

Exalting Jesus Christ

"Functions of the Holy Spirit"

INTRODUCTION:

- I. Saying good-bye to someone we have known and loved is never easy.
 - A. The last evening that Jesus spent with His disciples in the upper room was no exception.
 1. Jesus had been preparing His disciples for His departure – He was going back to the Father.
 2. And the disciples knew that could mean only one thing. He would soon face death.
 - a. They didn't know the details – they had no idea how it would all happen – but they knew Jesus was going to die soon.
 - b. They would be left alone.
 3. And so, like fearful sheep, the disciples huddled near their Shepherd that night – saddened, grieved, and afraid.
 4. Being the Good Shepherd that He was, Jesus reassured them that He would not leave them alone.
 - a. **John 14:16-18** – *"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever —
17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because*

it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you."

- B. The single, most important message Jesus wanted to communicate was that His presence would be replaced with that of the Holy Spirit.
 - 1. It seem clear that the disciples understood very little about the Holy Spirit that night, but in a few weeks the reality of the Lord's words will transform their lives.
- II. As we continue our studies through the gospel of John, in our series "Exalting Jesus Christ," we come to the sixteenth chapter where Jesus explains some of the "Functions of the Holy Spirit."
- A. Although these words were spoken to His disciples – the Lord's apostles – and not to us today, we can learn still learn some valuable things about the Holy Spirit's work.
 - 1. And while the Holy Spirit would do things for the apostles that He doesn't do for us, He continues to serve a vital role in the lives of the Lord's disciples today.
 - 2. So, as we go through these verses we're going to see what the Holy Spirit would do through the Lord's apostles, and also learn what He does through us today as well.

- B. On this night as Jesus spent the final hours of His life surrounded by His most trusted followers, He had many things He wanted to say to them – most importantly things about Himself, and things they needed to know about themselves.
 - 1. Time and again, Jesus spoke that night of His vital union with the Father.
 - a. He wanted to impress His disciples with the fact that the Father was in Him and that He was in the Father.
 - 2. That relationship with the Father was to serve as an example to the disciples of their new relationship with the Holy Spirit.
 - a. Just as Jesus had a vital union with the Father, so His disciples would likewise have a vital union with the Spirit.
 - b. They would be able to draw on the Spirit's power just as Jesus had drawn upon the Father's.
 - c. And just as the Father was in Jesus, so the Spirit would be in them – empowering them, illuminating them, and comforting them.

BODY:

- I. A simple reading of John chapters 13 through 16 allows us to see the growing panic within each of the Lord's disciples.
 - A. He had told them several disturbing things.

1. First, in chapters 13 and 14, Jesus told them He was going to the Father, and that they couldn't come with Him.
 - a. They would be left behind.
 2. Then, in chapter 15, Jesus told them of the persecution that was to come.
 - a. They would not only be thrown out of synagogues, they would also face the constant threat of death.
 - b. In the end, most of them would be put to death for their faith in Jesus Christ.
 3. Therefore, in chapter 16, knowing that His disciples were feeling threatened and insecure, Jesus explains in detail exactly how the Holy Spirit will help them and minister to them.
- B. From the disciple's reaction it was clear that they needed support.
1. **John 16:4-6** – *"But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you. 5 But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' 6 But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart."*
 - a. The Lord's disciples were overwhelmed with sorrow.

- b. They were experiencing genuine grief and fear – like children who have just been separated from their parents. It's called "separation anxiety."
 - c. Their reaction was no different than ours would have been under these same circumstances.
 - d. Deep down, we all have a basic human need to be held securely – especially when trouble and sorrow threatens.
- C. Therefore, moved by their insecurity, Jesus assures the disciples with these words:
- 1. **John 16:7** – *"Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you."*
 - 2. The word "advantage" means "profitable" in the original Greek. Therefore, Jesus was telling these troubled disciples that His departure would actually benefit them in ways they could never imagine.
 - a. It's hard to understand how the Lord's absence could be beneficial or advantageous, but it's true.
 - b. As long as Jesus was on earth in His physical body, He could only be in one place at a time.
 - c. But the Spirit would strengthen each of them – no matter where they were – because the Spirit works from within.

