



**John 16:5-11**  
**A Spirit-Filled Summer**  
**Convicted by the Spirit**

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This morning we continue a series we started last week, called “A Spirit-filled Summer.” It’s a series on the Holy Spirit – how the Spirit works in our lives, how we live by the Spirit, and so forth. So today’s passage comes in John 16 which for me, is kind of an overlooked stretch of Scripture. It’s the third of four straight chapters in John that all are centered on two things. First, Jesus is saying goodbye to his disciples because his date with the cross is on the horizon. We see Jesus preparing them for his leaving throughout this four-chapter stretch. Second, in their grief at what Jesus is saying about him leaving them, He gives them words of assurance that the Spirit will be with them in Jesus’ place.

And there are some very famous stretches of Scripture in these chapters. The first few verses of John 14 are where Jesus teaches that there are many rooms in his Father’s house and about the peace that Jesus gives and that it’s different than what the world gives; In John 15 Jesus uses the famous illustration of a vine and its branches to talk about the connection we are created to have with Jesus – He’s the vine, we are the branches. John 17 is Jesus’ prayer for the disciples, the world, and those who come later. Those are some well-known and well-loved stretches of Scripture. And sandwiched in with all of that is John 16 and it’s easy to overlook. But not today, as we dive into the first part of chapter 16.

So I shared with you last week as we kicked off this series, that I have wanted to do a series on the Holy Spirit for several years, but have continually put it off. One of the things that sparked me to do it was a talk I heard at a family camp that I was at with my family in the summer of 2018.

One of the main speakers at the camp was a pastor named Andrew McCourt. He is from Northern Ireland, but is head pastor of a mutli-site church in California called Bayside church – which sounds like a church that belongs in San Francisco or anywhere else along the California coast, but they originated in a suburb of Sacramento. So go figure. Anyway, Pastor McCourt made a point about the Holy Spirit in one of his talks at this family camp we

went to, and in doing so, he talked about “The Strategy of the Spirit”. He then listed 10 or 12 ways that the Spirit operates in and through our lives, with Scriptural support for each one.

Well, I may have been at a family camp with my family, but my “sermon series” alarm bells started going off in my head, like dog having a piece of steak laid out in front of it. So I immediately wrote down each of these things that he called “strategies” of the Spirit and the Scripture passage that went with each one. Boom! Instant Holy Spirit sermon series outline.

Now, in planning this series out last summer, I ended up not just using that list as-is – some of Pastor McCourt’s topics I’m using, others I’m not, and I’ve added in some other facets about the Spirit that I felt were important to cover and weren’t in his list. I also felt that his title, “Strategies of The Spirit” was a little confining, especially when you think of Jesus’ teaching we looked at last week that the Spirit’s movement is comparable to the movement of the wind. It seems less about strategy and more about inspiration.

But that talk that Pastor McCourt gave definitely was a kick in the seat of the pants for me about this series, and has given it some of its structure. Perhaps most importantly, however, it planted a seed of conviction that this is an important part of our faith that I need to cover in a series at some point. It was a wake-up call for me, and my eyes and ears were open as if God was speaking to me through the Spirit and saying, “See, here’s a blueprint for a series on the Holy Spirit. Stop setting the idea aside, take what I’m giving you and make it your own for your congregation.”

And it’s that idea of conviction that I want to invite you to look at with me this morning. **Jesus says in today’s passage that the Spirit will “prove the world to be in the wrong about sin, righteousness, and judgment” (John 16:8)** This phrase, “prove the world to be in the wrong” is just two words in the Greek. English is not very economical in its word usage sometimes. Greek is frequently much more efficient. So two words make up this phrase, “prove the world to be in the wrong.” **One of the words is “Kosmon” – the root word is “kosmos” – and guess what word we get from it?**

**One of the words is “Kosmon” – the root word is “kosmos” – and guess what word we get from it?: “cosmos.”** Stunning insight, I know. But the Greek “kosmos” can mean “world” as it’s translated here – though you could probably think of “world” with a little more cosmological sense to it.

The other word in this phrase “prove the world to be wrong” is elegkei, from the root word elegko. **“Elegko” means, “to convict...or a conviction by bringing to light, or to expose...to find fault with or correct...to reprehend or to call to account.”** You get the idea. So “prove to be in the wrong” conveys the meaning even if the actual words used are a little different. The idea here is that people’s eyes will be opened to these things...The classic translation here is that the world will be convicted. We think of being “convicted” in a negative sense – someone being convicted of a crime – but the point Jesus is making is that: **The Spirit will convict us for a holy purpose: to be moved into a deeper relationship with Jesus.** Much as I had a sense of conviction at that family camp about needing to do a series on the Holy Spirit, we will be convicted about our world and our lives – our own eyes will be opened and we will see the truth of the matter.

So that begs the question: What is the truth that we will have illuminated? What is it that the Spirit will convict us of...will open our eyes to and make us aware of and thereby change and transform us? There are three things he mentions in verse 8 and then He expands upon each of them in the following verses. He says we will be convicted in regards to sin, righteousness, and judgment.

So first, **Jesus says that the world will be proved to be wrong (convicted) in regards to sin, because the world does not believe in him (v. 9).** What does he mean by this? He means that without recognizing the sin in our lives, we don’t see a need for Jesus. Who needs a savior if they believe there’s nothing to be saved from? Who needs a redeemer if they think there’s nothing from which to be redeemed? Who needs a ransom to be paid if we don’t see that we’re held hostage by something? When we don’t recognize our sin, we see no need to believe in Jesus and put our trust in Him.

