

In the Shadow of the Cross - Charged on Three Accounts

by J. Glyn Owen

The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and brings the truth to light, emphasizing the seriousness of unbelief in Jesus Christ.

Duration: 1:03:04

Scripture: Matthew 25:1, John 14:1-2, John 15:1-8, John 16:5-11

Topics: "Cross"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on a passage from John chapter 16, specifically verses 8 to 11. The passage discusses the role of the paraclete, or counselor, in convicting the world of guilt in regard to sin, righteousness, and judgment. The preacher emphasizes the intimacy of Jesus' relationship with his disciples, using the analogy of the vine and branches. The sermon also highlights the historical guarantee of judgment, as the prince of this world is already condemned. The preacher acknowledges that it may be difficult for some to accept the concept of sin and righteousness being irreconcilable, but emphasizes the importance of belief in Jesus Christ.

Transcript

May I invite you to turn with me then to John chapter 16 and to the passage that begins with verse 5. Now I think we shall have to confine ourselves this evening very largely to the central passage in this larger section tonight, namely the passage beginning with verse 8 and concluding with verse 11. We have already had occasion to refer to the content of verses 5 to 7 in another connection in chapter 15, but we'll read now as the basis of our message this evening, verses 8 to 11. When he comes, that is the paraclete, the counselor, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment, in regard to sin because men do not believe in me, in regard to righteousness because I am going to the Father where you can see me no longer, and in regard to judgment because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

Our Lord is still concerned to comfort his disciples who have been so unnerved by the pending departure to go to be with the Father. You will remember that in the passage perhaps beginning at least with the first verse of chapter 15, coming right through to chapter 16, there have been as it were two main threads woven into the tapestry of this remarkable teaching. On the one hand we have a note which underscores the intimacy of our Lord's relationship with his own.

The parable of the vine, I am the vine, you are the branches. You can't conceive of a more intimate relationship than that which obtains between the vine and its own branch. They share in the one life.

They bear the one fruit. It's the fruit of the whole vine, though it appears on the branches. The intimacy of the relationship obtaining between Jesus Christ and his people, his followers, that is expressed here in a number of ways.

For example, in the course of chapter 15, more than once our Lord speaks to his disciples as friends. He says, I've not called you servants, I've called you friends. You're not just slaves.

A slave doesn't know what his master's about, but I've called you friends and I've told you everything. And of course that's exactly what he's doing here. He's opening their eyes and their minds to things that as yet they know not.

And he's even telling them things that are yet to happen. He's dealing with them as with friends. But then there is this, this counterbalancing thread in the tapestry.

If you want to speak of the first as a light thread, there is a dark one. And we were dwelling on that last Sunday evening particularly, namely the enmity of the world towards Jesus Christ and towards those who are his friends. That enmity is soon to nail the son of God to the cross.

And Jesus has told his disciples that there will come a time when the same hostile, evil, unbelieving world will believe that it is doing God's service when it takes them and their successors. And we'll put them to death. And they will think that doing so, hurling them to prison and eventually bringing them to the place of death is nothing short of rendering service, worship to almighty God.

Now, how do you deal with a situation like this? Well, our Lord had the master key. The answer to it is found in the blessed ministry, the wholesome ministry, the adequate ministry, the victorious ministry, the sufficing ministry of the blessed Holy Spirit. If there is one thing I pray God for tonight as we meditate upon this passage, it is that you and I should see again that there is no such entity as a Christian and there is no such phenomenon as a church apart from the blessed ministry of the heavenly paraclete, the Holy Spirit.

Though Christ has died and is risen again, it is by the Holy Spirit that he brings to birth those who are dead in trespasses and sins and applies the merits of his atonement to them so that they are released and liberated and made the children of God and incorporated into his body. The ministry of the Holy Spirit. Now, there is a double ministry here.

There is a ministry of the Spirit in relation to the believers, the followers of Christ, the disciples. And there is a ministry of the Holy Spirit in relation to the world, the hostile world. Here tonight, we are focusing particularly on one aspect of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in relation to the hostile world.

