

In the night before His crucifixion, in John 16:7-11, Jesus gave His disciples some instructions, telling them the following:



John 16:7-11 (NKJV)

⁷ Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It's to your advantage that I go away; for if I don't go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.

⁸ And when He has come, He will convict the world *of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment*:

⁹ *of sin*, because they don't 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.

In verse 8, we can see the three-fold ministry of the Holy Spirit: to convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. It's amazing how religion in general has twisted this verse to make it sound condemning, when it's in fact the exact opposite. The Lord Jesus seems to have known that this passage will be misinterpreted, or that it could be misinterpreted, so He went on in the following verses explaining in detail exactly what He meant. In verse 9, it says "of sin" (singular) and not "sins" (plural). The Holy Spirit convicts the world and not believers, of only one sin: the sin of not believing in Jesus. He doesn't convict the world of all their individual immoral sins, because the conscience already does that. The Holy Spirit doesn't convict people that are not born again about whether they are drinking, lying, or stealing; that is the conscience's job. The primary reason for which people will be going to hell is the sin of rejecting Jesus, not their individual sins. This is the direct cause, because the sins of the entire world have been paid for:

1 John 2:2 (NKJV)

² And He Himself is *the propitiation (the atoning sacrifice)* for our sins, and not for ours only but also *for the whole world*.

Jesus didn't die only for the believers that would accept Him, but He also died for the people that maybe will never accept Him. He has already paid for their sins as well. *The sins of the whole world have been paid for*. The Lord Jesus has paid for the sins of the whole world, even those that haven't been committed yet. Consequently, people are not going to hell for their sins. Their sins have been paid for. People

go to hell for rejecting the payment that was made for their sins, which is the sacrifice of Lord Jesus. Christ has paid for the sins of every single person. It doesn't matter whether you are a good person, a moral person, or a bad person. Romans 3:23 says that "all have sinned and have come short of the glory of God." Every person has missed heaven. Some of us have lived maybe a little better than others, maybe we haven't done the evil things other people have done, but compared to God's standard of holiness, all have sinned and come short of His holiness. If you are trusting in your own goodness, your own holiness, and in your good deeds, without receiving Christ into your heart, you will go to hell. Jesus paid for your sins and you cannot come before God based on your goodness and tell Him, "God, I deserve heaven because I lived holy. I didn't curse, steal, or kill anyone. I am a good and moral person." You would be sent directly to hell. But Jesus paid for the sins of everybody. Everybody! All your sins have been paid for. It doesn't matter what you have done. It doesn't matter if you are the sorriest person in the world. Jesus has paid for your sins the same way He paid for every person's sins, so sin is not the problem anymore. Jesus ended the sin problem once and for all. It's all about Jesus. All that matters is that you put your faith in Jesus. That is what the Holy Spirit convicts the world of: Jesus' payment of all sins.

After you are born again, the Holy Spirit continues to convince you and tell you the same thing, but on the righteousness side of the payment. He tries to convince you that all your past, present, and future sins have been forgiven and removed for you by Jesus' payment of blood. The Holy Spirit is not the One going around after you everywhere telling you: "You should not do this," or "You should not have done that." Some of you have this thinking sometimes, "Oh, the Holy Spirit has been on my case and He's been telling me all the time I should not do this or that." No, this is religion that talks to you that you, not the Holy Spirit. It's your own conscience condemning you and your intuitive knowledge of good and evil, your knowledge of right and wrong. Religion only amplifies these and makes it worse. *The Holy Spirit is not the One condemning you.* Have you not heard people in church confessing things like, "My brother, I did this thing wrong and the Holy Spirit just made me feel miserable; He would not give me any rest?" They stand up, confess, and then they repent, and tell everybody what they have done. And they think the Holy Spirit brings this feeling of condemnation. They call it conviction, but it's actually condemnation. That does not mean that the Holy Spirit is against the conscience and He's opposing it. Conscience is good and moral, exactly like what Paul said about the Law of Moses. That is why God gave it to us in the first place, to keep us in check. Both the conscience and the Law of Moses reflect God's nature and His perfect moral standard. They are both in tune and in unity with the Holy Spirit. However, the Holy Spirit has to convince believers of a higher reality that supersedes the condemnation coming from the conscience and the Law, and that is, the righteousness of Jesus that was paid for in blood. Isn't it so that you don't hear very often in churches today people standing up and saying: "Dear brothers and sisters, I did this or that and I know it was not good before God. But the Holy Spirit came to me and convinced me that I am still the righteousness of God and Christ, I am still God's beloved, and I am free of condemnation?" And yet, this is exactly what the Holy Spirit is trying to convince believers of, especially after they sinned, because it is so counterintuitive to the human mind's logic.

Concerning believers, the Holy Spirit continues to convince them basically of the same sin of unbelief and not of individual sins. However, this time, it is not unbelief in Jesus' payment for their sins, but unbelief in the continuous eternal result of Jesus' payment for sins, that is unbelief in righteousness. The Holy Spirit is there to convince believers of righteousness. Why? Because Jesus is no longer with them to assure them of this reality. He went to the Father. So, when you sin as a believer, the Holy Spirit is there to ask you: "Do you really believe in Jesus?" You answer: "Yes, I believe." And He says: "Then you are still righteous and in right standing with God, even if you sinned. You are not condemned. God is not angry with you and you are still in fellowship with Him. And I, the Holy Spirit, am still here with you to help you and to strengthen you. I am on your side no matter what and I love you."

The root of all sins is the sin of unbelief in Jesus. If you peel all the layers, everything goes back to unbelief. Why do you worry? Because you don't trust in Jesus. Worry is an insult to the promises of God. The doctor tells you that you are sick and you are going to die, while the Bible says that by His stripes you were healed (1 Peter 2:24). Why do you stay sick sometimes? Because you trust the doctors' facts and diagnosis, more than you trust the Word of God on healing and on who you are in Christ. And that is what the Holy Spirit is trying to convince believers of. He is trying to convince them of the Word of righteousness.

The Holy Spirit is the Comforter, the Helper and the Builder, not the Accuser. The devil and your conscience are the accusers. The Bible says:

1 John 3:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ For if our heart condemns us, *God is greater than our heart*, and knows all things.

When your own heart condemns you, God is there through the Holy Spirit to tell you that He is greater than that condemnation and He knows all things. He is aware of your failures and sins, but He is greater than those failures.

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