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Upper Room Discourse (Part 7)



The Life and Teachings of Christ - Steve Gregg

In this discourse, Steve Gregg explains Jesus' instructions to his disciples before his crucifixion. Jesus warns his disciples about the trials they will face and why he is telling them so. Steve emphasizes that Christ's love and grace transform people's nature, unlike the condemning and judgmental attitude of the religious spirit. The Holy Spirit plays a critical role in transforming hearts, which is necessary for the Christian faith to have meaning and power.

Transcript

We're in John chapter 16 in this session. I had hoped actually that I might finish it in our last session. It's been a couple weeks since I've been away, and I would come back to it.

Many of the things that Jesus said in this chapter had been said previously, or similar things have been said previously in chapters 14 and 15, because this is the final chapter of that which we call the Upper Room Discourse. And as we pointed out, the first time we began to treat it in chapter 14, we kind of ran through the whole thing, pointing out the themes that Jesus repeatedly made in that Upper Room, which means we looked at some of the verses here, although we didn't go into detail on them. But the themes will be familiar in many cases.

In fact, I don't know. We don't need to. We're on schedule.

We're doing okay. But if there's not that much new to say about chapter 16, we may even venture into chapter 17, but I won't make any predictions about that. So let's look at John chapter 16, and Jesus is continuing.

Remember back at the end of chapter 14, Jesus said, Arise, let us go from here. So as he went through the material in chapter 15 and 16, we don't know for sure if they'd left the room and were now en route to Gethsemane, which is where they went from there. I don't know exactly how long it would take them to walk there.

No doubt a few minutes. So he could have possibly said these things as they walked along, or they may not have actually left the room before he finished this entire

discourse. All right.

These things I have spoken to you that you should not be made to stumble. They will put you out of the synagogues. Yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think he offers God a service.

And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor me. 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. Excuse me.

It's allergy season now. Some of you may have noticed. Now, in these four verses, he twice makes reference to why he has spoken to them.

Back when we were doing chapter 14, I showed you that there's a number of times, actually in chapter 13 and 14 and here, in which Jesus indicated that there was a reason at this time for him saying the things he was saying, things he had not said to them before. And in most of the cases, in chapter 13 and 14, the statements were, I've told you this before it comes to pass, so that when it comes to pass, you may believe or you may know that I am here, whatever. The idea being that the fulfillment of his words would be the verification that he was not just speaking as a man from human wisdom.

He was speaking from God. And that's, of course, how we know any prophet in the Bible is by the fact that they predicted things that came true, and that's even the very reason I believe that they did predict things is so that when they came true, we would know that these were not just guys with a bad mood. These were people who really had God's complaint on their heart, and God had verified that that was the case by punctuating their utterances with predictions that came true.

Now, that seems to agree with what he says in verse 4. He says, but these things I've told you that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them. That's very much like what we've seen before. Although verse 1, he says, these things I've spoken to you that you should not be made to stumble.

So there's a sense in which he's saying, I'm saying this to you also to forewarn you. There is a sense in which prediction gives you some idea of what to expect. Like he didn't give them a lot of specifics.

He did say they could expect to be hated. In chapter 15, he had said, if the world hates you, know that it hated me before it hated you. There in chapter 15, verse 18.

And he said, if they've, you know, he says in verse 20 of chapter 15, a servant's not greater than his master. If they persecute me, they'll persecute you. So there's a sense in which he's telling them these things in advance so that although they don't know the exact way in which this will be fulfilled, they won't think it a strange thing when they

encounter diverse trials.

So he says, I don't want you to be stumbled. A lot of times I think people are stumbled and leave the faith because they first came to faith on false advertising. It's often the case that when people are brought to the Lord, they're brought to the Lord through the same means that Madison Avenue brings people to the point of buying their products.

By emphasizing the desirable points, downplaying the limitations of the negative points, and a lot of people advertise Christianity that way to get people to buy it. And in my opinion, we do them no service when we do that. It's not really necessary to do that because anybody whom if you told them, you know, hey, you could be persecuted.

If you accept Jesus now, you might, you're going to have to face some possible persecution. You might even have to forsake all that you have. You might be hated by your family.

You might have to, all your relationships may disappear or may worse, may stay around and stay, you know, negative. People may hate you and persecute you. And if we told people at the beginning, some people no doubt would not accept the Lord who would otherwise.

