

SCRIPTURE:

John 16:4b-15

SERMON:

Why didn't Jesus die, rise from the dead, and bring about the end of all things immediately? Why did Jesus leave, and why has he waited so long before returning? These are fair questions to consider. And they are important to understand the answer to.

Why has he waited so long to return?

2 Peter 3:8-10 -- 8 But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

So the answer is, it's not long. God has existed for eternity. Two thousand years is kind of nothing. God waited thousands of years between promising to send the seed of the woman to crush the head of the serpent and Jesus' birth.

But what is the purpose of the wait?

Matthew 24:30-31 -- 30 Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

What's the purpose of waiting? To gather the elect. The shepherd is gathering his flock before the end of all things.

This is why Jesus sends his disciples out to disciple the nations, to baptize them and teach them to obey (Matthew 28:18-20) and be his witnesses (Acts 1:8). He promises to be with us while we do that even though he is physically in Heaven. How? Through the Holy Spirit.

J.I. Packer wrote, "*The Spirit's post-Pentecostal task is essentially that of mediating the presence, word and activity of the enthroned Christ. It is by grasping this basic New Testament perspective that we get the Spirit in focus.*"

The Spirit makes Christ known to us, and near to us.

So Jesus goes away, gives us a mission, and promises to return. And it is under those conditions that the best thing he can do is go away and give us the Spirit. In a sinful and broken world, awaiting its full redemption and renewal at the return of Christ, the best scenario for believers is for Jesus to be away so the Spirit can indwell and lead us.

This is what we see in our text today.

Exegesis: John 16:4b-15

VS 4b: "*I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you.*

"These things" = persecution. Why did he not say these things to them from the beginning? He was with them. Now he is leaving. The focus is shifting from his work and ministry to them. He's about to leave and they will bear witness about him. The irony of this is they don't fully grasp what all they are going to be bearing witness to yet. He's going to be crucified for sinners and raised on the third day from the grave. But they still don't grasp that. Jesus is telling them the instructions before they even grasp the message.

VS 5: *But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?'*

Jesus says he is going to him [Father] who sent him. This is about the ascension of Jesus from earth back to Heaven. Jesus was sent from Heaven to earth. He is the Word from the beginning who became flesh and dwelt among us. He came to his own. He came. The idea of Jesus coming from Heaven is clear, but now we see the promise that he's going back. He will ascend back to Heaven and sit enthroned as king over all. Jesus says

that none of them are asking "Where are you going?" Now, earlier they said they didn't know where he was going, but they are not focused on where he is going, they are focused on the persecution that is coming to them.

VS 6: *But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.*

Sorrow has filled their hearts because of the promise of persecution and the fact that Jesus won't be there with them. They're sad. They're confused. "I'm leaving you and trouble is coming" is a difficult pill for them to swallow.

VS 7: *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.*

But Jesus tells them that regardless of how they "feel" about it, it is better for them that he leaves. It is to their advantage that he goes away. Why? Because only then will the Helper come.

Why is the Spirit present with them a greater advantage to them than Jesus himself being there? Many reasons, but here are a few:

- the Spirit's power will be in them
- each person through the Spirit can have communion with Christ
- help can be given to each of them by the Spirit
- Jesus couldn't be everywhere in his human body, but through the Spirit he can "be with them always, even to the end of the age" (Mt. 28:20)

Jesus reminds them that the Spirit's coming happens with his going. This is all part of the divine plan. Each person of the Trinity has their role in the redemptive mission. After his death and resurrection, Jesus must return in order for the Spirit's work to begin.

VS 8: *And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:*

What will the Spirit do? He will convict the world (all people, but particularly the wicked) of sin, righteousness, and judgment. What does this mean? Well, he breaks each one down.

VS 9-11: *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.*

Convict of sin: The Spirit will bring an awareness and sense of guilt for sin. Romans 1 & 2 makes clear that all people will be without excuse. How does the Spirit do this work? Through natural revelation (creation), special revelation (preaching and sharing the Scriptures/gospel), and through holiness and godly living.

Convict of righteousness: because I go to the Father and you will see me no longer. What does this mean? It means his death and resurrection will vindicate Christ's righteousness and innocence.

Convict of judgment: because the ruler of the world is judged (Satan). The one the world followed is defeated and judged. God promised in the Garden that the serpent would be crushed by the seed of Eve. Jesus' death and resurrection does that.

VS 12: *"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.*

Jesus doesn't say/reveal everything about the kingdom of God during his earthly ministry. What we have Jesus saying in the four Gospels is not everything he could have said about the kingdom. He says, in fact, he "still has many things to say." But they can't bear them now. They're sorrowful. They haven't seen the death and resurrection. The Spirit doesn't yet indwell them. They're not ready yet.

