

## **The Gospel of John - #55 - 02/20/2022 - "Witnessing to a Lost World!" John 16: 1-15**

**Introduction:** Let's set the stage for the wonderful teaching in this passage about witnessing for Christ! Chapter and verse divisions are not inspired like the actual text of what Jesus is sharing with His disciples. The broad context is Christ's teaching with His disciples starting in chapter 13. And Jesus, in chapter fifteen at verses 26 and 27 speaks of both the witness of the Holy Spirit and of His disciples' witness- **our** witness. After Jesus returned to the Father in Heaven and the Holy Spirit was sent on the Day of Pentecost, according to Acts 2, from that point on the disciples were effectively used by the Spirit to witness of the resurrected Savior and to lead many, in the thousands each day, to faith in the Lord Jesus. (Acts 2: 47- "The Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved." )That shows us how it can be that...

\*Every true believer can effectively witness for Christ if three statements are true of us:

### **1. We walk in close fellowship with Jesus and not in fear! Verses 1-4**

**We are kept from stumbling by the Holy Spirit's power!** Jude, verse 24 gives a word of praise to our God- "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy..." God is able to keep us on track as we walk with Him so that our witness is effective. We saw in John 9 that the man who was "formerly blind from birth" was put out of the synagogue because he wouldn't quit testifying of Jesus! "The hour is coming" is a prophecy from the Savior about what was going to happen in the near future as all of the original disciples except possibly John were martyred for their faith and their confident witness about Christ.

**Persecution of Christians is on the rise.** More martyred Christians in the past 122 years than in the first 1900 years combined! Yet our witness is not hindered like that! We can demonstrate to the world around us a clear message of love for their souls. **IL-** John MacArthur- "When the world says it hates us we can say "I love you in Christ!" While they may make it known that they are enemies of Christianity we can tell them that Jesus can be their Friend. When they cause trouble and strife we can rest in peace. Where they only know sorrow, we can demonstrate joy. While they may want to kill us we offer them eternal life through Christ!" That blind man who was given his sight by Jesus knew he would face excommunication from the synagogue but he was willing to clearly say, in chapter 9 verse 25- "This one thing I know- that though I was blind, now I see!" We can say something similar to unsaved people around us if we are in close fellowship with Jesus. And there need not be any 'fear factor'! 2 Timothy 1: 7- "God has not given us the spirit of fear but of power, and love and a sound, healthy mind." So I can say to my friend "Don't run FROM Jesus- run TO Him" because there is nothing about Him to fear if your heart is ready to respond by faith! The second statement comes into play now...

### **2. We allow the Holy Spirit to convince the lost of their true spiritual condition. Verses 5-11**

"None of you asks Me, 'Where are you going?'" In chapter 13 and verse 36 Peter asked Jesus where He was going. And Thomas, in chapter 14 and verse 5 said- "Lord, we do not know where you are going." What Jesus meant here is that their motivation for asking was to protest His leaving them at such a critical time. It was as if they were saying- "Lord, what will happen to US?"

"To put it another way, their focus was on their own sorrow, not what the Father had planned for Jesus after His resurrection! One thing this incident tells me is that Jesus knows the thoughts of every man! We can often mislead others about our motives and keep our sinful thoughts and actions hidden from others, but if we're going to be an effective witness for Christ our hearts and minds must be pure and open before the Lord who knows us well! If you feel broken by sin in your life, if you are struggling with sin of any kind, confess that to Jesus and claim His forgiveness and then determine to be totally open with God and thus with those around you. The greatest danger for those first century disciples was not death but apostasy- a falling away from truth as revealed in God's Word!

**The early Church proved that the 'advantage' was real!** "It is to your advantage that I go away!" Because the Holy Spirit indwells every true Christian in this church age, we have it better than those early disciples because the Spirit is in us and is there to stay permanently! "When He comes He will convict the world..." To convict means to convince or expose facts about. The best rendition is to "convince and bring conviction". Since the Holy Spirit is referred to three times in chapters 14 to 16 as the "Spirit of truth" [14:17, 15: 26] He knows the truth about each person spiritually and knows what to do to lovingly confront that person, either to discipline them as wayward believers or to draw an unsaved person to faith in the finished work of Christ on Calvary's cross. **IL-** Merrill C. Tenney- "A court may convict a man of murder but only the Spirit can convict him of unbelief!"