We've already referred to one other aspect of the ministry in relation to the world. I think that is indicated in verses 26 and 27 of chapter 15. When the counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.

The Holy Spirit would testify, would bear witness in the world and to the world through Christians, of course. The implication there is when he comes to you, he will testify in you, through you, to the world. He will tell the truth about the Lord Jesus Christ, as no one else can.

But now here comes the other ministry to the world or in relation to the world. Here, the word paraclete seems to be taking on the meaning of an advocate for the prosecution. Ever to the term advocate, the term paraclete, paracletos, as it is used here, has really meant one alongside the disciples to guide them, to help them, to guard them, to encourage them and so forth.

He is more an advocate for the defense and for the comfort of people that need him. But now here we take on the other side. He becomes the advocate for the prosecution of the world.

He will convict the world of sin, righteousness and of judgment. Now that then is our theme tonight. I guess it is helpful if we divide it into two main sections.

The first will be brief, and the other will be a little longer. First of all, the conviction at which the Holy Spirit aims in his prosecuting of the world. When he comes, he will convict the world of sin in regard, of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.

That is the new international version, and I think it is very accurate. Now, what does this mean? To convict the world. What was the Holy Spirit going to do? What was his ministry? Can I briefly summarize what I trust will be a reasonably adequate reply to that question? I turn to the Arntgengrich Greek English Lexicon, and it tells us that there are three possible shades of meaning to the underlying Greek word translated convict, or in some of your translations, you have the word reprove in the King James Version, for example.

In another version, it says to prove the world wrong. And you have a number of various translations of the underlying word. What does it mean? Well, evidently, when you have various translations, it means that the word is a very large one, a very comprehensive one.

And there are more thoughts than one embodied in its bosom. There are three very significant thoughts that could well be found in this one word translated in our text, he will convict the world. One, it may convey the idea of exposing something that so far has been covered.

Now that word is used, for example, in John chapter 3 and verse 20, in that sense, bringing something to light, something that's been hidden, exposing it. Listen to what John says. Everyone, or what Jesus says in according to John 3 20, everyone who does evil hates the light and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

Now that's exactly the same word as the one translated in our text as convict the world. You see, it has this meaning of exposing something. Now, you may have had something hidden about you.

Nobody knew about it, but the Holy Spirit comes and he brings the truth to light and suddenly you're exposed. Secondly, the same word may imply the activity of convincing or convicting. That's what we have, particularly in our translation in the new international version.

This meaning appears to be required in such passages as John 8 46. You remember when our Lord was remonstrating with the Jews because they wouldn't believe on him, he said, can any of you prove me guilty of sin? I think in the King James, it says, can any of you convince me of sin or convict me of sin? If I am telling the truth, this says Jesus, why don't you believe me? But if not, can any of you convict me or prove me guilty of sin? And of course, none of them could, and yet they wouldn't believe him. Thirdly, the words may equally well describe what we mean by reproving with a view to correcting like a parent reproves a child, not just for the sake of telling the kiddy off.

I hope not anyway, at worst, it may be that sometimes, but in order to correct the child, because the child is precious to the parent. Paul, in writing to Timothy 1 Timothy 5 chapter 20 says, those who sin are to be rebuked publicly so that others may take warning. Now you notice what that means, rebuked, reproved in order to be corrected.

Here then in John 16 verses 8 to 11, we may have one or more of these three main emphases implicit in the underlying word, namely those of exposing what has been largely hidden or convicting someone of a fault or of rebuking someone of his or her misdeeds with a view to correcting that person. Dr. J. H. Bernard summarizes it in this way. The word means, he says, to cross-examine for the sake of convincing or refuting an opponent.

And a great scholar of a former day who had chairs in two Canadian theological colleges adds one important rider to all this. He says that by using this particular Greek word rather than another one, which was probably even better known and more familiar to the common people, Jesus meant to imply that the conviction of the world of the spirit, the conviction of the world by the spirit will be effectual. The reason he says that is this, the other word *epitima* could sometimes be used of a rebuke that was undeserved and also of a rebuke that never was fruitful in fulfilling what it was meant to fulfill.