VS 13: *When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.*

But when the Spirit of truth comes, the Helper, He is going to guide them. He will guide them to all the truth. The Spirit is not going to speak on his own authority, but will take whatever he hears from Christ and declare it to them.

It is these men who will be the authors of the New Testament. Paul will also be among those whom the Spirit reveals these things.

2 Peter 1:6-21 -- they have something more sure than hearing a voice in the Scriptures

The doctrine of Scripture arises here. We believe that all Scripture is breathed out by God. The Bible is the Word of God (without error, authoritative, inspired). The Bible is penned by people. They did not write in a trance or like robots. They wrote as the Spirit of God led them. They used language and words they knew. They used a writing style

unique to them. Yet God spoke to them and through them. This passage (vs 13) is one of the Scriptural promises that this would happen. Jesus is going to keep revealing to his disciples and they will have all truth.

This is also why we believe that the canon of Scripture is closed. Jesus led them to all truth through the Spirit. We don't need additional words from God (Mormonism, prophets today). This is why the role of the apostles was so crucial and unique.

VS 14: *He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.*

The Spirit will glorify Christ. He will take what is Jesus' (teaching/Word) and declare it (reveal it) to them. I want you to see and hear this clearly: Jesus says the Holy Spirit will glorify Him.

This is a really important theological point that I want to take a minute to emphasize. One ditch we can fall into as Christians is we don't emphasize the Spirit at all. The Spirit has a very important role in our lives as Christians. The Spirit's work is irreplaceable in our conversion, our sanctification, our comfort in suffering, prayer, discernment, spiritual gifts and works, and so much more. So we can't neglect or ignore the Holy Spirit. But another ditch we could fall into is we put such an emphasis on the Spirit that we exalt the Spirit and fail to talk much or focus much on Christ. Some charismatic believers fall into this trap.

The Bible says, and Jesus himself says, that the Spirit's job is to glorify Christ. That means that the Spirit doesn't seek to bring attention and glory to Himself, He seeks to bring glory and attention to Jesus.

What is the purpose of flood lights or uplighting on your house? The purpose is to shine a light on your house. It lights up your house. It showcases your house. The whole purpose is ascetic, and beatification of the house. You don't stand in front of the flood light and stare into the bulb and say "wow, what an incredible flood light." You turn around at what the flood light is illuminating and say, "wow, what a beautiful house." This is the role of the Spirit. The Spirit's role is to serve as the floodlight that shines the spotlight and glory on Christ. We are out of step with Scripture if we turn our focus on the Spirit and stare into the floodlight.

VS 15: *All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.*

Notice again the Trinity shows up in this text and the previous one. The Spirit's role is to glorify Christ. The Father gives all he has to the Son. The Father is going to take what is the Son's and declare it to them...by the Spirit.

The challenge for us is that we are living under the fulfillment of Jesus' words today whereas the disciples had to wait a little bit for its fulfillment. Jesus has gone away. He has accomplished the work of redemption. We've been given the mission to make disciples. We've been given the Spirit to help us while we wait. We have the Scriptures (the additional teaching Jesus wanted his people to have, but weren't ready for).

So we should:

- Read the Scriptures and live faithful to Christ
- Rely upon the Spirit for help, comfort, and strength
- Gather the sheep into the fold
- Comfort one another as we await Jesus' return
- Remember that Jesus reigns over all things
- Long for His coming

REVIEW:

1. What did Jesus mean when he said in verse 4, "I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you."?
2. Where is he going in verse 5?
3. Why is it to their advantage that he goes away (verse 7)?
4. What are the three things that the Spirit will convict the world of (verses 9-11)?
5. How does the Spirit glorify Christ in verse 14?

REFLECT:

1. What typically comes to your mind when you think of the Holy Spirit?
2. What are the two ditches we can fall into regarding the Spirit?

RESPOND:

1. What should we be doing while we wait for Jesus to return?

2. Are you doing those things?

MEDITATE:

- John 16:8-11 - *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; 11 concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.*

MEMORIZE:

- John 16:13 - *When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.*

PRAYER FOCUS:

- TJC Kids Director: **Laurie DiCicco**
- NAMB Church Planter: **Miguel Estevill** - Miami, FL - *Christ In Me Church*
- Unreached People Group (UPG): **Dargin** in Ukraine
 - Population: 1,300
 - Christian: 0.00%
 - Evangelical: 0.00%
 - Primary Religion: Islam
 - Primary Language: Dargwa
 - Status: **Unreached**