

“Your Advantage”
John 16:4-11

We’re all looking for an advantage. Athletes look for the advantage in competition. Students look for the advantage in their studies. Professionals look for the advantage in the work place. We all want to operate from a superior position of strength, in order to do our best and get the best results in life.

Jesus has a message for us. He says, “My Helper, the Holy Spirit, is your greatest Advantage!”

Let’s look at... **John 16:4-11 (text displayed)** together.

Jesus once again tells them of his coming departure in verses 4-5. He acknowledges the sorrow that has filled their hearts in verse 6, but then he brings them a word of hope in verse 7. This word of hope was a shocking word, an unbelievable word, a staggering word:

“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.”

Can you hear the disciples thoughts? “Advantage? Advantage! Jesus, we know you’re the Son of God. We know you’re perfect and all that kind of stuff, but we believe you just misspoke. You couldn’t have said ADVANTAGE. You missed that prefix. If you’re heading out, it doesn’t matter who you send us, that is going to be a major DIS-ADVANTAGE!!”

But JESUS SAYS it is more advantageous to have the Helper, the Holy Spirit IN YOU than ME BESIDE YOU!

FCF: In wrestling with this text, J.D. Greear asks this piercing question: “Is your connection to the Holy Spirit so strong and real that you regard his presence in you to be a better advantage than even Jesus himself beside you?”

To ask it another way: Does your life reveal the unbelievable advantage of God’s Spirit?

The Spirit is our Helper, Teacher, and Friend. The Spirit enables us to live like Jesus & empowers us to serve like Jesus!

But the advantage Jesus highlights here deals with the Spirit’s work of helping them lead others to follow Jesus.

Jesus ties the advantage of the Spirit coming to his own departure. While Jesus’ physical body was restricted to a particular location, the Spirit would continue and expand his ministry by revealing him all over the world!

But what specifically will he do? Jesus goes on to say in verse 8: “And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.”

The key work of the Spirit is found in verse 8. His job is to “convict” the world.

- Convict means to “convince (someone) of guilt or error.” (BDAG)
- It involves exposing the error of one’s thinking or living.
- The Spirit does this by bringing people to a realization of where they stand in relation to sin, righteousness and judgment.

Before we press into these three areas, it is really important to see Jesus' thought here continues what he just said at the end of chapter 15. Verses 26-27 say: "But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning."

The Spirit testifies in our testimony. As we point people to Jesus, he points people to Jesus through us.

Verses 8-11 give us the practical understanding of how he testifies through our testimony! He bears witness to the truth of Jesus, as we tell people the truth of Jesus, by convincing people the story is true! Just like Jesus says in places like Mark 13:11, and Matthew 10:19 & Luke 21:15 (See also Mark 13:11 & Luke 12:12): don't worry about what to say, the Spirit will give you the words, empower your words and make them effective in peoples' hearts!

Here's what I came to tell you today.

The Point: Be confident to share Jesus. You have the advantage of God's Spirit!

As we work through vv. 9-11, we are going to see the Spirit's role helping people see their sin, Christ's righteousness and Satan's judgment. #1...

1. The Holy Spirit convicts people of their sin. (16:4-9)

In verse 8, when Jesus the Spirit "will convict *the world*..." most scholars would tell us the word "world," when used in opposition to Jesus, refers to "unbelieving Jews." (Kruse)

Does the Spirit's convicting work have continuing relevance for believers in regards to sin, righteousness and judgment? Of course, but the real audience of vv. 8-11 are those yet to believe and truly follow Jesus.

Verse 9 says he starts by bringing conviction "concerning sin."

- When the Spirit convicts us, when he taps us on the shoulder and says, "Excuse me, but there are some things you need to change. There are some ways you are "missing the mark" of God's intention (that's SIN). There are some lines you have crossed that God has put in place for your protection and flourishing (that's what the Bible calls TRANSGRESSION).
- Now, this is not always enjoyable. Few people wake up and say: "I hope someone points out my failures today!"
- But think about it...
 - We appreciate the optometrist telling us we need corrective lenses. We appreciate personal trainers telling us how to workout properly, BUT... when it comes to spiritual matters, we don't want to hear: "That's right. That's wrong. God, likes that. That makes God's heart hurt."
 - Like a loving parent who corrects their children, or a doctor who prescribes a remedy for their patient, God helps us see our sin, because he loves and wants to heal us!

What about you? Consider your life.

- Pride vs. Humility
- Greed vs. Generosity
- Lust vs. Selfless Love
- Jealousy vs. Contentment. Just want to thank the Lord from that open rebuke a 5 year old gave me Thursday. (Dead serious with true concern) "Pastor Tanner, the Bible says we shouldn't be jealous."
- One more: Idolatry vs. Worship.

Anyone guilty? Of pride? Greed? Selfishness? Jealousy? Idolatry? Everyone should be saying: “Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. & Yes.”

The Spirit convinces us of specific actions and attitudes that are wrong, but don’t miss this. At a fundamental level, all sin flows from unbelief.

Look at verse 9 again: “*concerning sin, because they do not believe in me;*” The Spirit helps us overcome our greatest sin, the sin of not trusting Jesus as the Son of God & Savior of the World.

