“The Spirit of Truth”

John 16:4-15  March 15, 2015

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Introduction:

There is a lot being said and there is a lot not being said on truth. Confused? Let me explain. In the secular mindset there are many who have rallied to challenge and deny the idea of absolute truth. The idea that one way or one specific train of thought is right for all men is a little too much for them to grasp. Instead they promote the idea that truth is only relevant to one’s understanding of the matter.

Whereas, on the other hand those who proclaim they are bearers of the truth, who have found their understanding of life, faith and purpose based on what truth declares about them, are eerily silent. This is one reason, one of the greatest reasons we have witnessed a shift in the atmosphere, especially here in our own country. The declaration of what has always been wrong has now become right, and what has always been right is now deemed wrong in the eyes of many. And, the truth bearers remain silent.

Silence is a killer of a nation. Silence allows things to go unchallenged. Silence gives people permission to carry on as is without regard to consequence. Consequences that not only the individual involved must experience, but also how it seeps into the very fabric of our culture staining it forevermore.

Think of your life today. What would it look like if those who stood for truth in our history remained silent? The Bible says, “He who speaks truth declared righteousness . . .” (Proverbs 12:17, NKJV).
Truth falls in line as an attribute of God. “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent . . .” (Numbers 23:19). He can’t do anything but support that which is just because that is who He is. “Righteousness and justice are the habitation of your throne: mercy and truth shall go before your face,” (Psalm 89:14). In essence, he who chooses to stand for truth chooses to stand for everything God believes in. You become a supporter of His causes.

There is an absolute Truth! He is God! Everything that is right begins and ends with Him. The idea of truth is not a manufactured human concept. It’s a God thing.

The Spirit of truth is a guiding force in the life of believers, but it is also a convicting force in the life of unbelievers. He is a revealer to all and God sends Him with the purpose to peel back the layers of this world and humanity to draw the inner man closer to Him via His truth.

**John 16:4-6**

4) “But these things have I told you, that when that time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

5) But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?

6) But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.”

In last week’s lesson we discussed the Comforter and His role. In this week’s lesson we are literally bouncing off of last week’s lesson in dealing with the role and the workings of the Holy Spirit.

In the previous lesson, we saw the Comforter also be referred to as the Spirit of truth (John 14:16-17). John 15:26 also shows us that they are one and the same: “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.” With that we are connecting these lessons together and learning more about the operation of the Spirit and His work in us and in the world.
Our lesson today begins with Jesus saying, “But these things have I told you.” To what things was Jesus referring? Between last week’s lesson and this week’s lesson Jesus had a very frank and open talk with His disciples that remained (Judas Iscariot already departed to betray Jesus). In that, He told them everything He endured His disciples can expect the similar treatment from the world. He said, “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you,” (John 15:18).

Jesus told them the love that the world has for its own but because they were chosen of Him they would suffer, John 15:19. He continued to tell them, “If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you,” (John 15:20).

With that Jesus was in the process of preparing them for their future and some of the things they would endure as His disciples. John 16:1 (not in today’s text) says, “These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended;” that you should not be made to fall and “abandon your faith,” (NLT).

Jesus tells them in today’s lesson “these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them.” Notice here He didn’t say “if the time shall come;” rather, He said “when the time shall come.” Those who only preach prosperity and blessings are leaving their hearers open to great disappointment. Jesus knew and taught the reality that times of hardship will come for any true believer of His. As a matter of fact, later in this same chapter He says, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world,” (vs. 33). Every Christian will face obstacles in their faith; they will face times that try to shake the foundation of all they believe.

For the disciples, He lets them know that He informed them ahead of time that they “may remember that I told you of them.” With His preparedness comes warnings and with those warnings comes remembrance. When the disciples face the same things that Jesus spoke of before it ever happened, it shores up their faith in Him. It opens their eyes to the reality of His Sovereignty and though the times may seem to be chaotic and working against them, in actuality everything is going in accordance with what He already stated. That increases the faith of His
followers. In John 13:19 He speaks similar words but at the end of the verse He adds, “Ye may believe that I am He.” His foretelling of these events authenticates Him even more in the eyes of His disciples.

“And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.” Jesus had no need to press extra burdens upon the hearts of His disciples with such heavy news “at the beginning, because I was with you.” In Matthew 9:15 Jesus said, “Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.” While Jesus is with them they rejoice but now He is nearing the end of His earthly journey and they will experience difficulty and the need to remember what He said.

