

"When I'm gone... It will be better for everyone"

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[0 : 0 0] the reading is from John chapter 16 verses 4 to 16 page 1084 in the church Bibles I have told you this so that when their time comes you will remember that I warned you about them I did not tell you this from the beginning because I was with you but now I am going to him who sent me none of you asks me where are you going rather you are filled with grief because I have said these things but very truly I tell you it is for your good that I am going away unless I go away the advocate will not come to you but if I go I will send him to you when he comes he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment about sin because people do not believe in me about righteousness because I am going to the father where you can see me no longer and about judgment because the prince of this world now stands condemned

I have much more to say to you more than you can now bear but when he the spirit of truth comes he will guide you into all the truth he will not speak on his own he will only speak he will speak only what he hears and he will tell you what is yet to come he will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you all that belongs to the father is mine that is why I said the spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you Jesus went on to say in a little while you will see me no more and then after a little while you will see me this is the word of the Lord thanks Catherine for reading if you could keep your Bibles open for me that would be a great help on page 1084 of the church Bibles if you're using those and you can find an outline inside the notice sheet if you find that helpful as we look at this portion of God's word together but let's ask for God's help as we turn to his word let's pray heavenly father we praise you for your gospel plan through history for your revelation of yourself to us by your spirit graciously send your spirit now we ask that each of us will hear your voice in his word about your son and by his work in us would you help us to know you convict us teach us transform us as we experience your love for we ask in Jesus name amen well it seems obvious to us that the Christian life would be easier if Jesus was still around the universities have got Christian unions and have just had their events weeks we've been hearing about and praying for where they invite friends to look into the Christian faith and Simon and Robbie from our own staff team went up to Aberdeen for the week and they were speaking for the Aberdeen Christian Union would they not rather have had Jesus as their speaker than Simon and Robbie obviously when your friend says to you at the school gate or by the water cooler at work or in the dinner queue at school have you seen that Kate Forbes in the news have you seen what she thinks how can anyone still believe what Kate Forbes thinks you don't believe that at your church do you at that moment imagine you could choose would you like to have Jesus there with you or not uh Jesus please that would be helpful I'll back the question along to him and don't we think that just living the Christian life ourselves just keeping on keeping on as a Christian would be a lot easier if Jesus was still physically here isn't that what we think surely it is a key reason we find the Christian life hard is Jesus has gone well Jesus says something extraordinary in verse 7 very truly I tell you that's Jesus way of saying listen up guys it's really important for you to grasp this very truly I tell you verse 7 it is for your good that I'm going away Jesus is saying you won't think it but honestly you're better off without me how can that possibly be true it's an even more remarkable claim when you consider what Jesus has just been saying to his disciples that we looked at last week that the world will hate them and he doesn't call them to leave the world that hates them this hostile world but to go into that world and through them the spirit will testify about him how can it be for the disciples good that Jesus is going away let's just back up and follow through what he says from verse 5 where we started the reading he says first now I am going to him who sent me in verse 5 that's been the subject of these chapters of John's gospel that Jesus is teaching his disciples the night before he died to prepare them and everyone after them for life when he's gone so he goes on verse 5 now I'm going to him who sent me none of you asks me

where are you going rather you are filled with grief because I have said these things now it looks a bit like they have asked him where he's going and Peter said in chapter 13 verse 36 Lord where are you going and here he says none of you asks me where I'm going I think the difference is that the disciples are asking because they're just stuck on the news that he will leave them so they're asking to say do you have to go

or can't or can we come with you but Jesus wants to turn their gaze not from their preoccupation with life for them without him but rather to look at what he will achieve by his going and the reason is in verse 7 but very truly I tell you it is for your good that I'm going away unless I go away the advocate will not come to you but if I go I will send him to you Jesus has taught these 11 apostles who are left Judas Iscariot has gone these 11 are left and Jesus has taught them about the Holy Spirit in chapter 14 he called him the advocate in fact he called him another advocate so the word advocate is trying to translate this word that literally means someone who draws alongside and this is another advocate because he's another Jesus to continue the work that Jesus has been doing and that work we know from John's gospel is enabling people to believe in him that's why John wrote the gospel because by believing in Jesus we find life true life knowing God eternal life how can we believe

