

Session 1

June 5, 2022

CONVICTED BY THE SPIRIT

John 15:26-27; 16:7-15

I think we Baptists have a hard time with the Holy Spirit. We have a pretty good theology about Him (a.k.a. *pneumatology*), but in practical church life we run to extremes. The Holy Spirit is too often treated either as a ghost-like apparition on the one hand, or is entirely ignored on the other. Neither of these is right. The Holy Spirit is not an *it*, but a *He*, possessing the traits of personality (mind, will, emotion). As the second person of the Trinity, He is co-equal, co-eternal, and co-essent with the Godhead. As such, the members of the Trinity always act in concert. The emphasis in John is not really on *who the Holy Spirit is*, but rather *what He does*. Hence, as Jesus describes Him, remember that He is primarily describing the Holy Spirit's *role*. While His role is both comprehensive and complex, three main emphases are mentioned here.

Confirmation (15:26-27). Here, the Holy Spirit is described as the *Paraclete*, which means counselor, helper, mediator, or advocate. He would help the disciples transition from their role as followers, to their role as leaders. So what did Jesus mean by "when He comes...?" As an eternal part of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit has always existed and has always been at work (see Gen. 1:2). While some believe the *indwelling* of the Spirit did not happen for believers in the Old Testament (until Pentecost), I disagree. Can one be truly saved without it? (see Rom. 8:9). Again, we should focus on the role of the Spirit. Here, He will do something new; something He could not do until after the resurrection: "He will testify of Me." And just as the Holy Spirit empowered the church to carry out the Great Commission on the Day of Pentecost, (see Acts 1:8, then Acts 2:1-4), He would empower the disciples to testify of Christ. Since they had been with Him since the beginning (v. 27), they had the *experience*. Soon, they would have the *empowerment*. For reflection: *How do you think the Holy Spirit empowers us today? Is this an empowerment of the church, or of individual believers?*

Conviction (16:7-11). Verses 7 and 8 could easily lead one into the heresy of *modalism*, the idea that God changed His form and became the man Jesus, then changed again and became the Holy Spirit. But again, the focus is not on changing forms, but enhancing roles. Jesus would bear the cross and ascend to the right hand of the Father to intercede *for* man there. The Holy Spirit would then assume the role of God *with* man. Both would act as mediators: God the Son in heaven and God the Spirit on earth. This could not happen until Christ ascended (see John 7:39 and Acts 2:33). The further enhancement of the Holy Spirit's role is mentioned in verses 8-11. He will *convict* (convince, expose) the world of three truths: of *sin*, and all of its ramifications (or as Matthew Henry stated it, "the fault of sin; of the folly of sin; of the filth of sin"); of *righteousness* (the fact that Jesus is who He said He is and proven by His ascension; v. 10); and judgment (because the Lord Jesus triumphed over the devil [v. 11. See also Col. 3:15]). For reflection: *While these verses are directed to "the world," do they apply to the lives of believers as well? What is the ongoing role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer?*

Guidance (16:12-15). In this remarkable text, three additional promises are made regarding the Holy Spirit. First, there is the promise of *sanctification*. In verse 12, Jesus declared that there was more to learn than He could share in His time with the disciples. The Spirit of truth would guide

them from the truth they already knew, into *all* truth. Second, in verse 13, there is the promise of *revelation*. The events of Christ's life and His teachings would be expanded, especially in the area of the End Times. Ultimately, the Holy Spirit would inspire the books of the New Testament, just as He had the Old Testament (see 2 Pet. 1:21). Third, in verse 14, there is the promise of *glorification*. The Holy Spirit would not only testify of Christ and declare what the Lord Jesus says but will superintend the glorification of Christ both in His earthly ministry and in His future exaltation. For reflection: *These promises were made specifically to the disciples. But how do they apply to us today?*