

Children's Moment

June 21, 2015

Title: Holy Spirit is Our Guide

Object: Compass

Scripture: "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. But if I go, I will send him to you."
(John 16:7)



I am sure that most of you have seen a compass. A compass is a very handy instrument that will help keep you from getting lost. Not only that, it will help you find your way if you do get lost. The compass has four main directions, they are North, South, East and West. The needle of the compass always points North. With the needle pointing North, if you want to go East, you would go in that direction (point to the East.) If the needle sometimes pointed North and at other times it pointed to the South, East, or West, you would never be able to use the compass to find your way. You would wander around, hopelessly lost. The compass must always point in the same direction if you are going to use it to guide you.

In trying to find our way through life's journeys, God has given us a spiritual compass to guide us. That guide is the Holy Spirit. When we don't know what to do or which way to turn, the Holy Spirit always points us in the right direction.

Some people rely on their feelings to help them make decisions. That's no good. Our feelings may change from day-to-day, so they cannot be trusted to guide us in the right direction. Besides, just because we feel good about something doesn't mean that it is the right thing to do, does it?

Some people look at what others are doing to help them make important decisions. That is no good either. Just because everyone else is doing it doesn't mean that it is the right thing to do. Tomorrow everyone might be doing something else.

Jesus promised that God would “will send him (*Holy Spirit*) to” guide us. That means that the Holy Spirit will help us to understand God's Word which always points us in the right direction. It points us to Jesus who is "the Way, the truth, and the life."

Whenever you don't know which way to turn, you can always turn to God's Word, the Bible and let the Holy Spirit be your guide.

Father, we thank you for sending the Holy Spirit to be our guide through life. We know that the Spirit will lead us to Jesus. In his name we pray. Amen.

John 16:5-11

Spirit's Witness

The deity of the Holy Spirit ought to be clearly recognized in Scripture. One only has to look at these facts: Christ is born; the Spirit is His forerunner. Christ is baptized; the Spirit bears witness. Christ is tempted; the Spirit leads Him up. Christ ascends; the Spirit takes His place. What great things are there in the character of God, which are not found in the Holy Spirit? What titles, which belong to God, are not also applied to Him? The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the mind of Christ, the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of adoption, Spirit of truth and of liberty. In addition He is the Spirit of wisdom, of understanding, of counsel, of might, of knowledge, of godliness, of the fear of God. This only begins to show how unlimited the Holy Spirit is – fully God and equal in the Trinity. This morning we explore what is one of my favorite topics - the witness of God the Holy Spirit.

Spirit's Witness to the World

The world sees loss as what will not be recovered and what costs one in material wealth or comfort or status or power. As believers we see loss as God's purpose to grow us, loss will bring something that God will use to help us. Jesus said, **35 "For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. 36 For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? 37 For what can a man give in return for his soul?"** (Mark 8:35-37) If we do not confront our losses and if through our losses we do not seek what God is doing in our lives we may let sorrow overwhelm us.

Bitterness will grow within us and rob us of the joy of Christ. As we continue to explore the Gospel of John this morning we find the disciples being taught by Jesus. Jesus once again is teaching about the Holy Spirit to come. Even though they will no longer be with Jesus in person He has prepared a great gift, the coming of the Holy Spirit. However, the disciples are overwhelmed and can only think of their loss and sorrow. Because Jesus is aware of their sorrow He begins to teach concerning the Holy Spirit. Turn in your Bible to John chapter 16, Jesus is teaching in verse 5, **“I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you.”** *The disciples did not need to hear of or be taught in depth about the Holy Spirit because they had been taught by God incarnate, Jesus Christ for 3 years. Jesus continues, “But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’”* *These disciples gave up much to follow Christ and they cannot comprehend His leaving. Jesus tells them clearly He is returning to God the Father.* **6 “But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. 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. But if I go, I will send him to you.”** They had forgotten that Jesus had taught them when the Holy Spirit came to them they would be indwelt and by faith in Jesus they would receive the gift of eternal life. Earlier in John chapter 7 it is recorded concerning the coming indwelling of the Spirit, beginning in verse **37 “On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ 39 Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”** (John 7:37-39) Jesus taught about the

indwelling of God the Holy Spirit before in chapter 14, “I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, **17** even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.” (John 14:16-17)

Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, Jesus taught, “he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.” (John 14:26)

The Spirit inspired the writers of the New Testament and they were able to remember and write the words of God. It is the Holy Spirit that teaches believers through the Word of God and brings remembrance of the knowledge and wisdom of God to both our minds and hearts. Jesus says not only will the Holy Spirit teach believers, but also “he will bear witness about me. And you also will bear witness.” (John 15:26-27) The Holy Spirit and believers are the two-fold witness of Jesus as the Christ.