Jesus did not choose that word. He put it on one side and he took up this particular word that we have here and says, Dr. Abbott Smith, he did so because he really meant to imply that when the spirit comes to convict, he convicts successfully sooner or later, he will bring the matter to an issue and he will convince us and convict us and find us guilty to the point that we shall have to plead for mercy. Now, of course, if we were to do it at this point, we could very well prove that by what happened on the day of Pentecost.

This is exactly what the spirit did, but perhaps we shall have a look at that before we close our next point, which is this. We turn from the conviction at which the spirit aims to the charges which the spirit advances against the world. Now, I'm glad this is the occasion when two of our sisters are leaving us, though that's the wrong way of putting it.

We're not glad to get rid of them, but I'm glad that it happens to be when we are called upon to expound this passage. For if there is one thing that those on the mission field need, as those of us in the work of the Lord on the home front, it is this. It is the knowledge that apart from the ministry of the Holy Spirit, we can do nothing, literally nothing.

But on the other hand, on the other side of the coin, where the spirit of the Lord is ministering to and through the people of God, then he can minister successfully to do exactly what God wills. Now, what are the charges? Well, it is possible. This is very aggravating when you read the commentators.

It is possible to look upon these three supposed charges here in different ways. There are some people who feel that really there is only one charge here, a charge of disbelieving in the Lord Jesus Christ. And the other two are but expressions of the first.

Other folk believe that there are three distinct charges. Well, I'm going to compromise and I'm going to come halfway through. In a sense, the first is distinct, I think.

But there is another sense in which the second, there is a sense in which the second and the third amplify the first charge, though we are going to take them one by one, even taking them largely on their own. Now, let's look at them. What are they? What is the Holy Spirit going to charge the world about? He will

convict, he will convince, he will reprove, he will expose the world concerning what? First of all, concerning sin.

And concerning sin on this count because the world does not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. The gravity of unbelief in Jesus Christ. Now, I've no doubt at all, if you and I were to be honest, we would really doubt the validity of this statement.

You see, the implication here is this, that the first thing, the most important thing for the Spirit to do is to show the world, to reprove the world and expose the world's unbelief in Jesus. As the most perverse thing that the human heart and human mind can possibly do. You and I don't really believe that.

Oh, we say we do. But I think you and I would believe that there are many sins in the book which are more important than this. If you were robbed of your possessions tonight, wouldn't you think that robbery was far more serious than that the man should just say, I don't believe in Jesus Christ as son of God.

And I could quote a number of other things that might well happen to you. And in consequence upon which you would think that there are many things far, far more serious than simply unbelief with regards to Jesus Christ. But I want you to notice this.

This is what comes first. When the Holy Spirit comes, he will come and he will charge the world and convict the world and expose the world on the score of this first and this basic issue. It's sin in unbelief concerning Jesus Christ.

And I want to say to you right at the beginning, I believe this is the cardinal sin. If you live in this sin and die in this sin, there is no forgiveness. This sin, if it is perpetuate is a sin that is sure to condemn you.

Every other sin will condemn you. Unless you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. When you disbelieve in the Lord Jesus Christ, then that very disbelief can cancel all your good and leave all your sin in your lot and in your heart and on your shoulders.

Now let's look at it. Men's refusal to believe in Jesus Christ when they have been presented with the facts relating to his birth, life, teaching, death, resurrection, and ascension, and to his enthroned status in heaven is no light matter. Men may treat it as a trivial affair, but not without courting the gravest possible consequences.

Such unbelief shares in the moral quality of sin. And the text is quite unequivocal in regard to sin because they believe not or they disbelieve in me. Now, why is unbelief in Jesus Christ so, so, so serious? There are many reasons one could give to this question.

Let me just suggest two or three very briefly. One, unbelief in Jesus Christ is so serious because it is a manifest disobedience of a divine command. The scriptures command that we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

John, in writing his first epistle in chapter 3 and verse 23, puts it very boldly. He says, and this is his, that is God's command, that we believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. Now, one could enlarge considerably upon that.