The thing is, if that kind of information would cause them not to accept the Lord in the first place, I think we could safely say those kinds of facts when they do materialize will cause them to leave the Lord. I mean, if they're not prepared for what Jesus said is normative in Christian discipleship, then they are not making a normative commitment to discipleship. And if those normal circumstances of loss and persecution and trials come, they're not at all committed to stay through that kind of thing.

And so Jesus is trying to make it plain before they get into it. Actually, they've been following him for some time. And they have known that Jesus is on the outs with certain people.

They've been aware that there's plots against his life. Even at this time and sometime earlier, they've been kind of sneaking around to avoid being in the clutches of the power mongers in Jerusalem, the Sanhedrin and so forth. Yet, he wants it to be made clear that he is going away.

He's told them that. That was one thing that could certainly stumble them. In fact, back in chapter 6, when he was telling them about eating his flesh and drinking his blood, and they were bothered by this, he said, does this stumble you? What then, if you see the Son of Man go back up to where he came from? Maybe I should find that verse for you.

But he's indicating that if you're stumbled by what I'm saying when I'm with you, how are you going to be able to handle the stress of following me when I'm not with you, if you see me disappear? Are you going to be shocked by that? It's in John chapter 6, verse 61

and 62. Thank you. When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured about this, he said to them, does this offend you? Or the word stumble is the same word.

Does this stumble you? What then, if you should see the Son of Man ascend where he was before? Which they would eventually do. Now, in the connection of John chapter 6, it may seem a little strange, that statement. What's that got to do with eating his flesh and drinking his blood? But essentially what he's saying is that they're going to have other things more unexpected than what they're hearing from him now.

At this point in time, the disciples were convinced that he was the Messiah, and he was. But they were not at all clear on what the Messiah was going to do, and they thought he was going to stay around, they thought they were going to be his cabinet, they thought he was going to rule the world, and they were going to rule with him. And all those things were true, but not in the sense that they thought.

They were to be true spiritually, but they were looking for something entirely different. And his going away from them, well his crucifixion, first of all, certainly stumbled them. But he came back three days later, and then they were encouraged again, you know.

But now he's going to go away for a lot longer. And would they be prepared for that? Would this stumble them? And so, he says, the reason that he's telling them these things, including in the Upper Room Discourse, what he kept saying, I'm going away, but I'll come back, I'm going away, but I'll come back. He says, I'm telling you this now so you won't stumble.

It could stumble you if you're taken entirely by surprise by my departure. He says in verse 2, they will put you out of the synagogues. Yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think he's offering God a service.

This is true not only of actual martyrdom, not only of people who actually physically kill you, it is often true of people who will assassinate your character. Sometimes people will assassinate your character and think they're doing God a service. I would say that most people in ministry that I know, myself included, would have fewer complaints about the way the world has treated them than the way that other professed Christians have.

I've heard many ministers say this. You know, you say, well, how's the world treating you? Oh, the world's treating me fine. It's the way the church is treating me that I'm struggling with.

It's not usually those who don't profess interest in God that ministers are frequently with. That's a shame, perhaps. Maybe ministers should be out with even more often.

But, I mean, there's not too much they can do about that. The needs of the church often call a man, especially a pastor, a man in pastoral ministry, calling away from worldly relationships into intensive interaction with the people of the church. And that being so,

it is not uncommon for a man's trials to be with those of his own congregation sometimes or with his fellow pastors or something like that.

And there's enough of that that goes on. Now, you see, the apostles were in fact going to be leaders. It's possible that you, if you're not a leader in a church, which probably many of you will not be, you may actually have more interaction with unbelievers out in the workplace or whatever and with neighbors and so forth.

And you may find most of your persecution comes from people who are not intending to do God a service. But leaders, like the apostles, were going to take a lot of pride. Now, think of the people who opposed Paul.

Paul was opposed by Romans occasionally and pagans occasionally. But the majority of his problems came from his fellow Jews who were not believers or in some cases even his fellow Jews who were professing believers. Paul said in Galatians 2 that he experienced problems when he and Barnabas went to Jerusalem the second time after his conversion from false brethren.

And we know he's talking about the Judaizers because of what he says about them. They had come to spy out our liberty and to bring us back into bondage. And he called them false brethren, but they were not other than professing Christians.