Jesus claim that if you believe in him you cross over into eternal life and you won't be condemned by God how can we believe in the Jesus who has gone away well we heard about the spirit who is coming another advocate Christ with us to teach us Christ in us to help us from chapter 14 and this morning Jesus tells us about two special ministries of the Holy Spirit one to the world and one to his people so our first point this morning is the spirit will bring conviction to a guilty world Jesus tells us what the spirit will do in verse 8 if you have a look when he the spirit comes he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment now the word in verse 8 that we have translated there is prove the world to be in the wrong it's just the world for convict it's a good translation of a word that just means to convict the world to show that the world is wrong and when John talks about the world here he means something specific all through John's gospel the world is humanity humanity set against God humanity in rebellion against God on our own our hearts are fixed resolved that we don't want God to be in our lives and without the spirit the world will just carry on like that I think we can say that if the spirit had not come then Jesus would have died on the cross and risen again and nobody would have put their faith in him no one would have been saved but then the spirit comes and he does what nobody else can do he proves the world to be in the wrong so if you imagine a courtroom the spirit is like the prosecuting lawyer making his case proving that the world is in the wrong but not for the judge to see that the judge knows that it's for the person in the dock the defendant to come to this realization that they have done wrong in God's eyes and that's true of everyone in the world that we all need the spirit to bring that sense to us for us to turn to Jesus it's a feeling like I don't know if you've ever been caught speeding and you would I haven't actually but if you imagine that you were and you're you knew you were driving too fast and then you look in your rearview mirror and you see the blue lights flashing and this moment of ah I've been caught or I was thinking from my experience of the feeling I can remember of a time when I made an inappropriate joke a rude joke like just I said a rude thing I thought was funny with some friends and nobody laughed and it was this moment of realizing I am such an idiot that I thought that was funny I'm I was so wrong and and people's reaction has just shown me how stupid I am I've got this so wrong now anyone in the world needs the spirit to bring this that that kind of sense of realization about the way we've been leading our lives when it comes to God

[11:10] I've got this wrong and Jesus gives us the specifics of that work of the spirit and I think the three specifics of this ministry of conviction are really different sides of this same reality if we just read from verse 8 again Jesus says when he comes he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment about sin because people do not believe in me about righteousness because I am going to the father where you can see me no longer and about judgment because the prince of this world now stands condemned so let me just go through those and say what I think they mean people around us in the world need to be convicted by the spirit that they are in the wrong about sin because they don't believe in Jesus people think they're good enough so they don't believe in Jesus they think I'm not a sinner you know I'm not perfect no one's perfect but if God looks at my life if there is a God which there might be and he looks at my life and he measures it on the scales I've got nothing to worry about I'm an okay person and people need to be cut to the heart to realize that we have all fallen short of the glory of God we see moments of self-doubt in our culture don't we cracks where the kind of the bravado wears thin if you think about

Taylor Swift's recent hit anti-hero she sings it's me hi I'm the problem it's me but that song is so clouded in self-pity and existential angst that she also says I have this dream my daughter-in-law kills me for the money she thinks I left them in the will the family gathers around and reads it and then someone screams out she's laughing up up at us from hell it's me hi I'm the problem it's me so you hear that and you think Taylor Swift really needs to get out more okay she she's spending too much time camped inside her own head that is a problem for her but that sense of the real me has messed this up we can only come to that realization when it comes to God a realization that would move us towards believing Jesus by the Spirit of God in our lives so he convicts the world of sin then in verse 10 he proves the world is in the wrong about righteousness because I am going to the Father where you can see me no longer so without the Spirit the world who can't see Jesus thinks he's irrelevant maybe he's a revolutionary who died young but the world has other categories of righteousness we can't see Jesus we don't know what to think of him and we think well you can be righteous by what you do and by the values you have but I think the

Spirit's conviction in verse 10 that Jesus is describing is the Spirit moves us to see that we're wrong about Jesus that actually he's gone to the Father because he is righteous so death couldn't keep hold of him death couldn't contain him he rose and he ascended and he is vindicated so that he could send the Spirit because he has authority over all things and is at God's right hand and that gives us something of an understanding of why Jesus has to go in order for the Spirit to come we were looking at this passage as a staff team this week and one of the team said I get I get that we needed the Spirit but why why did Jesus have to go away for us to get the Spirit and we're not given a whole answer here but I guess part of the answer is that lots of us like the idea of God coming to be with us lots of people out in the city today would like the idea of being thought of as spiritual people of God's

Spirit being in us but the truth is that if Jesus hadn't gone away to be lifted up on the cross and God the Spirit had come into the world we would have been destroyed because he's the Holy Spirit God's holiness is a consuming fire when it comes to sin and the Spirit coming to dwell in people would have destroyed us because we are spiritually not fit for that and then Jesus goes to the cross and as he's lifted up on the cross he bears the curse that's on the world for sin so that he can then go to the Father and send the Spirit and the Spirit really can come and dwell in people drawing us to receive the gift of eternal life so we need to be shown to be in the wrong about righteousness and Jesus righteousness and then the third side to the Spirit's ministry in the world is in verse 11 he proves the world to be wrong about judgment because the prince of this world now stands condemned so he's referring there to Satan the evil one that he has a power over this world and he's blinded the minds of the world so we can't see who Jesus is and without the Spirit the world just scoffs at the idea that God is going to judge the world but the Spirit comes and he persuades us individually that the whole direction of this world is heading towards the justice of God that everyone will one day stand before the judgment seat of Christ and without Jesus we stand condemned that is the colossal reality that the world doesn't see so before I became a Christian I thought I'm not a sinner I'm kind of an okay person and I thought