- d. Where there was now panic in the innermost recesses of their hearts, the Holy Spirit would bring peace – where there was fear, He would bring fortitude.
3. The same is true for the Lord's disciples today.
 - a. No matter where we are in the world, the Spirit works in each of us today – not in the same way as He did with the apostles – but there should be no mistake about the fact that the Holy Spirit is in us, and works in us.
 - b. With the apostles, it was a direct working of the Holy Spirit to empower, illuminate, and comfort them through the process of divine inspiration.
 - c. For us, it's an indirect working of the Holy Spirit to empower, illuminate and comfort us when we read the divinely inspired writings of the apostles – the New Testament of Jesus Christ.
 4. This is all the more reason why we need to spend time immersed in the Spirit-given Word every day.
 - a. This is how the Holy Spirit does His work in our lives – through the Word.
 - b. And if we simply toss our Bibles aside, and put other activities before reading and meditating on the Word, we are essentially turning off the switch that allows the Holy Spirit to work in us.

D. So, what did Jesus tell His disciples this night about the functions of the Holy Spirit?

1. Jesus said: **John 16:8-11** – *"And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 of sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; 11 of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged."*

II. As we take a closer look at these verses, we discover that Jesus identifies three things the Holy Spirit will do through these disciples to help make the world aware of its helpless state and of its needed for a Savior.

A. First, "concerning sin," the Holy Spirit will *"convict the world of sin"* through the preaching and teaching of the apostles.

1. According to Kittel the Greek word for *"convict"* means: "to show someone" something.
 - a. In this case, it's showing someone "his sin and to summon him to repentance."
2. Thayer defines the word *"sin"* as meaning: "that which is done wrong, committed or resultant sin, an offence, a violation of the divine law in thought or in act."
3. Through the divinely inspired preaching and teaching of the apostles, the Holy Spirit will show all mankind that we have done

wrong – that we have violated divine law – and must therefore come to repentance."

4. It didn't really matter whether one was a Jew or Gentile, the apostle Paul made it crystal clear that all of us have become unrighteous because of sin – no matter how little or how great that sin may be.

- a. **Romans 3:9-18** – *What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. 10 As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; 11 there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. 12 They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one.*

13 Their throat is an open tomb; with their tongues they have practiced deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; 14 whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood; 16 destruction and misery are in their ways; 17 and the way of peace they have not known. 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes."

- b. **Romans 3:23** – . . . *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. . .*

5. In fact, Paul tells us just how helpless are those who have not obeyed Christ.

- a. **Ephesians 2:12** – . . .*that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.*
 - b. How more "hopeless" can one get than to be "*without Christ,*" to be "*aliens*" and "*strangers,*" "*having no hope and without God!*"
6. It has always been true that God can have no fellowship of any kind with sin – and never will have anything to do with sin.
- a. **Isaiah 59:2** – *But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.*
7. The Holy Spirit has indeed done His job of convicting the world of sin.
- a. You can't read anywhere in your Bible for very long until you come to realize that you're a sinner in need of forgiveness.
8. Until someone sees their sin – until someone admits they are in sin and in need of forgiveness – there can be no forgiveness.
- B. Then, Jesus revealed the second function of the Holy Spirit which concerns "righteousness" – the Holy Spirit will "*convict the world of righteousness.*"

1. Just as the preaching and teaching of the Spirit-inspired apostles convicted the world of sin, their divinely inspired preaching will also show the world "*righteousness.*"
2. The word "*righteousness*" in **John 16:8** means "perfect moral purity, integrity, sinlessness."
 - a. But how will the Holy Spirit, through the Lord's disciples, convict the world of "perfect moral purity, integrity, and sinlessness"?
 - b. The answer is to speak to the world about the only One who lived a life of "perfect moral purity, integrity and sinlessness" – show them Jesus Christ.
4. Christ was at the very center of all the preaching of the Lord's disciples during the first century. In fact, Paul describes the reaction to that preaching in this way:
 - a. **1 Corinthians 1:22-31** – *For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 26 For you see your calling,* *brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many*

mighty, not many noble, are called.

27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence. 30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God — and righteousness and sanctification and redemption — 31 that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord."

b. **Colossians 1:28** – *Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.*

5. It does little good for people to see how helpless they've become by being lost in sin, unless they also see true "righteousness" – "perfect moral purity, integrity and sinlessness" – in the life of Jesus Christ.

a. Jesus is the living demonstration of what we should be, and what we can become with His help. The world needs to see that.

- b. The world also needs to see a living demonstration of "righteousness" in us – the Lord's disciples.
 - c. This is why Jesus said: **Matthew 5:14-16** – *"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."*
6. There is no greater way to show the world "righteousness" – no greater way to show the world the character of Jesus Christ – than to model it in our own lives.
7. Three times in his first letter, Peter admonished Christians everywhere to live godly lives – and then explains why.
- a. **1 Peter 2:11-12** – *Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, 12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.*
 - b. **1 Peter 3:1-2** – *Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they,*

without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.

