

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit In Relation to the World

Sermon Delivered on April 15th, 2018
AM Service

By: Pastor Greg Hocson

Text: [John 16:7-14](#)

Introduction

Today I want to start a mini-series of messages on the ministry of the Holy Spirit in relation to the unsaved world. The Bible teaches that **the Holy Spirit has a ministry not only to the believer but also to the unbelieving world**. It is important that we understand the Holy Spirit's ministry in relation to the unsaved so that we would be on the same page with what He is seeking to accomplish in their live.

[John 16:8](#) And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

Here our Lord tells us that one to the purposes of the Holy Spirit's coming is to reprove the world. The **world** refers to the **unbelieving world of men and women**. It refers to mankind that is **lost in their sin** whether they be **Jews or Gentiles**. Jesus promised the disciples that when the Holy Spirit comes, **His main ministry to the unbelieving world is to reprove them**.

The word "**reprove**" means to convict, reveal, to bring to light, to expose, to show one's fault. It is a legal term that means to convict of guilt in a court of law. It is a word which refers to what the prosecuting attorney does when he argues his case. He puts the defendant on the witness stand and begins to pile up the evidence against the defendant. Evidence upon evidence, until finally, the enormity of the evidence is so over-whelming that the defendant is compelled at the end of the trial to step up and say, "*I admit it. I confess. I am guilty.*"

What is it that the Holy Spirit convicts the world of or exposes?

[John 16:8](#) And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9: Of sin, because they believe not on me; 10: Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11: Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

Our Lord gives us the **threefold area that the Holy Spirit will convict the world of**, namely, sin, righteousness, and judgment; of sin, because they believe not on Him; of righteousness, because He will go to His Father, and they will see Him no more; and of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

This morning consider with me the work of the Holy Spirit in convicting the world concerning sin.

I - The Necessity of the Holy Spirit's Conviction

The necessity of the Holy Spirit's conviction arises from the fallen nature of man. **Men and women are by nature blind** to their true sinful condition. We were all born blind to our guilt and sin before God and **without the Holy Spirit we will continue to be in that sad condition of spiritual blindness.**

The spiritual blindness of men and women, boys and girls is **demonstrated by the way they excuse themselves** and say that they are not really that bad and that they don't deserve judgment in hell. They **always look for someone who is worse than them**, to pat themselves in the back. I'm not that bad, look at my neighbor, my co-worker, look at the people at jail, and the list goes on and on. They make excuse after excuse.

It is **easy to get people to admit they are not perfect.** It is easy to get people to admit that they make mistake. It is easy to get people to admit that **they sin from time to time.** But it is difficult to get men and women to admit they are truly sinners before a holy, righteous and just God. In fact, **it is humanly impossible to get men and women admit that they are truly guilty and deserve to be judge in hell** because of their guilt and sin before God.

Regardless of how educated or intelligent a person may be, the truth of the gospel is beyond the reach of his or her natural mind. **Without the Holy Spirit, no one could discern the truth** as it is in Christ or be convicted of it, no matter how familiar he or she might be with the Scriptures. **Spiritual things are spiritually discerned.** Human beings simply cannot experience the power of the gospel without the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

No amount of preaching or pleading will bring about the conviction of sin, unless the Holy Spirit is at work in the sinner's heart. And mere admission of wrong doing is not enough. **There must be a powerful, effectual working of the Holy Spirit** in the heart, convicting and convincing that person to confess and forsake his sins and to renounce self-righteousness.

II - The Nature of the Holy Spirit's Conviction

[John 16:8](#) And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: [9: Of sin, because they believe not on me;](#)

You may have noticed that our Lord says "**sin**" not "sins". It is **singular** not plural. Our Lord does not give a long list of sins. He just says that the Holy Spirit will convict men of sin. What one sin does the Holy Spirit expose in the life of the unbeliever? It is not adultery, nor drunkenness, nor lying, gambling, drug abuse, pornography, or having a bad temper, **for sure these are all terrible sins** but the one sin that the Holy Spirit exposes in the unsaved person is unbelief. It is **not believing in Jesus Christ.** Our Lord is basically saying that not to believe in Him is the greatest of all the sins. **It is the chief of all the sins.**

[John 3:36](#) He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

This one sin sends the unbeliever to a Christ-less eternity is **the sin of refusing to believe in Jesus Christ**. A persons' eternal destiny is determined by whether or not they believe in Jesus. This is one of the things that the Spirit convicts the world of.