Jesus is irrelevant because I don't need his help and I got my sense of value from the world and the Spirit comes into my life and he has shown me I am a sinner I need a savior I was wrong about that Jesus is the only righteous one who's ever lived I was wrong about him I can have eternal life if I believe in him and the world that I used to get my value from is hurtling towards the judgment of a holy God and the Spirit is doing that work in the world today we look around here today most of us here today are believers in Jesus here is evidence that the Spirit is doing that convicting work that miraculous work even in Glasgow today Jesus says the Spirit comes into the world to bring conviction that's the work of the Spirit in the world conviction it's humbling to hear that because it reminds us that none of us can believe in Jesus without the Spirit's work in our lives but it's reassuring news as well it's reassuring if you're here this morning and you're looking into the Christian faith could the very fact that you're here be evidence that the Spirit is at work in your life already drawing you to look at God helping you overcome the struggles that you might feel to believe so that you can see Jesus and trust him and here in John 16 as Jesus teaches this news he's sharing it with the apostles to give them deep confidence to prepare them for mission of course we feel weak at the school gate chatting to parents at the water cooler chatting to colleagues in the dinner queue chatting to friends we feel weak to convince our friends that faith in Jesus is reasonable without the promise of the Spirit we have no chance of course we are weak there's a

spiritual blindness in people around us we cannot persuade them in our own strength and we see that all the time you know people come to church they come to a quiz night they hear a gospel talk they take nothing in they completely miss the point I remember hearing a series of talks that was so incredible they just made me want to become a Christian all over again they were amazing I thought I wish all my friends had been here so I gave one of my friends a recording of the talks I said you've got to listen to these talks will you listen to them promise you'll listen to them yeah yeah yeah thanks thanks I'll listen to them I'll listen to them they meant nothing to him nothing but with the Spirit's power anyone can become a Christian even your hard-hearted colleagues and friends no matter how far someone seems from the gospel today the Spirit can convict them he was powerful to raise Jesus bodily to life he can convict the world so he gives us confidence that as we cross the pain barrier to speak about Jesus the Spirit will convict the world bring conviction to people who hear the gospel so that's our first point the Spirit will bring conviction to a guilty world but how could it be better that Jesus has gone for his people for people who already believe well that's our second point the Spirit will guide the apostles into all truth so we see in verse 12 that the disciples cannot understand anymore verse 12 Jesus says I have much more to say to you more than you can now bear but then the assurance but when he the Spirit of truth comes he will guide you into all the truth so this side of the cross and resurrection the apostles are limited in what they can grasp in their understanding but he assures them the Spirit will come and when Jesus spoke about him in chapter 14 verse 26 he said the Holy Spirit will remind you of everything I've said to you so at this point Jesus as he talks about the ministry of the Spirit he's not talking about he's not speaking to every believer who'll believe after the apostles we weren't there but he can remind them those first 11 the apostles and his ministry to them will be comprehensive he will guide them into all truth so I take that it's not like he's not like a search engine telling you everything about everything but he's going to guide them into all the spiritual truth that we need he goes on verse 13 he will not speak on his own he will only speak what he hears and he will tell you what is yet to come he will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you so we can't separate the Spirit from Jesus the Spirit will receive all truth from Jesus by hearing it from

[22 : 27] Jesus and then passing it on to the apostles inspiring the apostles with that truth and then for us we receive that truth through the apostles through their teaching the scriptures each book of the New Testament has either as its author or as its source the apostles as they were inspired by the Spirit after Jesus sent him to be with them and pass on his words to them that's how they came to understand the meaning of Jesus life and death and resurrection that they'd seen it's how they came to understand the unfolding plan of God the way that all the prophecies through the centuries came together to Jesus and how they come to understand the future that Jesus will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and bring a new world so as Jesus teaches here that the Spirit's words will come from him it reminds us that it's when you center your reading of the Bible on Jesus that it becomes one story for us