And a lot of these people went around still having trouble for Paul. And of course there were a lot of unconverted Jews who went around trying to get Paul killed and sometimes even swearing that they wouldn't eat until they killed Paul. And no doubt, every one of them, including Saul himself before his conversion, thought that the persecuting of Christians was something that he was doing to do God a service.

Now, the tables have turned tremendously politically for the church and for the Jews. We don't get persecuted by the Jews anymore unless you go to Israel. But of course, in more recent history, it's appeared that people who are, what shall we say, nominally Christian have persecuted Jews, which is a bad thing for them to do.

But we don't usually get persecuted by Jews, but we may get persecuted by, as Paul did, people who for religious reasons are upset with you. I think, and of course my experience is limited, and therefore my experience may not be characteristic of what goes on. But in the years I've been in ministry, I have been negatively impressed with the pettiness of Christians more than non-Christians.

Now that's not saying Christians are worse than non-Christians. In fact, I'm sure that the pettiness that characterizes some Christians is an improvement over whatever they were when they were non-Christians. You know, I've heard people say, well, I had better friends when I was in the world than I have in the church.

That may be true, but there's a couple good reasons for that. One is you picked your

friends when you were in the world. If someone wasn't a good friend, you didn't have to hang out with them.

In the church, you've got little choice. You're your brother, you're forced to work it out. And therefore, you're thrust into relationships that you would have avoided in the world.

And therefore, in the world, your number of friends, or the people you make yourself vulnerable to, is always narrowing to those who have never done you any wrong. And then, of course, you've got this group of friends who are so like-minded and so much like you, and who find their identity in their relationship with you in the group or whatever, that you hardly ever do experience serious problems with them, it may be. And that's one reason that people sometimes can rightly say, I had better friends in the world than I had in the church.

But another reason is, or let me just put it this way, the suggestion that you had better friends in the world than you had in the church may wrongly give the impression that being in the church doesn't help people, or that being a Christian doesn't help people. The fact of the matter is, being a Christian helps a great deal. Not everyone in the church is a Christian.

But even the ones who are, and who are immature, are probably not worse people for having become Christians. You just never knew them before they were Christians, it may be. They might have been horrendous before.

God doesn't appeal to the righteous, he appeals to sinners. And therefore, the church is full of people who have been the first to recognize their sinfulness, and many times they're the ones who have serious problems in their life, in their character, in their relationship styles. And so the church is going to be thick.

Really, the true church is going to be thick with people who know their sinners, and who may have had problems in the past, and though they're redeemed, they're still working through their character changes. And you may happen to be in a relationship with them at a time when they're not very far along that road. So, anyway, that phenomenon itself, perhaps will guarantee, or is one of the factors involved in the fact that people may yet think they're doing God a service.

You probably won't be put to death by any Christians in our time, but believe me, Anabaptists were put to death by Lutherans and Swiss Reformed Protestants. Protestants were put to death by Catholics. And non-conformists throughout the Dark Ages were put to death by Catholics.

People who no doubt felt they were upholding the honor of God by putting these people to death. And even some of the Anabaptists, or they're not their... Well, I mean, there were some extreme groups. There was a place called Münster, Germany, where a group

of Anabaptists set up a, you know, sort of a utopian Christian community, which became very materialistic, and very different than the general spirit of the Anabaptists.

But it was a bad deal. But every group has their problems, and we all have the... Probably we're living at a time where we will not be put to death by people who think they're doing God a service, unless they're Muslims. And we're in a Muslim-dominated area.

Some of you may be put to death who are doing God a service, or unless you have a ministry to Jews in Israel. But all of us can probably brace ourselves, even if we're in Canada or America and we never have anyone actually threatening our life, we can brace ourselves to have people oppose us, speak evil of us, gossip about us, or whatever, who are professing Christians. It's because there is a tremendous amount of pettiness in the Church.

And I said a moment ago, I don't think being in the Church hurts people, or that it makes them worse. Most of the time I don't think so. I think there might be even some cases where people were a little more gracious before they got religious.

Because religion doesn't improve people. Christ does. But some people when they receive Christ get temporarily, or even long-term, into a religious spirit, very much unlike that which Christ had.

Or they, you know, they feel like it's their job to condemn all sinners, or whatever, including sinners in the Church. In which case, you know, I think some people have been worsened for the contact with religion. Because religion itself encourages condemnatory attitudes.