John has already described or rather explained sin in terms of disobedience to commandment. It is anomia, it is lawlessness. Sin means trying to live in rebellion against God's law, breaking loose from the

law of God, from the command of God.

Failure to believe in the Messiah, the Son of God, when we have known the facts concerning him, is a flagrant disobedience of the divine command, and it is unjustifiable. It is unjustifiable because of the person Jesus was, because of the life Jesus lived, because of the death Jesus died, because of the resurrection that was his, and the ascension that was his, and in this context, the sending forth of the Holy Spirit. It is completely unjustified to disbelieve in Jesus Christ.

Unbelief in the second place is a veritable disregard of the Spirit's manifold witness to Jesus Christ. Now, here again, this is a major theme of Scripture, and if we were here for a longer time, we would have to start in the Old Testament, because what you have in the Old Testament is basically the testimony of the Spirit to the Lord Jesus Christ. And when the Savior came to expound the Scripture following his resurrection, you remember, he started with Moses, and he went through all the Scriptures, and he pointed to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

How did they get there? Please, how did they get in there? I'll tell you, by the Holy Spirit. It's the Holy Spirit testifying to the Lord Jesus Christ, and the unbeliever in Jesus goes against the testimony of the Spirit to Jesus in the Old Testament. But there, I've no time for that tonight.

Let's just take two or three illustrations of the Spirit's testimony to Jesus Christ. First of all, the Spirit's witness in coming to abide upon him in the semblance of a dove at his baptism. Yes, and abiding on him.

You remember what we read in Matthew, and in Mark and Luke, in almost identical words. As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment, heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him.

But now, if you turn to John chapter 1 verse 32, John the Baptist says this. Then John gave this testimony. I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him.

Well, what's the significance of the remaining on him? Well, if you read on to verses 33 and 34 of John 1, you get the answer. John had already been told by God, upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon him, he is my Son, he is the Messiah, he is the Promised One. And says John, I saw, and I testify, I saw it, and because I saw it, I believe.

And so you see, John the Baptist was able to testify not only to the fact that Jesus was the one who would take away the sin of the world, but was the one who would baptize with the Holy Spirit. For he saw the Spirit descend upon him, and he knew that he was the Anointed One of God. To disbelieve in Jesus is to disbelieve the testimony of the Spirit and the witness of John.

It is also to disbelieve the Spirit's witness in coming to the church at Pentecost in fulfillment of the Savior's promise. I find this the most faith-confirming study when you read the book of Acts and read the Gospels in this light. How do you explain the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost? Where did he come from? Well, of course, this chapter that we're dealing with now, and the previous chapter, and chapter 14, they explain the whole thing.

Jesus is leaving. He has been the paraclete with the disciples, by their side in the body. He's leaving, and he says, I'm going to send you another paraclete.

Right here in our text, or in the earlier words, beginning with verse 5, he goes on to say, it's expedient for you that I go away. It's really for your benefit. Because if I don't go away, the other paraclete will not come to you.

His coming to you depends upon my going away. When I go, when I will arrive with the Father, I will ask the Father, and I will send him forth to you. Bless them.

We find a lot of faults with those early disciples. And they were not blameless. They were men and women made of like stuff to ourselves.

But listen, they believed that Jesus meant what he said, and they waited in Jerusalem, and they tarried for 10 days. He had said to them, don't you go out from Jerusalem until you be endued with power from on high. Don't move, he says, until my promise is fulfilled.

Then you will go. You shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you. And they waited.

Why? Because they believed. Then came Pentecost. When the day of Pentecost was fully come, you remember the story, down from the glory, the blessed Spirit of God, the other paraclete came.

But you see the significance of this. It means that Jesus has arrived. The only explanation of the Spirit's coming is that he's arrived at the place of authority.

So the coming of the Spirit is a testimony to Jesus that he counts in heaven, that God hears him. Oh, this is precious. You were tempted to disbelieve in the validity of our Lord's intercession.

