

**Text: John 16: 5-15**

**Theme: It is for Your Good**

**Sermon delivered by Dele Agbelusi during Holy Communion Service on 11/06/2017 at 10.30am**

There are times when we face some challenging circumstances in which we expect God to intervene in a particular way. For example, I was scheduled to travel in a coach some years ago from Ibadan (Oyo State in Nigeria) to Kaduna. I missed the coach, not because I was late but because a smart Alek took my place. I was sad and wished God would intervene but He did not in spite of the fact that I was travelling on His mission. I made frantic efforts to join the same coach in the next town but that also failed. Eventually, I boarded a later one two hours later. To my consternation, on our way to Kaduna, the coach I would have boarded earlier was involved in an accident with a petrol tanker and almost everyone in the bus was burnt to death. "It was for my good" that God made me lose my position in the earlier coach. I could say that with the advantage of hindsight, because I could have died with the others!

### **(5-7) Jesus explains the benefits of His departure.**

The passage before us is the end of the discourse that Jesus had with his disciples before he was arrested, tried, beaten, mocked, sentenced and nailed to a cross.

Jesus was seeking to engage His disciples in a discussion about His own suffering and departure, but they were too preoccupied with themselves. There is a principle here: When you and I are consumed with our own problems, it is impossible to focus upon another person's dilemma. Unfortunately, the disciples had not yet learned this important principle. They wanted Jesus to continue with business as usual not realizing how limiting this would be for them and Jesus, in John 16:7, Jesus says, "But 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."

You may ask, "why doesn't He send the Helper to walk alongside Him?"

The gift of the Advocate or Helper or the Holy Spirit could not be given until Jesus had gone back to the Father. That's what Jesus is saying. 'Why' you might be thinking? 'Can't God do anything'? Well yes, God can do anything that's in accordance with His character and will. And the role of the Holy Spirit, as we shall see in minutes, was to point people to Jesus. The Holy Spirit was going to work through the Apostles to spread the message of Jesus, the good news to the ends of the earth. But what is the good news about Jesus Christ – that He was born in Bethlehem and worked many miracles and was seen as a good teacher and a compassionate person? No.

The good news of Jesus depends on Jesus going to the cross; it depends on Jesus being raised from the dead on Easter Sunday. And it depends on Jesus being enthroned in victory back in Heaven as he returned to His father. So, the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost, couldn't have happened until after Easter; it couldn't happen until after the ascension. "Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you." And that was better than having Jesus with them in the flesh.

Why is it better for the disciples to have the presence of the Helper than the presence of Jesus Himself as they did then? Because the **Holy Spirit will not only be with them as Jesus has been, but in them as well** (cf. 17:23, 26). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus, and He dwells within everyone who believes. Clearly, these are the best days to

be living in. Through the Spirit, Jesus is here inside each and every believer right now. The Holy Spirit is a God send.

However, if the Holy Spirit is to serve as an advantage in your life, you must ask Him to help you. This really isn't so tough. In your daily life, you ask others to help you, right? If there's a jar you can't open, you ask for help. If you run into computer problems, you call someone who knows computers to help you. To succeed in life, you need to ask for help. If you don't, you will continually fail because no person has all the necessary skills to pull everything off in life. Similarly, in your walk of faith, you need help. You can't do it by yourself. You ought to be continually calling on the Holy Spirit to help you to live this life.

In the remaining verses, **Jesus speaks of two major advantages of the Spirit's coming: He convicts the world (16:8-11) and He communicates to believers (16:12-15).**

**So, the first major advantage of the Spirit's coming is His involvement with the world.**

First, Jesus focuses His attention on how the Holy Spirit will prove (convict) the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment." (verse 8)

Interestingly, this is the only place in Scripture where the Spirit is said to perform a work in "the world." The word "convict" comes from the drama of a courtroom trial. It refers to what the prosecuting attorney does when he argues his case. He puts the defendant on the witness stand and begins to pile up the evidence. Fact upon fact, witness upon witness, truth upon truth, slowly, building his case until finally the enormity of the evidence is so overwhelming that the judge is forced to say to the defendant, "I find you guilty beyond a reasonable doubt." Not only that, this word means to present the evidence in such an overwhelming fashion that even the defendant is compelled at the end of the trial to step up and say, "I admit it. I confess. I am guilty."