Jesus doesn't. But that's the difference between Jesus and religion. Anyway, there's a possibility that if you don't... You may be martyred by people who think they're doing God a service.

The apostles, some of them were. But you might also not be. But even then you should brace yourself for the possibility of people that you thought were your brothers, people that you thought would support you, people that you thought would, you know, work with you through what they consider to be your problems.

They just won't be disposed of. You've all heard, I'm sure, the saying that the Christian Church is the only army that shoots their wounded. You know, I mean, the soldiers go out to battle in the world and they come back tainted and wounded from the world.

Maybe they fell into sin or something in the battle. They come back to the Church and they shoot them dead, you know. And it's kind of a shame.

Now, he says in verse 3, These things they will do to you because they have not known

the Father nor me. So you can be sure that if somebody attacks you thinking they're doing God a service, and you have in fact been doing nothing but what you believe was doing God a service, that their attack upon you will be an indicator they don't know Jesus. They might be very religious but they don't know Jesus.

At least they don't know him well enough to know what he would do in the same situation, because he doesn't do that to sinners. He was a friend of sinners. Okay, now, But these things I've 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.

I think what he means by that is, depending on what he means by these things, presumably he means the things that he's repeatedly saying there in the upper room, which are what? I'm going away, but I'm going to come again. I'm going to leave my spirit, and it's going to be an advantage to you that I'm gone, because the Holy Spirit will be with you then forever. And you'll be able to use my name in prayer.

You'll have my power available to you through my name, my authority. And I want you to remember to love one another and expect persecution from the world. Those are the kinds of things he kept saying.

Now, So I didn't say all these things to you before because I was with you. That meant I was here to protect you. You know, he protected them even still after this, when he was arrested in the garden.

Peter drew his sword, and the disciples were very much at risk of being arrested along with Jesus. And Jesus said to the soldiers, Who are you seeking? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. And he said, I am.

And you recall, they fell over backward. They got up again, brushed themselves off, and started at him again. He said, Who are you seeking? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

He said, I told you, I am he. And they fell over backward. So he protected his disciples.

He stood up for them, and they escaped. But they wouldn't always have him around to protect them. They wouldn't always have him around quite in the same sense to nail them when they're arguing among themselves about who's the greatest.

I mean, just a few days earlier, he had taken them into a house, and he sat down and said, What were you guys talking about back there on the road? And they were embarrassed they wouldn't answer him because they'd been discussing who was the greatest. And he was able to correct them right on the spot. But we don't always get that correction as quickly.

We do have the Holy Spirit, and he does convict, but sometimes it's easier to ignore the

voice of the Spirit than it is to ignore Jesus in flesh and blood standing there saying, Hey, you did the wrong thing, and you hear that audibly in your ear. And they can't ignore that as easy. So the Holy Spirit is just as faithful as Jesus is to convict of sin, but a lot of times it's easy, since you can't see him, you don't hear him with our ears, to just kind of ignore it for a while.

And so they needed Jesus around for a while in his physical presence to get them started, and now they're going to not have him. So he's telling them the kind of things that he would tell them if he were going to still be here. He's preparing them for his absence.

In other words, I was with you until now. I didn't need to prepare you for all this, but now I'm not going to be with you anymore. So I need to prepare you for what you're going to face when I'm gone.

Verse 5, But now I go away to him who sent me. And none of you ask me, Where are you going? But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. 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. And when he has come, he will convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.

Of sin, because they don't believe in me. Of righteousness, because I go to my Father and you see me no more. And of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

Now, this is what the Holy, well, let's read further. I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 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. He will glorify me, for he will not take, excuse me, he will take of what is mine and declare it to you.

All things that the Father has are mine, therefore I said to you, that he will take of mine and declare it to you. Now, once again he tells them the helper is coming. He's told them that in chapter 14, he's told them that again in chapter 15, and now he's saying it again.

It's very important for them to know this. He adds a little bit of more information every time he mentions this, however. He said, in verse 7, it's good for you that I'm going away.

Now, that wouldn't seem apparently true. Who would think that it would be better to not have Jesus around than to have him around? But he says, the reason it's good for you is because if I don't go, the spirit won't come, the helper won't come. And that is to your

advantage that he does.

Why? I mean, is the Holy Spirit better than Jesus to have with you? No. But he could be with you all the time. Jesus could only be in one place at one time.