Elaine and Margaret, I've no doubt that you will be from time to time attempted to disbelieve, as all of us are. But when he makes a promise, he keeps it. That's the point.

And the Holy Spirit came down on the day of Pentecost in visible form. There were tons of fire and they heard and they knew that he had come. Why? Because the Spirit wanted to make sure that they recognized that Jesus was on the throne.

He was on earth because Jesus was on the throne. His was a testimony to the ascended authority of the Lord. You see, to disbelieve in him, to refuse to trust Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, is to dishonor the whole testimony of the coming of the Spirit.

Now one could go on. Perhaps I can just mention this. The same goes for the life and teaching of Jesus.

You know that before the prejudice got hardened so that nothing could touch it, the common people not only heard Jesus gladly in the base of his flesh, but they even confessed that he spoke as one having authority and not as the teachers of the law that they were accustomed to hearing. Now the teachers of the law had authority. They were the authorized teachers of the day, but he had a quality of authority that was not given to them.

Where did he get it from? There's only one answer to that. The blessed Holy Spirit ministered to him. He explained that in the synagogue in Nazareth at the very beginning of his ministry, that he was doing this and that and he was proclaiming liberty to the captives because the Spirit of the Lord is upon me.

Isaiah 61 was fulfilled in him, he said, and that's the explanation. Same goes for his miraculous deeds. I like the way the Gospels record how Jesus performed his miraculous deeds of healing.

For example, Matthew says that he healed and he cast out demons by the power of the Spirit. Have you noticed how Luke puts it in a different way? Luke says, I like this, Luke says that he cast out demons by the finger of God. Isn't that precious? What an image of the Holy Spirit here upon earth, the finger of God.

Can you see those demons leaving men and women? Can you see them exercised no more to touch men? Can you see them liberated? Says Luke with a touch of humor, that's only the finger of God. You wait till you see his hand at work. The finger of God is enough to rescue a man from hell and from the powers of Satan.

What must his hand be like? What must his arm be like? But you see, to refuse the testimony of his teaching with authority and of his healing with might is to refuse the testimony of the Spirit to him. And all this mounts up not only to show that it is serious, but it is terribly serious. I move from it by referring to something that we've just in going referred to.

This unbelief in the Lord Jesus Christ is a kind of parent sin, as some of our forefathers used to speak of it. There was a great old divine in the part of the world that I come from, who always used to speak of unbelief in Christ as the parent sin. I won't give you his language, you wouldn't understand it, but that's what he meant, a parent sin.

So what did he mean by that? Well, you see, he meant this. When once you have unbelief in Jesus Christ, then that gives birth to many other sins. If you don't believe what Christ has said about God, then you don't make use of his teaching in approaching God, in thinking of God, in worshiping God, in serving God.

It's a parent sin. If you don't believe in what Jesus Christ did on the cross, well, then you don't trust it. You trust something else for your salvation, and so you undermine the whole thing.

It's a parent sin. It begets children all along the way. Unbelief in Jesus Christ is a kind of sin that spawns other sins down along the way, until you are engrossed and lost in a whole host of sins, all springing from this.

And of course, ultimately, then this must be the sin that separates us from God. There will be all kinds of sinners in the glory, you know. That is, men and women that have been sinners of various kinds.

When you and I have the opportunity of going around and conferring with them, we shall find that they've been guilty of all the sins in the book, and some that are not in the book. But they will all have found forgiveness, and they will all have found peace. Where will they have found it? In believing, in trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Every one of them. And their robes will be washed, and their spirits will be clean, and they will be accepted by the beloved one, and they will sing around the throne, and they will belong to the concourse of the redeemed out of every kindred and tribe and people and nation, and they'll know the song of the lamb, let alone sing it. They will know it.

How have they got it? There's only one answer. By their faith in the Lord Jesus. And what accrued out of that faith? The gravity of unbelief.

Here is the basic charge. Because they believe not on me, nothing counts. Where this is absent, where this is present, everything counts.