Rather than receiving him as the “Bread of Life” to satisfy you and sustain you, as the “Light of the World” to show you the way to live, or as the “Resurrection and the Life,” who enables us to conquer death... we say: “No, thank you. I got this.”

But the Spirit speaks to our hearts: “This IS TRUE. YOU REALLY need him in my life.” (Sometimes it feels like a light bulb going off. Other times, it’s like a tug on our hearts!) And you really need him because the our sin brings separation. “The wages of sin is death.” (Romans 6:23 - not just physical death but spiritual death and eternal separation from God)

This is what happened in Acts 2. It says when the people heard Peter tell the good news about Jesus “they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’”

T: For those yet to go ALL IN with Jesus: Do you hear his voice today? You need him. For those who follow Jesus, do you hear the Spirit saying: “Have confidence. Just like I revealed your need for Jesus, I will show others through you!”

2. The Holy Spirit convinces people of Christ’s righteousness. (16:10)

Verse 10 - “concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer;”

- Our efforts of living good lives before God and others are incredibly inadequate. Our standards do not cut it. This should not surprise us, because we don’t even meet the standards we set for ourselves.
- But how does this relate to seeing Jesus? Jesus is God’s standard of righteousness. He’s the blueprint. He always lived rightly which gave him a right standing before God. When he was with the disciples, they could see the standard with their own eyes.
- Verse 10 says, because Jesus is not physically present, the Spirit helps us see God’s righteous standard and reveals how we are guilty of falling short of his design (cf. Romans 3:23).
 - Please hear this: God does not expose our failure to put us on a guilt trip! (Do more, be better, you’re not good enough, you don’t measure up.)
 - He exposes our GUILT leads us to GRACE.
 - You can’t get to grace until you realize your guilt, AND Jesus wants to take your guilt and bury it in the grave of his grace.

Most people live by our their own selective and very subjective standard of righteousness, which is most often: “I’m better than him. I’m better than her. I’m better than Will Smith. I’m good.”

But they are not the standard!

Here’s the wild thing: you need to be as righteous as Jesus to enter heaven. That means you not only need God to forgive your sins, but give you Jesus’ righteousness. And guess what? This is exactly what he wants to do for you.

- 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
- And then 2 Corinthians 5:21 tells us "God made him [Jesus] who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."
- Sin and unrighteousness removed! Christ's righteousness given to us! All this coming through Jesus' death on the cross!

Open your hands and receive it!

T: And once you do... you will continue to hear the Spirit saying: "This is the way. Live like Jesus." If you follow Jesus, let's renew our commitment to living like him. John Wesley explained why this is so crucial a few centuries ago: "As a very little dust will disorder a clock, and the least sand will obscure our sight, so the least grain of sin which is upon the heart will hinder its right motion towards God."

3. The Holy Spirit convinces people of Satan's defeat. (16:11)

Verse 11: "concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged."

- Who is the ruler of this world? God's greatest enemy. His name is Satan, also known as the devil.
- We should recognize Jesus uses the same language earlier in John 12:31 when talking about his "hour." "Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out."
- What is his "hour"? His time to go to the cross. What is he saying?
 - The cross, the place of death and apparent defeat, is *really* the place of my victory.
 - Colossians 2:13-15 says, "[Jesus forgave] us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him."
- At the cross, the devil was exposed and judged. His verdict was rendered for all to see. This how it read: Satan, though you thought this was the moment of your greatest victory, it has proved to be the moment of your greatest defeat! You are exposed as a liar. Jesus is the Truth. You are exposed as a thief. Jesus is the Giver. You thought you had the authority, but Jesus reigns above all! You brought death. Jesus brings life!!

T: Like Satan, everyone will stand before God to be judged. We will all stand before him one day and give an account of our lives.

Are you ready to face God's just judgment?

Conclusion:

If you have heard his convincing voice, you know you have not lived a perfect life and that your sin has separated you from enjoying a vibrant relationship with him. You know that you have not measured up to his standard of righteousness in Jesus. . . .

BUT you also have heard the good news: though we all have run away from God, God has come running after us!

Romans 5:8 - "But God demonstrated his love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Somebody needs to hear this today: **"There is more mercy in Christ than sin in us." - Richard Sibbes**

Your sin and my sin is great. No doubt about it. God's mercy and grace and love and forgiveness is GREATER!

If the Spirit is opening your eyes to God's love through Jesus, here's my encouragement for you:

- Admit your need for God. Confess your sin before him.
- Believe in Jesus. He died in your place, took your sin, and paid the penalty of our sin, which is death. He did it so that we might have life!
- Commit to live your life for him!

If you follow Jesus: **Be confident to share Jesus. You have the advantage of God's Spirit!**

You communicate. The Spirit convinces. The advantage is yours!

I want us to spend a couple of minutes praying... If you've yet to follow Jesus and you feel God tugging at your heart, tell him you want to begin your journey with Jesus today!

If you follow Christ, I want you to ask God to bring one person to your mind who needs to know how amazing he is! I want you to ask the Spirit to fill you with confidence to share Christ with them, to invite them to our Easter celebration. I want you to ask the Spirit to remind you of the great advantage you have because you have him.