**Jesus expounds on this verse in 16:9-11. In these verses, Jesus explains what it means to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.** First, the Holy Spirit will convict unbelievers of their sin because people "do not believe in me." Jesus is not saying the Holy Spirit will convict the world of sin in a general way (though He does that). He is talking here about a very specific sin because He says, "they [humankind] do not believe in me."

**What is the greatest sin? Is it murder? Is it theft? Is it adultery? Is it hatred? No. None of those things would be called the greatest sin in the world because there is one sin which, in its effect, is greater than all the rest. It is the sin of refusing to believe in Jesus Christ.** That's what Jesus is saying in 16:9. Not sin in the general sense, but, "I will convict them of the greatest sin of all because they have not believed in Me."

Until people see themselves as sinners they will never see their need for a Savior. However, one's personal sin is not the focus; Jesus has already paid for sin. The focus is the acceptance or rejection of Jesus. What will you do with Jesus? This is the question that we must pose to people.

**The second reason the Holy Spirit convicts the world is because they need to understand their lack of righteousness.** In 16:10-11, the Holy Spirit will convince the world of its need for God's righteousness by making the world realize the poverty of its own righteousness. In Isaiah 64:6, Israel's righteousness is likened to filthy rags. The Holy Spirit needs to convict unbelievers of their need to believe in Christ and not trust in their own righteousness, which is like filthy rags.

**The third reason the Holy Spirit convicts the world is because of the reality of judgment.**

In 16:11, Jesus declares that the Holy Spirit will convict the world “about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.”

At first glance this might appear to be a reference to some future judgment. But this text is not talking about future judgment. It’s talking about past judgment. Notice the phrase “stands condemned”.

Jesus is saying Satan “has been judged in the past, continues to be judged, is now judged, and will continue to be judged into the future.” The judgment is past, present and future. Satan may be a great power in this world, but he is already a defeated foe. This will be fully realized when sinful mankind, fallen angels, and Satan himself stand before the righteous God (cf. Phil 2:6-11).

The Holy Spirit will fulfill His responsibility to convict the world, but He also expects and commands you to fulfill your ministry to unbelievers (cf. 15:26-27). When it comes to sharing the gospel, there are three important principles to keep in mind.

**(1) Pray for those in your life who have yet to believe in Christ. Keep sharing Christ, but remember that only God can change a human heart.** Your first step should be to pray by name for your neighbors, co-workers, classmates, friends, and family members who have yet to believe in Jesus. It’s as simple as writing these people’s names down on a card or post-it-note and putting it inside your Bible cover. Ask the Holy Spirit to convict these individuals of their sin and their need to believe in Jesus.

**(2) Proclaim Christ as the only way to God.** Let’s suppose that you and I are standing 50 feet away from the edge of a cliff. If you fall off, you will drop 1,800 feet before you hit the jagged rocks on the canyon floor. As we stand there chatting, we see an old man walking slowly toward the edge. As he nears the edge, we realize that he is blind and has no idea the danger he is in. Suddenly, he calls out, “Which way should I go?” What would you think if I yelled out, “It doesn’t matter? Go any way you like?” Would I not be criminally negligent when he falls to his death? If I care about him at all, I will call out, “Don’t take another step. I’ll come and get you.” And then I would take him by the hand and lead him to safety. Love compels me to speak the truth and to do what I can to save his life. I recognize that most people throughout the city of London would laugh at the notion that not believing in Jesus is sin. They would say, “We believe in tolerance, diversity, pluralism. Christianity works for you, but it doesn’t work for me. That’s your way of thinking, that’s not my way of thinking. Don’t lay that Jesus stuff on me.” But if you claim Jesus’ words: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me,” (John 14:6) you will tell them the truth.