A cup of cold water given in the name of a disciple who believes in him has meaning and value. Without love for him, you may give your body to be burned. You may sell all that you have and give to the poor.

But unless you're rightly related to him by faith and love, nothing counts before God. Where you have the thread of faith and love in Christ, then every apparently insignificant deed has a new meaning. This is the cardinal sin.

The gravity of unbelief in Jesus, now that brings us to the guarantee of the righteousness of Jesus Christ himself. The second charge, he will convict the world in regard to righteousness because I am going to the Father where you can see me no longer. Would you notice first of all here, the seal set upon Christ's righteousness.

We've already referred to this. We must again do so. The arrival of the Holy Spirit among God's people is intimately related to the arrival of God's Son in the presence of God, in the presence of God in heaven.

Because Jesus had promised that when he arrived there, he would ask the Father and then the Father would send forth the Holy Spirit. The apostles understood and explained the arrival of the Spirit at Pentecost. Therefore, in terms of Christ's prior arrival, not only in the presence of God, but at the right hand of God.

Now that means that he is accepted in the presence of God as righteous. There is no other explanation of the phenomenon of Pentecost, of the coming of the Spirit, other than in terms that it was the fulfillment of our Lord's promise. But that means that he is accepted by God.

He's accepted into the presence of God. He's accepted to the place of authority with God. And would God accept one who was unrighteous? Would God accept one who had led people astray? Would God accept into his presence and to the place of authority that he could command the Holy Spirit to go and take his place upon earth? Would God accept anyone to that position who was unrighteous? If only to ask the question, to hear the answer.

And so you see, Peter on the day of Pentecost explains the phenomenon of Pentecost, exalted to the right hand of God. He says, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and he has poured out what you now see and hear, Acts 2.33. There could be no more definite seal upon the unsullied righteousness of Jesus Christ than this. He's received into the Father's presence and he's given authority there.

But now, the seal set upon Christ's righteousness leads to something else. That sealed righteousness of Christ becomes the standard righteousness for all who would enter the presence of the same God. What is the standard that God requires of those who would enter into his presence? Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Who shall stand in his holy place? Our blessed Lord entered and he stands in his place, in his holy place, and is seated at his right hand because he was righteous.

If you and I are to stand in the presence of God and be received, we must be righteous. Jesus told his disciples on one occasion, Matthew 5.20, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and of the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven. Christ, according to Peter, has left us an example that we should follow in his steps, while Paul insists that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven.

The standard required of any man to enter into the presence of God is that of righteousness, Christ's righteousness. But we haven't got it. That's what I haven't got.

That's what you haven't got. And there may be someone here tonight to whom this is the message of the hour. You think that you have righteousness which you don't have.

You think that you have a quality of righteousness that enables you to come into the presence of God in prayer now and into his presence at last. But you're depending upon your own home-spun righteousness, and your righteousnesses are as filthy rags. They don't count with God.

The kind and quality of righteousness that belong to Jesus Christ is not found in us. We do not have it. But now this is where the gospel comes in, you see.

To go to Paul, Paul says, now our righteousness from God, apart from law, apart from our own keeping the law, has been made known to which the law and the prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe in him. Disbelieve in him, and you're left in your sin.

Believe in him, and not only does he pardon your transgressions through his atoning blood, but he hides you. He clothes you with his own righteousness. He imputes his own righteousness to you so that with Zinzendorf you can say, Jesus, thy blood and righteousness, my beauty are my glorious dress.

Midst flaming worlds in these arrayed with joy shall I lift up my head. You're accepted in the beloved one. Christ has been made our righteousness, says Paul in 1 Corinthians 1.30 or more daring still in 2 Corinthians 5, we are made the righteousness of God in him.

He was made sin for us. We have become the righteousness of being made the righteousness of God in him. The righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ is guaranteed because he was accepted into the presence of God.

And that's the only righteousness that'll get you there and get me there. But how can I get that? Well, it's the gift of God. You can't earn it.