Andy Woods puts it this way,

“This is the very sin that the Spirit strives to bring to the unbeliever’s attention. The Holy Spirit seeks to make them aware of their failure to believe in Christ. After a person comes to Christ, then the Spirit will convict them of other sins. But such sanctification cannot transpire until the unbeliever first becomes a Christian. There is only one condition that must be satisfied for a person to become a Christian and this one condition is faith. This reality explains why the Spirit is so intent in convicting the unbeliever of the specific sin of unbelief. In other words, rather than convicting unbelievers of gambling, drug abuse, pornography, or having a bad temper, etc...the Spirit convicts them of unbelief in Christ.”

III - The Effect of the Holy Spirit’s Conviction

How do we know the Holy Spirit is convicting the sinner?

Romans 3:19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

That is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to the world - to bring conviction to the world, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world is guilty and held accountable to God. He is convicting men and women of their guilt before God.

Look at the tax collector who went to the temple and pray ...

Luke 18:10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. 11: The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12: I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. 13: And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. 14: I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Here we have a Pharisee and a publican who went to the temple and pray. Their prayers were recorded in the Scriptures. Let’s listen to their prayers.

The Pharisee

Luke 18:11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12: I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

What the Pharisee said shows that has no conviction of sin and guilt and that he trusted to himself that he was righteous. His mistake was he compared his outward life with the lives of those around him. He went up to the temple to pray, but he was full of himself and his own goodness. There was no conviction of sin and guilt.

The Publican

Luke 18:13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

The publican's address to God was full of humility, and of repentance for sin, and desire toward God. His prayer was short, but to the purpose; God be merciful to me a sinner. Here is a man who has been convicted of his sin and guilt. He did not look at the direction of the Pharisee he looked towards God. He acknowledged himself a sinner by nature, by practice, guilty before God.

This is the obvious effect of the Holy Spirit's conviction of sin. When a lost sinner is truly under conviction, there will be no more excuses, no more boasting of one's goodness and there will be an honest admission of guilt and sin before God.

Both prayed only one was forgiven ...

Luke 18:14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

So the Pharisee returned from the temple as poor and proud as he came, while the publican, whom he despised, found forgiveness and peace.

To come to a point where we blame no one but ourselves; and to make no excuses but confess our sins is humanly impossible. Only the Holy Spirit can produce this.

Closing Thoughts

We live in a sinful world, and one of the Holy Spirit's ministries is to convict the world of its sin. It is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to convict.

John 16:8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9: Of sin, because they believe not on me; 10: Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11: Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

This is the first step in salvation. Sinful, fallen human beings must be convicted of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to do this **through the preaching of the gospel**. The convicting power of the Holy Spirit is at work in the world today.

But the Holy Spirit is not merely convicting to make people feel bad or to pile on guilt. The Holy Spirit is working to convict a person **to admit their sin and to help them**. The Holy Spirit came not to make the world miserable, but to convict the world of sin and **to bring them to repentance and faith**.

If you are lost this morning may God be pleased by the Holy Spirit to convince you of your need of the forgiveness of sins! May you be brought to repentance from sins and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ!

What a wonderful gift and provision it is that the Holy Spirit will convict the hearts of men and women of their sinfulness so that they could be brought to a saving knowledge and relation with Jesus Christ!

Before I close let me speak to those among us by the grace of God have been forgiven and justified. As believers we are called to witness. Witnessing is a great privilege, but it is also a serious responsibility. It is a matter of life or death! **How we need to depend on the Holy Spirit to guide us** to the **right persons** and give us the **right words**, but it is most certainly the work of the convicting Holy Spirit that brings others to faith in Christ.

AMEN!