- c. **1 Peter 3:15-17** – *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; 16 having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. 17 For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.*

8. Unfortunately, it does little good to convict someone of the sin in their life, and then show them the kind of life they could be living, unless we give them motivation for changing.

C. And so, the third function of the Holy Spirit mentioned by Jesus concerns "*judgment*" – the Holy Spirit will convict the world of "*judgment.*"

1. Once again, this is the very thing the Lord's disciples did when they went out into the world, and warned of a judgment to come.
2. The word "judgment" used here refers to the final judgment of all mankind – the day when we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.
3. Preaching about the final judgment is not popular today.

- a. We hear fewer and fewer sermons about heaven and hell, especially from the denominational world.
 - b. But even among our own brethren, this is a topic most people prefer to avoid.
4. However, the final judgment of all mankind was a constant theme running throughout the entire New Testament:
- a. Turn to the first book of the New Testament: **Matthew 25:31-34, 41, 46** – *"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. 33 And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: . . . 41 Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: . . . 46 And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."*
 - b. Now turn to the last book of the New Testament: **Revelation 20:11-15** – *Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat*

on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away.

And there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. 14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

5. There is simply no escaping the fact that we will all be judged someday:
 - a. **Romans 14:10-12** – *For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written: "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God." 12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.*
 - b. **2 Corinthians 5:9-10** – *Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that*

each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

6. The reality of a coming judgment is what motivated Paul and the other apostles to go out into the world and preach Jesus.
 - a. **2 Corinthians 5:11a** – *Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men. . .*
 - b. Paul knew the day was coming when every man and woman living on the face of the earth will face the reality of a judgment – and for those who do not know Christ, or who have not been faithful to the Lord – they will experience *"the terror of the Lord."*
- III. After Jesus told His disciples that the Holy Spirit will convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, He explained why.
- A. Jesus said:
 1. The Holy Spirit will convict the world: **John 16:9** – *". . . of sin, because they do not believe in Me. . ."*
 - a. Since Jesus Christ provides the only remedy for sin, those who do not believe in Him – and subsequently, those who do not obey Him – will remain in their sin, and separated from God.

2. The Holy Spirit will convict the world: **John 16:10** – “. . . of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more. . .”
 - a. God certainly will not allow the unrighteous into heaven. In fact, Paul says: **Romans 1:18** – *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. . .*
 - b. However, to prove beyond any doubt that Jesus is the Christ, the righteous and sinless Son of God, He was resurrected from the dead, and ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of God.
 - c. And the same will happen to us if we also attain the righteousness of God through our obedience.
3. And finally, the Holy Spirit will convict the world: **John 16:11** – “. . . of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.”
 - a. Notice the past tense of the verb "judged" – the "*ruler of this world is judged,*" or "*has already been judged.*"
 - b. Satan, the ruler of this world, has already been defeated: **Revelation 12:10-11** – *Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser*

of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. 11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

- c. Also, remember: **Matthew 25:41-42** – *"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:"* Hell is the place God prepared for the devil and his angels.
- d. Since judgment has already been passed on the devil and His angels, the same is true for those who continue to serve him.
- e. We will eventually suffer the same fate unless we come to Jesus Christ for salvation.

CONCLUSION:

- I. Jesus concluded His comments about the function of the Holy Spirit by leaving His disciples with some encouraging words.
 - A. He said:
 - 1. **John 16:12-15** – *"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of*

what is Mine and declare it to you. 15 All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you."

2. The Holy Spirit did everything Jesus said He would do
 - a. He guided the apostles into all truth, and He glorified Jesus by taking the teachings of Jesus and declaring it to them.
 3. The apostles then provided us with a written guide of everything the Holy Spirit revealed to them in the pages of the book we call the New Testament.
 4. These are the things that Jesus wanted all those who would be His disciples to know and understand – and ultimately obey.
- B. The question for you is have you obeyed the truths of Jesus delivered to His apostles through the Holy Spirit?
1. Have you come to Christ in faith, repenting of your sins, confessing your faith in Him, and have you then been buried with Christ in baptism to wash away your sins?
 2. And if you're a Christian, are you still living by those truths – living out the righteousness of God every day of your life?
 3. If not, then let the Spirit transform your life today by simply obeying those truths the Spirit has revealed in His divinely inspired Word.