You don't get that because you put something in the offering. You don't come back, get that because you come to church often. You don't get that even because you pray, though you may pray for it.

And to pray for it is the right thing to do. But you get it because it is the gift of God mediated through the sacrifice of his son by the ministry of the spirit. Hurriedly, let me turn to the last thought, the gravity of unbelief in Jesus Christ, the guarantee of the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

As far as he is concerned and as far as its ability to clothe us so that we too are acceptable in him. Now to approach God in prayer and ultimately to join him. And the last charge, the inevitability of judgment where the sin of man encounters the righteousness of Christ without faith in him.

He will convict the world in regard to judgment because the prince of this world now stands condemned. Sin and righteousness are eternally irreconcilable. And we find it difficult to take this in, all of us.

And I know if there are those here tonight in a condition of unbelief in Jesus Christ, I know you find this difficult and you try to say that though you are not righteous, then you're, you are, you've got what Dr. Donald Gray Barnhouse used to speak of as a 14 ounce righteousness or a 12 ounce righteousness. It doesn't come right up to the 16 ounces, but, but, but you've got a measure of it and you hope for the best

that that'll get you somewhere. My friend, sin in any measure, sin and righteousness cannot coexist in peace.

And whilst there is sin in you that is not forgiven, there has to be conflict with God. Conflict on the very basis of God's righteousness and your unrighteousness. This is the moral basis for the doctrine of judgment.

They are antipathetic. They are opposite. And these opposites can only clash and collide.

And when you clash with God, you can only lose. You collide with God and you are always the loser. He who because of the sin of unbelief denies and rejects the righteousness of Christ and refuses the pardon of his blood is a person who is left in the nakedness of his own sin.

And he is a candidate for eternal judgment. Now, whereas we learn elsewhere of a moral inevitability of this too, our text points to the historically demonstrated guarantee of such judgment. What our text says is this.

He will convict the world in regard to judgment. Why? Because the Prince of this world is judged. You see, God looks upon this world.

Now, whether you believe in it or whether I believe on it is immaterial. God looks upon this world as under one Prince. We as a country have one Prime Minister.

He represents us. God looks upon humankind under its Prince and behind the battle on the cross or in relation to the cross, the battle between Jesus, the human Jesus and other men, the Jews and the Romans and others, whoever they may have been. Behind the merely human battles that went on, there was a battle on another plane altogether, a spiritual battle.

It was the battle between God, the divine Savior, and the Prince of the power of the air, the Prince of this world, the one who holds the world in his power. Now, what Jesus is saying here is this. The Prince of this world stands condemned.

What condemned him? Well, he's speaking prophetically of what's going to happen at the cross. The cross is going to expose him. He will slay the very righteous one, the one whom God will eventually cause to be raised from the dead and to ascend to his own right hand and prove him to be righteous by accepting him into his own presence and his own right hand.

Yet Satan, the Prince of this world, condemned him. The world, namely society organized without reference to God, is consciously or otherwise under its Prince. And it has slain incarnate righteousness.

Now that same malign Prince or ruler was exposed on the cross. And not only was he exposed, but by the resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, as Paul tells us at the end of Ephesians chapter one, God has made the Lord Jesus above powers and principalities and every power that is in this world or in the world to come. He's Lord over them and he's judge of them.

Now, since Satan stands thus condemned at the cross, all those who take his stance and his view of Jesus and who follow him and serve him in rejecting Jesus and in undoing the work of Jesus, they can only share in his fate. I'd never noticed this before, but it shook me as I read it and meditated on this passage. Two things are said to be prepared in scripture at any rate.

One in this context and one in another context. But did you, did you notice? Yes, you did notice as we were dwelling and 14 chapter 14 verses one and two, I go to prepare a place for you. Can I remind you of another text in Matthew chapter 25 and verse one, then he will say to those on his left hand, depart from me.

You who are cursed into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Listen, my friend, let's get it. Jesus is preparing a home for his people.

There is a lake of fire that is as equally prepared for the devil and his angels. And unless you and I have righteousness, which exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees. In other words, the very righteousness of Christ himself, whereby he was accepted into the father's presence.