**(3) Share the bad news as well as the good news.** We are often told we need to believe in Jesus because if we do it will give us purpose in life. It will give peace in our hearts. It will help us make sense out of the world’s chaos. Now as desirable as those things are, they tend to trivialize the gospel. After all, a person might gain a sense of purpose through landing an excellent job that helps people. He might gain a sense of peace from a pill or a bottle, albeit a short-lived one. The Holy Spirit is concerned for more than those things. He does what no job and no bottle ever could do: **He awakens lost people to their ‘lost-ness’ and that has to happen before they are ever found. The Holy Spirit is a God send.**

**The second major advantage of the Spirit’s coming is that He communicates to believers (16:12-15).**

In 16:12, Jesus informs His disciples that He’d like to share more with them; however, at this juncture of their spiritual maturity they’re not able to bear His words. They are distracted and

disillusioned. This is equally applicable to you and me. Jesus has so much truth and insight that He longs to share with us, but He will only do so as we are able. One of your goals should be to be an eager receptor of Jesus' words. Pray for a spiritual sensitivity to God's Word. When you hear it, obey it, so that God will impart more truth to you.

16:13; "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 speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come." There is a particular body of truth that Jesus has in mind. This is not a promise to guide people generally in their exploration of physics and horticulture or atomic energy. The truth is the truth about God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the truth with which the Holy Spirit concerns Himself.

God's Spirit gives us guidance when it comes to practical matters if we ask Him and are willing to follow His guidance. In Acts 15, the Spirit brought peace to a troubled church as they had to adjust their style of ministry to reach a new group of people.

In 1996, we accepted the call of God to leave Nigeria for Great Britain to serve the Lord. But that was all we knew. There was no Sat Nav to tell us whether we would settle in South London, or North London or Newcastle. But with one step at a time, God made His way clear. I first resigned my very lucrative job and my wife followed suit. The children's education was disrupted and we started the walk of obedience one day at a time. The rest is now history.

**If you want the Holy Spirit to guide you in all truth, you have to listen. You have to obey when you're prompted to. You have to follow through when you're "moved" to talk to someone about Christ. You have to move forward when you sense the need to visit someone. You have to obey when you sense God's call to serve in a certain capacity.**

The Holy Spirit communicates to believers by exalting Jesus. In 16:14 Jesus says, "He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you."

The Holy Spirit's primary job description is to glorify Jesus. When you hear a lot of talk about the Holy Spirit or the Holy Ghost, you can be sure that there is a foul spirit. The Holy Spirit doesn't attract attention to Himself; instead, He points people to Jesus. When the Spirit is moving mightily in revival and in various ministries, Jesus is the center of attention. Our goal must be the same. Like the Holy Spirit and John the Baptizer, we must decrease and Jesus must increase (John 3:30). **Our personal lives and ministries must not be about our glory and our accolades; we must point people to Christ.**

This passage closes with a critical truth. Jesus says in 16:15: "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."

Here the Spirit is seen in complete submission to and in harmony with the Son and the Father. He does not act or speak from Himself. Nothing originates from Him; all comes from the Son, and all is done to glorify the Son. Just as the Son did not do anything from Himself, but only that which He heard and received from the Father, so the Spirit never acts independently from the Son. The Spirit's function is to reveal the Son in all that He is to believers. Yet, in revealing the Son, the Spirit is actually revealing the Father because all that the Son has comes from the Father. Thus, the Spirit reveals the Son, who, in turn, expresses the Father. It is a clear revelation of the mutual interdependency of the Trinity.

Don't let the thought of heaven scare you! Be ready for it, live like you could be there any time, but enjoy all the tastes of it we can get here on earth! God the Spirit has that for us. It sure doesn't mean we can't have a good time and enjoy life - the best joy in life comes from serving God. Enjoy it every day!