The Holy Spirit did not come to believers until after Jesus’ death, resurrection and ascension for several reasons. First the Holy Spirit “will bear witness about me (Christ).” By witnessing to the world of Jesus, the Holy Spirit convicts the world of its sin and need for Jesus. By witnessing to believers concerning the person of Jesus Christ the Holy Spirit strengthens believer’s faith and enables them to live holy and apart from the world. Second, God gave the Holy Spirit to the Church to strengthen it and enable the Church to fulfill Jesus’ plan of redemption. The Church is to preach Christ, Him crucified and risen to a lost world.

Paul set the example saying, **2** “I warned those who sinned before and all the others ... **3** since you seek proof that Christ is speaking in me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you. **4** For he was crucified in weakness,

but lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but in dealing with you we will live with him by the power of God.” (2 Corinthians 13:2-4) We are to warn the world of its sin, presenting proof through the scriptures and our changed lives. As Christ died and rose again in power, we are to follow His example and are to die to ourselves and rise by the power of the Holy Spirit that lives within us. This is a great witness to the world. It is Christ and the Holy Spirit working through us that convicts people of their sin and brings them to Christ. This is what Peter demonstrated and preached, “Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.” (Acts 2:33) My brothers and sisters is this what the lost observe in your life? The world is watching and listening not just to your words, but also the living out of your life filled with the Spirit. Is your witness to the world that Jesus is your Lord and Savior?

Jesus’s words in John 16 teach that the Holy Spirit has a ministry to the lost world. It is the Holy Spirit that convicts men of their sin. The Holy Spirit restrains the world’s evil. Consider for a moment, what would the world be like if it was left to the unrestrained evil of Satan and men? The Holy Spirit convinces those whom God has chosen to come to God through Christ and this happens as the Holy Spirit regenerates a person’s soul. It is the power of the Holy Spirit that convicts people of their sin and leads people to repentance and faith. The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin and restrains evil – often through the lives and work of believers.

Spirit’s Witness of Sin

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to convict the world of its sin. Jesus gives the

primary reason in verses 8 and 9, “**And when he (Holy Spirit) comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:** *The first thing the Holy Spirit convicts people of is “concerning sin.”* Why? Jesus immediately gives the reason, “**because they do not believe in me.**” So, the Holy Spirit is to convict the world of its sin because without this conviction they will not see their need for Christ and they will not believe.

The Holy Spirit, like the prosecuting attorney, demonstrates the world is guilty of sin. This is why the world hates Christ and Christians. The Holy Spirit also brings this guilt home – into the hearts and consciousness of men and women so they are disturbed and grieved by their sin and seek a path to be alleviated from it.

Let me be clear we cannot convict men and women of their sin. Neither does the preaching of the gospel. God uses believers; the example of living holy and the preaching of the gospel, but spiritual conviction of sin and salvation is by God’s grace alone. Man makes no movement towards God unless God first convicts him and draws him. People are spiritually dead and dead people are capable of nothing – because they are dead. It is only through the Holy Spirit’s supernatural regeneration of their dead souls that they come to know God and the salvation He offers.

I have heard time and time again, people saying I was happily living my life and then I saw the life of someone I know or I heard the testimony of a changed person or I heard the preaching of the word of God and I became uncomfortable, I began to feel awful, I don’t know what is wrong with me. The answer is simple they have come under the conviction of the Holy Spirit and they are seeing their sin for the first time for what it really is – sinning against a holy God. It is at this

point that we pray for the scales to fall from their eyes as Jesus did with the Apostle Paul. It is at this point God uses us to explain the gospel and their need to seek Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins. It is at this point the Holy Spirit gives them new life. We call them “Born Again.” The Holy Spirit convicts men of the sin of unbelief. Jesus said their sin is “they do not believe in me” in verse 9. It is not the sins of adultery or drunkenness or pride or stealing or lying, but it is the sin of unbelief. It is not that these other things are not sin, they certainly are and they need to be repented of and renounced by formerly unsaved people who are now born again and living for Christ. Please listen, this is important, it is this one thing God requires for salvation and the very thing that is hardest for the natural man and that is to believe in Jesus. To believe Jesus is “the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6) Only by believing in the Jesus of the Bible is salvation found. Not in the false Christ of Mormonism or Jehovah Witness or the prophet Jesus of the Quran or the Jesus many churches now portray because they want to be accepted by the world – no – a thousand times no! Salvation is found by believing in the true Christ, the Jesus of the Bible. Unbelievers do not see their unbelief as sin for they are spiritually dead. Satan’s desire is for mankind to believe in anything - but Jesus Christ – believe in themselves or in false christs or worship science and on and on. But, salvation is only found by believing in the Christ of the Bible and the Bible alone.

When the Holy Spirit touches a man’s heart and awakens it then the man can no longer look upon his unbelief as a sign of intellectual superiority. When the Holy Spirit touches a person’s soul the scales fall from their eyes and they see that their unbelief is the most damning of all sins and they are overwhelmed and they have a sense of guilt that they did not believe in Jesus Christ. They plead with

God to forgive them for their unbelief. Do you remember this moment in your life? I do and I was overwhelmed with shame and relief and joy. As I think back, I am still overwhelmed that God would reach out and save a sinner such as me! I am left with amazement and deep gratitude for the gift of my salvation. It renews my commitment to live for Christ, to live Galatians 2:20, **“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”** My beloved, by the power of the Holy Spirit, may we live this verse first before our Holy God and then before the world as a witness of Christ.