There were times when, you know, he'd be asleep and the disciples in the boat in the storm wouldn't have him awake. I mean, they woke him eventually, but for a while there he wasn't awake, and there'd be times when they'd be separated from him and he just wasn't always with them. There were times even when he just went off to pray and at those times he wasn't with them.

What if they had a need of him? Well, when the Holy Spirit comes, he won't ever leave them. He'll be with them all the time. That's to their advantage.

And in fact, he will dwell inside of them, which is also better, just as the New Testament, the New Covenant is better than the Old Covenant. Jesus' presence with the disciples was of an inward nature any more than the Law's presence with them had. He could tell them what's right and wrong, but he didn't change their hearts.

They still weren't understanding, they still had carnality, they still were resistant to some of the things he said, but we know that the New Covenant, which comes along with the Holy Spirit, writes the laws in our hearts, gives us a new heart, a new spirit, and so forth. Therefore, the coming of the Holy Spirit, it's better to have the Holy Spirit with us, dwelling in us, giving us a new heart, giving us an impetus in the right direction, than to have Jesus with us and not have the Spirit in us. Because Jesus can keep telling you what's right, but if it's not in your heart to do what's right, you're not really that much better off than if he had the Law telling you what's right.

Jesus did not really inaugurate the New Covenant during his earthly ministry, he just did so in the Upper Room, and that was the end of his dealings in the flesh with his disciples until, of course, his resurrection, he visited them a few times. So it's good for them in many ways that it's even better than having Jesus with them. And he says, and here's another reason it's good for them, in verse 8, when he has come, he'll convict the world.

Now, the disciples had the task of convincing the world of something that would be very hard to convince people of, generally speaking, namely that a man had risen from the dead, and that the man in question happened to have been one who was officially recognized as a criminal and executed as a criminal by the government. And yet, although he was officially and universally, except for a few disciples who thought otherwise, he was esteemed a criminal, not just a criminal, but one worthy of death, a blasphemer, in spite of all those things about him, he was in fact the Son of God, he was righteous, he had done no wrong, and he was the Lord, and you have to submit to him. Now, that message somehow has conquered you and me, or else we wouldn't be here right now, but how has it so? It's because the Holy Spirit convinced us the Holy Spirit

spoke to us, the Holy Spirit opened our hearts to receive that.

And the disciples had the task of trying to convince people of this, but if they had to do it all on their own, there would be serious problems. Now, the Holy Spirit helped them in a number of ways. First of all, he gave them signs and wonders, he gave them gifts of the Holy Spirit to help convince people, but also, the Holy Spirit himself convinced people, that is, convicted them, convicts their heart.

When you preach the gospel to someone, you're going to have no success at all, unless the Holy Spirit is also convicting them. If the Holy Spirit convicts them, that won't guarantee their salvation, because many people resist the Holy Spirit, as the whole Sanhedrin did, according to Stephen in his sermon in Acts 7. But, at least you've got the chance that they may be converted if the Holy Spirit is convicting them. Now, what does he convict them of? Sin, righteousness, and judgment.

Now, to say he convicts the world of sin presumably that means he makes them feel convicted about their sins. To say he convicts the world of righteousness doesn't mean the same thing. No one's supposed to feel bad about righteousness, but it does mean that he convinces them of what righteousness is.

The word convict and convince are really the same word. One's Old English and one's New English. Convict is what the King James says here, and it's just the Old English word for convince.

And so, if the Holy Spirit convinces the world of what righteousness really is, of course, that'll point out that Jesus is right. They need to be aware of that. They need to be convinced of that if they're going to be converted.

He also has to convince them of what sin is and how bad sin is. And if the Holy Spirit doesn't do that, you may not have much success with them. Also, of judgment.

That is, of the fact that sin will be brought to judgment. Now, that is a thing unseen. Faith is the evidence of things unseen.

No one has ever yet seen the judgment. They spoke about it as an incentive to do right. And there's certainly nothing wrong with hellfire preaching.

There's nothing wrong with telling sinners that there's a day of reckoning, a day of judgment and punishment for those who reject the truth. Nothing wrong with that kind of preaching. The Holy Spirit himself is involved in that kind of preaching.

The point here is that these are the things that people need to be convinced of in order to get saved. They need to know what righteousness is. They need to know what sin is.

They need to know what sin is. They have to be convinced that there's a judgment.

Something that people are not all fully convinced about.