“But now I go my way to him that sent me.” Now there comes a shift in the journey for Jesus. He was here but soon He has to go the “way” that was/is destined for Him. That “way” was not an easy road to travel but it’s the path that will lead Him back to “him that sent” Him. He would only reach that destination via the cross. The cross would take Him physically from His disciples so that He could dwell eternally with them because now He would be where the Father is. Earlier Jesus stated, “Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me,” (John 7:33).

“And none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?” Previously Peter asked Jesus, “Lord, whither goest thou?” (John 13:36) and Thomas said, “Lord, we know not wither thou goest; and how can we know the way?” (John 14:5). Does this contradict what Jesus is saying now? Absolutely not!

Jesus has broached the subject of His departure by stating that He was going “to him that sent me” and it is at this moment His disciples should have NOW been filled with awe and wonder that Jesus is going back to the Father. Absolute amazement should have NOW filled them with questions running out of their mouths at this new realized truth.

Rather, in their self-absorbing sorrow (vs. 6) they didn’t even ask Jesus about what He just said. They focused on “these things” concerning warnings and
persecution and have allowed the “sorrow” of it to cloud the concern they should have been showing for Jesus at that time.

They could have taken some time to ask Jesus about His journey back to the Father; about what it would entail or is there anything they could do to help. No. None of those questions came forth. When one is entrenched in “sorrow” of their own it has a way of taking over one’s whole life and perspective. It doesn’t allow that one to discern that maybe they should take the focus off of self for a while and look at the plight of another. Here, Jesus is speaking against their self-focused attitudes.

John 16:7-11

7) “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

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.”

“It is expedient for you that I go away.” Regardless of their sorrow or perception on the matter, Jesus knows that it is instrumental to their faith and the mission that He “go away.”

Jesus knows best. This is a concept that we will do well to get acquainted with in our humanness: Jesus knows what is beneficial for us. In the limitations of our humanity we are often prone to fall to the idea that we know the better way but this is often a path that leads to more disappointment. Do we struggle with trust issues, that though the situation may seem sorrowful right now, He’s working it out for our greater good (Romans 8:28); that He knows the best plan to follow though we struggle with the process?
God has an end result in mind. The way to reach that place to is follow the course He has laid out. We may not always understand His way for He said, “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD,” (Isaiah 55:8), but we can rest in His understanding and plan, and trust Him along the way.

So Jesus tells them, “For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.” His mission was to “go” that the same “Comforter” that was promised in last week’s lesson would “come.” By Jesus leaving in the physical He makes room of opportunity for the Spirit to come live in the inner man. The “Comforter” that He sends will be with them a permanent force. He will abide with them forever (John 14:16), which is crucial to one’s faith during the difficult days. To know there is a present help with them is the encouragement they and we need to press forth in the mission.

Jesus’ promise was, “I will send him unto you.”

“And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” When the Holy Spirit comes, He comes with more of a mission than most think. Most see Him as a moving emotion on the inside. They’ll say phrases like “I feel Him moving on the inside of me” which is all fine, but there is so much more to Him than that.

In last week’s lesson, we saw Him as an advocate, a helper, a guide and so much more for the believer. Here, in today’s lesson, we see part of His job as one who convicts the unbeliever (those who are not saved by His grace and the blood of Jesus Christ).

He stands in the position to “reprove,” which is synonymous with the word “convict;” to find guilty. He would do this in three very specific areas: “sin, righteousness, and judgment.”

“Of sin, because they believe not on me.” A lack of belief that Jesus is the Son of God; that Jesus is the promised Messiah; that Jesus is Lamb that takes away the sin of the world; that Jesus is our Redeemer; that Jesus is everything that He said He is, is a sin. Those that “believe not on me” are living in “sin.”
“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me,” (John 14:6). To go that way requires a walk of faith in Him. At one point Paul teaches, “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin,” (Romans 14:23).

Jesus taught in another area of the Bible, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned,” (Mark 16:16). Only those who believe in Christ will be saved! All others stand subject to conviction of the Holy Ghost; the Spirit of truth.

One MUST accept HIM as SAVIOR to be SAVED! THERE IS NO OTHER WAY!

Jesus once said, “If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not,” (John 10:37). In essence, He was saying if you don’t see the evidence of who I say that I am matching up in My life, then don’t believe Me. “But,” He said, “if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him,” (John 10:38).

Jesus, during the course of His time on this earth, and hereafter, gave much evidence that attests to who He is. To remain in unbelief is to out and out reject Him despite the proof before you. The Spirit will convict those who “believe not on me.”

“Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more.” I hate to bust the bubble of some, but here it goes: WE HAVE NO RIGHTEOUSNESS OF OUR OWN TO BOAST ABOUT! The Bible explicitly tells us, “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away,” (Isaiah 64:6).