Jesus himself said these scriptures testify about me it's one big story about Jesus and the Spirit's work promised here for those first apostles gives the Bible an authority for every age until Jesus returns and it's important to say that when we look at this section of the Bible because it's sometimes mishandled today so people in church today including bishops in their general synods and people in their general assemblies these mainline denominations church leaders when you see people wanting to wriggle away from the Bible's teaching they couch it in spiritual language you don't hear bishops saying the Bible's not important but what they start to say is they take the promise of John 16 13 about how the Spirit will guide you in all the truth and they'll say we're listening together to the Spirit to hear what he's saying to us today when really they're on a bus being driven by the Spirit of the age and they don't want to be under the clear teaching of the Spirit in the Bible but here what we're seeing is just as we mustn't separate the Spirit from Jesus because Jesus is saying it's my truth that I will speak to him that he will tell you we also mustn't separate the Spirit from the Word from the Bible because it's the apostles that he is inspiring to give us that truth the New Testament has this finality to it in its authority so we see Paul writing to a pastor Timothy in 2 Timothy and he says what you heard from me keep as the pattern of sound teaching with faith and love in Christ Jesus or in Jude the writer Jude starts his letter saying I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's people so this truth from Jesus is entrusted and it's about Jesus and it glorifies Jesus so we get that in verse 14 if you have a look again he says of the Spirit he will glorify me because it is from me that he will

receive what he will make known to you now to glorify something is to show how brilliant it is there was a movie some years ago called A Shot at Glory I don't know if you saw it remember it Ali McCoy was in it with Michael Keaton and Robert Duvall an extraordinary combination and the film A Shot at Glory was about a second division Scottish football team trying to win the cup playing Rangers in the final that's the idea of glory that we're maybe familiar with doing something brilliant etching your name in history worthy of honour a chance to shine well Jesus says that the Spirit comes to light him up like that to display his brilliance the writer Jim Packer talked about how the Spirit has a floodlight ministry he delights in shining up lighting up Jesus for us to see how glorious he is now Kathy and I heard a talk on this passage nearly 20 years ago now by a preacher Mike Kane and when I said to her that this was what we were looking at she immediately said the phrase that he used so it's worth reusing he said of the Spirit from this passage the Spirit's ministry is to light up the Jesus of the Jesus book that's what the Spirit does he lights up the Jesus of the Jesus book he inspired the Bible writers so that they light up Jesus in the Jesus book and he also promised

Jesus promised in chapter 14 that the Spirit coming is him coming to be with us forever so he illuminates our hearts and opens our eyes to see the brightness of Jesus in the Jesus book we see him shine in the Bible so the teaching here ends with this insight that when we pick up our Bibles we're being drawn into a relationship with God himself if we just look at verse 15 Jesus says all that belongs to the Father is mine that is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you it's the kind of moment I think you hear that and you all it kind of makes you think maybe we should cancel coffee time and newcomer's lunch and just get home and read our Bibles we're not doing that because there is a place for eating and having fellowship together to encourage each other and we're told to do that but Jesus is saying here to us what a gift that he is leaving for us to enrich the church when he's gone

[28 : 42] I'm reading a book at the moment by Ian McEwan where there's a woman in it Daphne it's a novel Daphne finds out that she's dying with an aggressive cancer so she knows she hasn't got long to live and her husband Chris goes into their living room and he finds Daphne in the living room and it's full of activity there's photo albums everywhere and she's busy labelling photographs for her children and she's writing long letters for each child for them to read six months after she's died and you can understand that frantic desire in a parent knowing that you won't be there but wanting to write something that will last so that something of yourself is still there for your children when you've gone and you can imagine what those letters would have meant for her children when they opened them six months later they were adults grown up children in the novel but imagine them opening these letters in their grief so precious to them to have something personal addressed to them from their mother well when we come to the Bible we're not to see it as an instruction manual to keep us on the right track so much as this is our very personal letter lovingly left for us by Jesus about Jesus for us and more than that because he lives again we really can know him as we engage with him through his word by his spirit and we can live life knowing him as the spirit lights him up for us folks our time has gone but Jesus demonstrates why it is for our good that he went away the gift of his spirit means we can be confident in mission knowing he has the power and the will to convict the world so that they will believe in Jesus and we can invest ourselves in knowing Jesus with eagerness because the spirit guided the apostles into all truth so that we have words from God to us about Jesus to light him up in all of his beauty and majesty and love let's pray together

Lord Jesus we thank you that you were lifted up on the cross willingly dying that we might be given life and that you asked the father to send the spirit Holy Spirit we thank you that you came that you brought conviction and we ask that you will go on doing your convicting work in the world around us have mercy we pray on the people around us move them to believe in Jesus and be at work among us as your people today that we would come to your word with a renewed eagerness to let your words remain in us that we might experience the life transforming knowledge of the glory of Christ for we ask in Jesus name

Amen Amen