And you can either try to convince them by arguments alone, or, better yet, have God convince them. Have the Holy Spirit convince them. And that's what Jesus said the Holy Spirit was coming to do.

That doesn't mean that you don't use any arguments. It doesn't mean that you don't work with God on this. But your work is worthless if the Holy Spirit's not actively working.

I've on many occasions, and I've repeated them, you know, you can outwardly deny the truth of what I'm saying. But you know that I'm telling the truth because the Holy Spirit is convicting your heart right now that what I'm saying is true. I've said this to people on many occasions and I've never yet had them say, no, it's not, no it's not.

I've never had anyone deny it. I've had people, without denying it, still reject the message. But I've never yet heard someone come back and say, no, there's no such, no, there's no such thing.

But it does. When you faithfully preach the gospel, the Holy Spirit helps. He bears witness.

Jesus said he would, by the way, back in chapter 15, in verse 26. But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will testify of me. He testifies to the heart of the unbeliever, to the world.

Now, that's wonderful really but without the Holy Spirit we're nothing supernatural. We don't have supernatural power. He is the supernatural element in the Christian life.

He is the one who produces the supernatural results in our own lives through the fruit of the Holy Spirit as we walk in the Spirit. He is the one who gives success in any ministry that we have any success in because it is through the gifts of the Holy Spirit that we minister. In terms of winning souls to Christ, it is the Holy Spirit alone who can make the supernatural happen in our lives.

You can, without the Holy Spirit, be a very good debater and argue people into the point where they can't argue any further against you and they have to just accede your point just because they can't say anything against it. They might even be forced, if they're pliable people, to say a sinner's prayer or whatever in your presence. But there will be no miraculous transformation in their hearts without the Holy Spirit's ministry there.

Now, he elaborates on it. He said the Holy Spirit would convict people of sin because they don't believe in me. They're not listening to me.

I am telling them that they're in sin but they don't believe it. So the Holy Spirit's going to have to do that. Because they don't believe in me, he's going to have to come and

convince the world that they're sinners.

Now, some have felt that what Jesus is saying here is the only sin that the Holy Spirit convicts people of is the sin of unbelief, the sin of not believing in Jesus. And that's what Jesus meant, they say, when he said he will convict the world of sin in other words, of the sin of not believing in me. I've heard it preached that really God doesn't hold any sin against any person except the sin of rejecting Christ.

I don't know if you've ever heard that or not. But if that were true, then why would there have to be such an elaborate judgment? Why would every idle word that a man speaks be brought up on the day of judgment if there's only one sin really that matters and that's the sin of rejecting Christ? It's the same kind of a statement that people say, well, no one is really, no one goes to hell because they're sick with sin. They go to hell because they rejected the remedy that God gave them.

Well, on one level, it's true. Obviously, they could avoid hell if they did not reject the remedy. But the reason they need a remedy is because God has a case against them based on their sins.

And people are accountable for their sins. They're going to have to give account of every idle word they speak. They're going to have to give an account of their sins.

The first time I ever heard this verse preached on and many times since, that he will convict the world of sin because they believe not in me means the only sin the Holy Spirit is concerned about is the sin of unbelief, the sin of rejecting Christ. It's the only sin for which people go to hell. Well, no, they go to hell because of all their sins or any of them.

It's true that had they accepted Christ, they would not go to hell. And so only in a secondary way, the rejection of Christ is the cause of their going to hell. But really, the Holy Spirit convicts of all sin when he is convicting.

He's not just going to convict of one thing. The reason a person repents of sin is because he gets convicted by the Holy Spirit that sin is a bad deal and that it's offensive to God. So, I think when he says of sin because they do not believe in me, he means they're not believing in me when I tell them they're in sin, so the Holy Spirit's going to have to come and continue working on them.

I've been trying to convict them of sin but some of them haven't gotten fully convicted so the Holy Spirit's going to keep chipping away at them. Likewise, of righteousness because I go to my Father and you see me no more. Now, the same teachers that I heard the interpretation of the previous line that I disagreed with argued this way on this one.

It made sense to me for a long time. Jesus said, the Holy Spirit will convict the world of righteousness because I'm going to the Father and you see me no more. And the

explanation I always heard for years and I didn't quite understand what it meant was this.