**The issue is the sin of unbelief.** "of SIN because they do not believe in Me." There are possible excuses for crimes, but there is NO excuse for rejecting Jesus Christ as Savior! The Holy Spirit, since He came at Pentecost, has been turning the attention on Jesus- His perfections in character and His redeeming work on behalf of all sinners! The Spirit's message, through the pages of Scripture and through the passionate witness of true believers, is consistent and unchanging! It is the **sin** question but as it is tied to the **Son** question! "Of RIGHTEOUSNESS because I go to the Father". Apart from the righteousness of Christ, no mere man has any righteousness of his own. Unsaved, unrighteous men and women cannot enter Heaven. Once Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to Heaven and sent the Spirit among men, having the righteousness of Christ granted to us by grace makes us, in God's eyes, as perfect as His Son Jesus! Some, maybe many unbelievers, would react by saying "I'm okay! I'm not a sinner like you're talking about- I do a lot of good things for people around me." But the Bible is clear- "There is none righteous- not even one". No one can parade their way into Heaven at death and claim, "God, you know all the good that I have done!" Paul told us, in Romans 4: 5- "To the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness!" And in 2 Corinthians 5: 21 we read this: "For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." "of JUDGMENT because the ruler of this world is judged." I will tell it plainly- "The sentence of Satan has been set!" At Calvary Satan was once for all judged by his Creator. He may prance around and feel like he is winning battle after battle for the souls of sinners, but the reality is that God's Word is emphatic when it teaches, in both Old and New Testaments, that the Devil is only a temporary ruler here on this sin-sick planet. Genesis 3: 15- "And the Lord said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring. He shall

bruise your head and you shall bruise His heel." Satan has been "walking about seeking whom he may devour" but he is sporting a huge bruise on his head as a small sign of what awaits him in the future. Revelation 20: 2, 3- "And He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer." That's a small part of the book of Revelation, two verses, but like the entire book and like the other 65 books of the Bible, it is all true! And thus we have a truthful testimony to all that Jesus is saying the Holy Spirit will accomplish...

### **3. We love THE truth and spend quality time in God's Word daily! Verses 12-15**

**ALL the truth!** The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth and that includes all the truth God wants any of us and all of us to know and share! I believe God wants His children to go deeper as they grow older. That means, of course, that I need to spend time EVERY day in the pages of my Bible, learning, applying, and sharing what I've been taught by the indwelling Holy Spirit. Despite what many unbelievers say, there is such a thing as knowable, unchanging truth! It includes the subject of future events! Jesus calls it, "things to come". There were many things that took place in that first two thousand years of church history, but God's not done yet! People will respond to God's Word shared in love. Either they will fall humbly at Jesus' feet and get saved and no longer live in unbelief or they will have one or more of many excuses for rejecting our message. Let me give you an example of each of those kinds of responses: Acts 2: 37- "Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles- 'Brothers, what shall we do?' Acts 24: 26- "At the same time he [Felix, the governor] hoped that money would be given him by Paul. So he sent for him often and conversed with him."

Remember- no matter what response comes as we share our faith, the key is to focus on Jesus and use the Word of God as much as we can. It is THE truth- all the truth we need to know to have an eternal relationship with the Triune Godhead.

**All the focus is on Jesus.** But Jesus is abundantly clear that the Holy Spirit zeroes in on the Son and turns man's attention and responses to Jesus. The Spirit will speak what He hears and that is the content of the New Testament especially. The Spirit will glorify the Son- not drawing attention to Himself as God but to the Son as God and Savior. Listen to this wonderful definition of witnessing Biblically: **IL-** Dr. Bill Bright [Founder of Campus Crusade for Christ]- "Witnessing is simply sharing Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God!"

**Conclusion: IL-** In 1998 the Barna Research Group surveyed thousands of Americans and calculated that there were 100 million people who claimed to be true believers. They averaged 10 plus years of faith while living in a country where 49% of people are definitely NOT Christians. The final summary of their look into this subject was: "The average Christian in America will die without ever having shared his faith in Christ with another person!" May that NOT be true of any of God's people here this morning!!