In other words, we have no goodness of our own. Paul taught, “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwells no good thing. . . .” (Romans 7:18). In order to be saved we are dependent upon the righteousness of Christ. Philippians 3:9 tells us, “And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”
The world; the unbeliever is living in denial of Christ’s perfect sacrifice for humanity. They live with the misconception that they are right in and of themselves. They live in error to the reality of the way things are. Man can never be good enough on his/her own. That may be a hard pill for some to swallow, but it’s the truth.

When one rejects His righteousness; His rightness before the Father, they reject the plan of salvation that is offered through Him (see Titus 3:5-6). The Father accepts Jesus which is why Jesus could boldly say, “I go to my Father.”

Mark 16:19 tells us, “So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.” David said, “The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool,” (Psalm 110:1 and Matthew 22:44). Jesus, and His righteousness, is accepted by the Father. To reject Him is to reject the way into the kingdom where He now is seated on the throne. The Spirit will convict of His “righteousness” and the lack of their own, thereof.

“Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.” On the cross, Jesus once and for all obtained victory over sin and the devil. “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” (1 Corinthians 15:55). All power that they supposedly had has been vanquished by Jesus and the enemy of our soul, Satan, has been “judged.” John 12:31 tells us, “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.”

It’s a done deal! And, those who side with the enemy by rejecting Christ will suffer the same judgment. “But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven,” (Matthew 10:33). The Spirit will reprove and convict because judgment has come!

There are times when life may make you feel cornered; as if you are facing enemies on all sides. But, I’m here to tell you not to give up! Don’t throw in the towel. Many say the battle is not over yet but I tend to disagree. We may be going through hard times and circumstances but the truth of the matter is THE BATTLE IS OVER! THE ENEMY IS ALREADY JUDGED! WE THAT ARE IN CHRIST WILL
REIGN WITH HIM! Them that choose to follow the path of the enemy will fall into the same condemnation.

“Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed,” (Psalm 37:1-3). And, that’s a PROMISE!

**John 16:12-15**

12) “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

13) Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

14) He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

15) All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you.”

There was so much going on and about to occur in the disciples life right now, after Jesus discussed to them the possible pending persecution He knew that “now” was not the time to discuss things further with them. Furthermore, there were some things that they weren’t going to fully understand at this time so Jesus, being the great discerner that He is, withholds the load that may be too heavy for them now.

He said, “**Ye cannot bear them now.**” Corrie Ten Boom, in her book The Hiding Place (which I consider a must read for every Christian) is quoted as saying, “Some knowledge is too heavy...you cannot bear it...your Father will carry it until you are able,” (Quote source: Goodreads.com).

I love God. He not only sits on His throne as Sovereign of the universe but, He sits as, “Our Father.” There is a unique love that fathers have for their children. There is a protective instinct that these men have that causes them to be on guard for
the care and welfare of their families. To make sure all is well; to make haste to run to the aid of the little ones when they cry out. Our heavenly Father is no different. He does care about the things we have to deal with. He cares if it seems to be too much for us.

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.” There are many lies of the world and many lies of the enemy, and we as well as the disciples, need a guiding force to help us reach our heavenly destination. There are lies of persuasion; lies of fear; distortions of truths trying to convince you of something contrary to God’s word.

“The Spirit of truth,” which abides on the inside of us forever, will “guide you into all truth.” All truth of what? All truth of Jesus!

He does not “speak of himself,” but everything He teaches will have the sole purpose to “glorify” Him. Everything He says will point to Jesus. In John 15:26 He says, “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall tesify of me,” (emphasis mine).

Anything contrary to that is not of truth and must be avoided. We need His discernment in walking this Christian walk. We need the wisdom that the Holy Ghost teaches in order to do His work (see 1 Corinthians 2:13). Corrie Ten Boom is also quoted as saying, “Trying to do the Lord’s work in your own strength is the most confusing, exhausting, and tedious of all work. But when you are filled with the Holy Spirit, then the ministry of Jesus just flows out of you” (Goodreads.com).

In order to have the ministry flow and be powerful we need His power and guidance on the inside.

“All things that the Father hath are mine.” There is complete unity and equality between Jesus and His Father. Philippians 2:6 tells us of Jesus, “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” He is of the same divine nature. In fact, Colossians 2:9 boldly proclaims, “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,” (see also Colossians 1:19).
With that being said, the Spirit of truth would be a revealer to the trueness of the power and deity of Christ.

**Conclusion:**

The Holy Spirit comes to convict, convince and reveal the truth.