Because I go to the Father means that my going to the Father is going to demonstrate that my life exhibits the standard of righteousness that God accepts. The ascension of Christ into Heaven is the visible display of God's approval upon Him. Therefore, it is God's way of declaring that what Jesus is, the way Jesus acted, the things Jesus said were in fact righteous and the going of Jesus into Heaven is that which convicts the world of what is righteous.

The level or the standard of righteousness that God will accept was demonstrated by Him accepting Jesus into Heaven which makes Jesus the standard. Now, that's not a bad preaching point but it hardly makes sense as the meaning of the passage. For one thing, Jesus didn't say my ascension is going to convict the world of righteousness.

He said the Holy Spirit is going to convict the world of righteousness and obviously the Holy Spirit didn't come in the sense that He was promising until Jesus had already ascended. He came at Pentecost. He's talking about what the Holy Spirit will begin to do at Pentecost and that was after Jesus had risen.

I think what we're trying to understand here is that it's a little bit like the way I explained it previously because I'm going to the Father and you're not going to see me anymore and I have been up to this point convicting the world of righteousness but I'm not going to be around anymore therefore the Holy Spirit is going to come and continue doing that. The reason He has to convict the world of sin the reason He has to convict the world of righteousness is because while I've been doing that I'm going to be gone. I'm leaving.

He's going to come and take up where I left off and you're not going to see me anymore that's why He'll have to do this. That's what I understand Him to mean by that connection. And then finally in verse 11 of judgment because the ruler of this world is judged.

Now the Holy Spirit has to convict people that there is a reality. The reality of the judgment and the way He does so apparently is by demonstrating that the ruler of this world has been judged. Now how in the world how is that demonstrated? How does the Holy Spirit demonstrate that the ruler of this world has been judged? Well obviously it must be by displays of power such as Jesus did which showed that the ruler of this world had been incapacitated.

When Jesus cast out demons in Matthew 12 He was accused of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub and He said no what's happening here actually is the kingdom of God has overtaken you and what's happening is really I'm demonstrating that I have overcome the wicked one. You can't go into a man's house if he's strong and plunder his house as I'm doing in the process of casting out demons that's what I'm doing,

plundering Satan's house. You can't do that because demons represent actual power encounters between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness and the fact that I win and the devil loses shows that he has been bound or judged that something has happened to him he's lost some of his power he has been reduced and what has happened is he's come under judgment at the cross.

Satan is judged at the cross he's reduced to incapacity if the church moves forward the devil cannot stop the church from moving forward if the church doesn't move forward the devil can stay where he is and keep the ground he's holding he's not just going away voluntarily and people say well how could the devil be bound how could the devil be reduced to inactivity as Hebrews says he is how could these things be true when the devil is so active today well the devil continues to be active in all the areas that we let him but an aggressive church and the work of the kingdom of God which is a work of the Holy Spirit demonstrates that this kingdom of darkness is passe that the true light has come and the darkness has passed and the true light now shines as it says in 1 John 2 and this demonstrates that the prince's will has been judged now you might think that the only way I think the Holy Spirit demonstrates this is through casting out demons I gave the example of Jesus casting out demons as a demonstration that he had bound the storm man of the powers of darkness that is that undoes the works of the devil undoes the work of the devil 1 John 5.8 says that for this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might undo undo is the way the Greek word ran destroy the works of the devil in the King James this is what happens when the church goes forward when people are translated out of the power of darkness into the kingdom of God as Colossians 1.13 describes conversion as that is a power encounter there may or may not be a healing there may or may not be a demon go out there may or may not be a person rise from the dead those things might be there they may not be present but there is a miracle in any case because a person who is totally lost in sin is miraculously transformed Satan has lost another captive his house has been plundered further and this is the work of the Holy Spirit and he shows that the kingdom of the devil is under the judgment of God and is being gradually overtaken this may seem like groundless optimism in view of the way the world appears to be going remember I mean most people when you say well Jesus is winning the battle in the world today and has been since he was crucified people say oh yeah well then why is evil getting worse and worse well I don't think that reflects an understanding of what's really going on in the world in China it's the gospel not communism that's making progress in Korea it's the gospel not Buddhism that's making progress in Africa, in Latin America it's the gospel not voodoo, not pagan religions not Roman Catholicism it's the gospel that's making progress we sometimes think the devil is winning because we're looking only at our own backyard and I don't know about Canada I don't follow the politics of it that closely but in America things have been kind of discouraging lately but even the way things have been going in the US it doesn't mean the devil is getting more ground it just means he's coming above ground I don't think there's more I don't think the ratio of Christians to pagans in