If we are left in our sin and left to ourselves, there is nothing but judgment and condemnation that awaits us. And we'll be tied to the Prince that has ruled over us in this world. And his fate hell was not made for men and women.

My dear people, did anyone ever say that from this pulpit before? I'm sure somebody did hell was not made for men and women. It was made for the devil and his angels. Don't be his angel.

Then quit your satanic ministry, break your links with him. It wasn't made for you. It was only prepared for those who are his angels.

And the call of the gospel and the summons of the gospel is to break our, our, our allegiance to him and to turn around and to submit to him. Whose righteousness covers our sin and mitigates the threat of judgment by making us right with God, the spirit's conviction, the spirit's charges. Now I must close.

Andrew saw just, let's look at the, take a brief look at Pentecost. This is exactly what happened. The Holy Spirit came and what did he do? Well, he charged men and women on these three counts.

People believed that they had done the right thing in crucifying Jesus. They argued that they were right. And they argued and argued until they won the day.

Then came Easter day and they saw that with one fell stroke, God had reversed their verdict. As Peter puts it so succinctly on the day of Pentecost, whom God raised from the dead, you hang him on the tree. God raised him from the dead.

He reversed his judgment. Your verdict. You said he's guilty of death.

God says he's the author of life. That was Easter day. He tore the seal to shreds, removed the stone they had used to bar access to or exit from the borrowed grave.

And Jesus in defiance of it all came out risen for over 40 days. He manifested himself to his friends as risen from the dead and communed with them. Then came Pentecost.

He had ascended. Then came Pentecost and the promised spirit descended to the very people who had falsely accused and then secured the death of the savior on Calvary's cross. And the spirit exposed the awful deed, brought the whole wretched thing out in its gruesome light.

They have crucified the son of God. They have crucified the Messiah of the scriptures. They were exposed.

They were convicted. They were rebuked until you hear them cry, men and brethren, what shall we do? That's the spirit's ministry. And there is no building of the church of Jesus Christ.

And there is no continuance of the true church of Jesus Christ. Apart from this, we're talking an awful lot today about getting extra numbers and doubling our numbers in the Presbyterian church. That's not how the church grows.

The church grows when the spirit of God comes upon men and women and shuts them up to faith and convinces them of sin and righteousness and judgment. And they cry out, what must we do? We have no answer to the spirit. Our mouths are shut.

Our hearts are broken. We're at our wit's end. What shall we do? And here's the blessed moment for the good news.

Believe. Repent. Turn from your unbelief and your wicked ways.

Trust him. Come to him. Accept him.

Confess him. Be baptized in his name. And he will receive you and he will bless you and he will bless your children.

And there was added to the church thousands upon thousands. And that's how it started. That's how it must continue.

I close, my friends, thank you for your gracious listening. I close with a question. Is the Holy Spirit your comforter or your accuser? He will convict the world.

He will comfort the saints. What makes the difference? Their attitude to Jesus Christ. That's all.

If you've believed on him and do continue to do so. If you've received him and he's yours, then the spirit will bear witness to Jesus Christ as worthy of your faith and worthy of your trust and worthy of your obedience, worthy of your life, worthy of your death, worthy of your all. The spirit will bear witness to that.

But you say no to him and the spirit will convict you until he departs from you or until you depart from this world. And when once the spirit has departed and ceases to convict you, my friend, you are on the last long slide from which there is no return. My spirit will not always strive with hardened, self-destroying man.

Is he pleading with you tonight? Are you a believer in Jesus Christ? Have you his righteousness? If not, I ask you in his name. Come to him. Rest in him.

Trust in him. Witness to him. Serve him.

Go on with him. The world needs him too. And that to his everlasting glory and praise forever.

Are you a believer in Jesus Christ? Have you his righteousness? If not, I ask you in his name. Come to him. Rest in him.

Trust in him. Witness to him. Serve him.

Go on with him. The world needs him too. And that to his everlasting glory and praise forever.

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