Spirit’s Witness of Christ’s Righteousness

Jesus tells the disciples that He must leave for the Holy Spirit to come. Reading beginning at verse **8 “And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; 10 concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer.”** We have already looked at the conviction of our sins. What does it mean that the Holy Spirit convicts people **concerning righteousness?**

Jesus called people to live righteously before a Holy God. Jesus convicted the Jewish nation by His righteousness and many hated Him for it. Now that Jesus has returned to the right hand of the Father it is the Holy Spirit that convicts world, in general, of the righteousness of both God the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit does this by “general revelation” to the world. Paul made this clear to believers in Rome, **“For his** (*“his” can refer to God the Father, God the Son and*

God the Holy Spirit – the Trinity) invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.” (Romans 1:20) Mankind is responsible for their sin of unbelief.

God’s righteousness is also demonstrated to the world by the changed lives of believers. It is not that believers are righteous as God is righteous, but believers demonstrate to the world where righteousness can be found. Righteousness is found in Jesus Christ who once walked this earth but who is now at the right hand of the Father. The Lord takes a person that is sinful and makes them conscious of their sin. When God gives that person salvation they are made righteous in that very instance, by their faith in Christ.

Spirit Witness of Satan

The third and final aspect of the Holy Spirit’s work mentioned by Christ in these verses is the Holy Spirit “will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: **9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; 10 concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; 11 concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.**” The Holy Spirit will demonstrate to the world there is judgment. The Holy Spirit demonstrates God’s judgment of sin and His judgment of Satan, whose grip on this world is diminished and broken by the atoning life and death of Jesus Christ. God’s Judgment of the lost is seen by the salvation of those He has called.

No one wants to believe in judgment. Until we are saved most people think they can do as they want and their only restraint is punishment by man’s law. We

have seen that our judicial system has lost consistency and balance in meting out punishment. Whatever a person desires, even if it belongs to someone else, they should have. People believe they can escape their day of reckoning by man and God. People's desire for sin and even evil is encouraged by seeing that crime and evil seem to go unpunished. I am frustrated by sin and evil going unpunished. Sometimes I wonder why God does not strike down the evil as He did in the Old Testament. God stated clearly His standards and the consequences of violating them, for example, God told the Hebrews concerning the Egyptians who accompanied them in the exodus saying, "If you do mistreat them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry, and my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless." (Exodus 21:23-24) I ask the Lord why is the suffering of the innocent not avenged? Then He reminds me through His Word that His judgment is longsuffering, but that it does come. God's judgment of Satan is both proof of His longsuffering and His judgment.

The Apostle Peter wrote of this very frustration in his second letter. Turn in your Bible to 2 Peter. The 1st and 2nd Epistles of Peter follows the Book of James. Read with me in 2 Peter chapter 2, "But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. **2** And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. **3** And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment; 5 if he did not spare the ancient world (*skip down to verse 9*) ... then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment.” (2 Peter 2:1-5 & 9) God’s day of judgment will come.

If a person does not come to Christ, believing that Christ atoned for his sin, that person will have to take the punishment for his sin. How much better is it that one should come to Christ, today, in this time of God’s grace.

Spirit Witness of Believers

In closing I want you to take notice of one last point. Even though this passage is primarily about the Holy Spirit convicting the world of its sin in order to point people to salvation through Christ – the Spirit does this through believers, through you and me. This is evident by what Jesus says in verses 7 and 8, “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. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.” The Lord sent the Holy Spirit to believers and it is through believers that He works to convict the world of its sin. Every conversion recorded in the Book of Acts came about through the agency of someone who was already saved. Jesus descended to earth, the firstborn, He bore witness to the twelve. The twelve bore witness at Pentecost and the day following and thousands came to Christ. The Lord sent Ananias to witness to Paul. Peter witnessed to Cornelius and his whole household was saved. This is God’s way –

by the power of His Spirit working through believers, like you and me, people come to know Christ.

To walk in the Spirit will of necessity be a walk in accordance with the Word the Spirit has inspired. To walk in the Spirit is to be filled with the Spirit and to be properly filled with the Spirit one must be filled with the Word of God. To remain filled with the Spirit, and thus enjoy His continuing sanctifying work, will mean continuing to be filled with the Word. The relationship between the Spirit and the Word is obvious.

The questions for each of us is - are we instruments of God? Cleanse you mind and life of the world by taking in the Word of God and allow God's Spirit to flow out of you as a channel of His grace.

My beloved, in closing, let me speak the very words of our Lord and Savior, Jesus, "The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. (*Giving our lives to Christ results in*) "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." (John 14:26-27) My brothers and sisters, it is my daily prayer that you know the peace of Christ in your lives and be an instrument of His grace. Amen.