One thing that's interesting here is Jesus' use of this word "Kosmon". He doesn't say the spirit will convict individuals, or people...He says that the Spirit will convict "the world." The Kosmon: it's a singular noun, so it's pretty clear that he means it as straight-forward as can possibly be understood: the world. It communicates a sense of our collective sin together - we're all connected by the fact of our humanity, that we're all created in God's image...and one person's sin in another part of the world or in another time before us has an impact on us. And Jesus is saying that our eyes will be opened by the Spirit in regards to our sin, and therefore to see our need for a savior.

Secondly, **Jesus says that the world will be proved to be wrong (convicted) about righteousness, because Jesus is going to the Father (v. 10).** What Jesus means here is that the world will be convicted about Jesus' righteousness – not ours. This stands in stark contrast to the first point. The Spirit helps us to see our sin, and at the same time opens our eyes up to the righteousness of Jesus. The majority of the people of Jesus' day – especially the movers and shakers of the world – did not see Jesus as a righteous man of God. If they had, he wouldn't have been crucified. He wouldn't have had a bogus trial. He wouldn't have been found guilty. He wouldn't have been considered a religious heretic by the Jews and a subversive threat to the government by the Romans. So Jesus was seen by many – particularly those in positions of power – ...they saw Jesus as anything but righteous, and they expected Jesus' following to go away as soon as he was put to death.

**But what happened instead was that the seed was planted for a world-wide movement of God that was fueled by the power of the Holy Spirit.** The world's perception of Jesus changed. The apostle Paul is a great example. In his own words, Paul tells of persecuting the church when it was in its infancy...and then when the Holy Spirit gets a hold of him, he realizes who Jesus really is, and has a complete turn around. Even in the moment of Jesus' death we see people's eyes beginning to be opened to his righteousness. For instance, Mark writes **"And when the centurion [officer in the Roman army], who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, 'Surely this man was the Son of God!'" (Mark 15:39).** Obviously, many people realized this about him earlier. Jesus had a tremendous

following and they perceived his righteousness early on.

But the point Jesus makes here is that the Spirit is the one who does this. The Spirit is the one who opens our eyes up to who Jesus really is.

Lastly, **Jesus says that the world will be proved to be wrong (convicted) about judgment, because the prince of this world (Satan) now stands condemned (v. 11).** In other words, there is a judgment coming, even though most of the world doesn't believe that. People tend to think we can live however we want, and that there is no judgment and no consequences now or on the other side of the grave: We can live without conviction of our sin, without conviction of Jesus' righteousness, and it's no big deal. And Jesus is saying here that that simply is not true. It is a big deal, there is a judgment about our living...and that the one who one who leads us to believe we aren't judged is in fact in judgment himself, and is even condemned. One commentary I read this week put it like this, "While the evil one continues to thrash around and the struggle goes on, his power has been destroyed."<sup>1</sup> So the "prince of this world" leads people to believe there's no judgment, even as he has been judged and condemned.

**So that's what Jesus teaches us about the Spirit here; that one thing the Spirit does is to convict us of these things – the Spirit opens our eyes to them.** But there's one other thing we learn that actually comes just before these three things that is crucial for us to understand. Because we could read these and maybe have an overly large sense of guilt or fear or feeling like we're on our own to respond to this sense of conviction. But we're not on our own, and the Spirit's job isn't to shake a finger at us and shame us about them. **We know that because of the name Jesus uses for the Holy Spirit in verse 7: the "Advocate."**

Jesus is speaking of the Holy Spirit here. The word he uses is "paracletos" and he uses it throughout these four chapters of John as he prepares them for His leaving. Usually to phoneticize it in English we simplify it slightly to just paraclete. And so what this word "paraclete" tells us is that Jesus wants us to play sports like football, baseball, and soccer, because he's sending us a "pair-a-cleats." Sorry...dad humor there that was more appropriate last

Sunday. Actually this name, **“Paraclete”** tells us that the Spirit isn’t coming to make us feel bad or alone or fearful; rather, it’s just the opposite, because paraclete means **“helper”** or **“friend.”** In fact, one of its primary meanings is someone who pleads the case of another person in a courtroom setting – in front of a judge. It’s the counsel – the lawyer – for the defense, or a legal assistant.

So the paraclete – the Holy Spirit – comes on our behalf...to come alongside and stand with us in the midst of our broken world and open our eyes up in regards to sin, righteousness, and judgment...but then to stay with us as our comforter, our helper, our spiritual lawyer who is on our side. It’s not a judgmental, “wag the finger,” “shame on you” ministry that the Spirit carries out. The Paraclete...the “Helper”...the “Advocate” is here to help us. Jesus is sending the Spirit into the world for this purpose. That begins by having our eyes opened about things. If the world just blindly goes along as it always has without acknowledging sin, then we’ll just continue in those same patterns in regards to sin, righteousness and judgment. The world needs the Spirit to move and help us see our blind spots, to wake up to the truth of who we are.

**So praise God that the Spirit convicts us in this way and then stands with us to help us and comfort us and usher us into a new way of living in light of the truth.** This is what the world needs so desperately right now. We need a fresh movement of the Spirit accompanied by a fresh openness by the world to see what is going on and be convicted of our own role in the world – in regards to race relations, poverty, homelessness, and other things....Just talking about these kinds of things in a civil way has become a challenge and we need the Spirit to move in the world. This is what we need in our own individual lives so we would be drawn deeper into God’s truth, and into a deeper faith walk with Jesus so that He would be glorified. Let’s pray...Amen.

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<sup>i</sup> Roger Fredrickson, The Preacher’s Commentary, p. 235.