America is really much different now than it's ever been if anything there might even be more Christians than there were in the past per capita because I don't see very many Christians real Christians falling away I don't think real Christians do that very often but I see pagans coming in so it seems to me like we must be winning at some level people who have always been pagans are no longer hiding the fact that they're pagans people we used to regard as decent folks or maybe Christians they were always pagans but now the climate of our society makes it comfortable for them to come out and declare themselves as pagans and so it looks like we're losing ground no we're just able to define who the enemy is now better people who are now displaying themselves as pagans they never were Christians before we haven't lost them they never were in well maybe they were bleak all the time and we just didn't know maybe we're mistaken thinking a lot of people are Christians and there really weren't very many at all but even if the gospel appeared to lose ground in the United States that doesn't mean that on a global scale in any sense that the devil is winning the devil is losing big time all over the world big time and so the world the prince's world has been judged and the forward movement of the gospel the transformation of lives who were once in bondage to Satan and now are living gloriously redeemed and transformed lives as well as the magnificent power encounters demons being cast out, healing, signs and wonders all these ways the Holy Spirit is doing his work and demonstrating that there is a judgment of the world coming up and the foretaste of it is already just as we have already tasted of the powers of the world to come according to Hebrews chapter 6 verse 5 and the world has too and so the Holy Spirit by doing his thing in the world is demonstrating that the ruler of this world has in fact been judged and if the ruler of the world has been judged can the world be far behind the judgment of the world now he said in verse 12 I still have many things to say to you but you cannot bear them now this shows tremendous restraint on Jesus' part I know as a teacher and Jesus was a teacher and a teacher's motivation doesn't want to hold back doesn't want to I mean if you ask me something about Revelation well let me put it this way I know a guy who is a teacher some guy who was being discipled and he said what do you understand about Revelation and he said well I have gotten some real insights lately but I don't feel comfortable telling you about it right now I don't know if I can hold back I mean teachers love to talk they love to tell people what they know and Jesus had many things they can't handle this yet they are going to have to grow into this one you got to show some sensitivity in discipling people and say well you know they don't need to know everything they are curious about at the moment and they don't need to know right now everything they are going to need to know later and Jesus said there is a lot of things I still wish I could tell you right now but I just can't do it right now not because I don't have time but because you are not ready for it you are just going to have to do some growing first however when the spirit comes over the past three and a half years he says when I am gone the Holy Spirit will keep up the work he will teach you all things he will continue to teach you and as you have learned slowly in my presence you will continue to learn probably slowly in my absence and sure enough something like a major thing that we take for granted namely that Gentiles can be saved

without being Jews took years after Pentecost before the apostles ever came into that truth the Holy Spirit didn't teach them everything instantly but he taught them everything and so the Holy Spirit continues to teach in Jesus' absence in his physical absence of course he is present in another sense in the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit and Jesus are one but he says in verse 13 when the Holy Spirit comes he will guide you into all truth but he will not speak on his own authority this is an improvement over the King James Version the King James Version says he will not speak of himself now actually of himself is probably a different word probably a more literal translation of the Greek the problem with that translation in the King James has been that people have forever misunderstood what Jesus meant he won't speak of himself has been interpreted because of our English idiom to mean he won't speak about himself I don't know about you but I've heard from my childhood the idea that if you hear someone preaching a lot about the Holy Spirit you know the Holy Spirit is not behind their teaching because the Holy Spirit doesn't speak of himself he just wants to speak of Jesus this is a very sad misunderstanding of the idiom he says he will not speak of himself he means that just as Jesus did not speak of himself that is from himself but from his father so the Holy Spirit will not speak from himself but from the father or what Jesus had to say to us he's not going to come and be a lone ranger he's going to be working under and through the authority of the Godhead so just like Jesus it's the same I mean when it says at the end of verse 13 but whatever he hears he will speak that makes it clear when he says he will not speak of himself but he'll speak what he hears it's clear that he's saying that what he speaks will not originate from himself but like Jesus said I don't speak anything but what I hear from my father so the Holy Spirit will only speak what he hears he won't speak of himself now one reason I make this point is I don't want people to be in some cases averse to the idea of some of the discussions about the Holy Spirit and so forth that are being conducted these days