



**Who's Afraid of the Holy Spirit? – Part 11**  
**Various Scriptures**  
**GCSP – 04/23/2010**

Our Bible studies this past week were both just tremendous. Monday night in the Book of Hebrews we looked at the responsibility we each have to turn the biblical knowledge we have into action. We also saw that we are not only responsible to get our own lives in alignment with God's Word and thus get active, but we have a responsibility towards our brothers and sisters in Christ; for if we fail to encourage and exhort each other a root of bitterness will likely take control.

On Wednesday night we are in the midst of what many call the pinnacle of the Old Testament; a description of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 52-53.

After the study on Wednesday evening, one of our group members had a few questions about one of the difficult concepts we had discussed. This was one of those concepts that really cannot be satisfactorily explained to the point of our human minds being able to fully understand. After we discussed things for a few minutes, this person said to me, "I don't like it when I can't make sense of things; I want everything to be settled in my mind."

This is typical with most of us. We struggle when things aren't logical. We want to be able to lay everything out and see order and structure. We want a world where  $1+1=2$  and where A comes before B. Really and truly we want a measure of control; or should I say we want absolute control.

The problem with control is that by and large it is an illusion. We actually control very little in our own little world, let alone in the lives of other people. Yet we spend so much of our time trying to assert control and trying to gain control.

Tonight, as we turn our focus back to the Holy Spirit as the primary topic instead of a secondary issue in this current sermon series, I want us to see and understand several aspects of the Holy Spirit's work and how we tend to get in the way or try to horn in and do the Spirit's job for Him.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Gospel of **John**.

**John 16:7-11**

Let's pray.

Jesus says the very first work of the Holy Spirit after Pentecost would be to convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.

The very first thing we need to notice and understand in all of this is the fact that conviction of sin, the righteous behavior of the world or lack thereof, and judgment of others, is not our job or responsibility but the divine work of the Holy Spirit. And as we develop each of these three works of the Holy Spirit tonight, I pray He will convict us, and expose righteousness to us, and judge us in respect to when and how we attempt to step in and do His work for Him. Because Jesus doesn't say, "I am sending you (meaning the disciples and us) to convict the

world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment” but that the Holy Spirit has that responsibility.

One other important issue before we get started is the context in which John uses the word, “**world.**” Most of the time this exclusively speaks of unbelievers but it seems in this passage to be speaking in a larger sense where believers could also be included; which only makes sense because the Holy Spirit does indeed also convict us when we are living like the world. So keep both in mind as we work our way through this lest you fail to make personal application where needed.

### Concerning Sin

First, the Holy Spirit convicts people concerning sin. It is the Spirit’s job to bring a deep sense of the sinfulness of sin in people’s lives. Satan has done a masterful job of alleviating and marginalizing and minimizing and even to some extent eliminating the sinfulness of sin in this world. And one of the reasons we must be careful to apply this to believers as well as unbelievers is because the church pretty much adopts the ways of the world, lock, stock, and barrel.

Most Christians dress the way the world dresses, read what the world reads, watch what the world watches, listen to what the world listens to, party like the world parties, and in general tries to bring the world into the church. Because of this tendency we have also fallen for the lies of Satan in regards to what constitutes sin in our own lives; which is very different from what we view as sin in someone else’s life. As I said last week, our vision is 20/20 when it comes to seeing sin in someone else’s life but we are pretty much blind to the sin in our own life most of the time.

So let’s first look at the Holy Spirit’s responsibility to convict unbelievers concerning sin.

### John 16:9

The primary reason Satan is on a mission to eliminate guilt and to take away all inhibitions to immoral and indecent behavior, is to take away the need for a Savior. After all, if you do not view yourself as a sinner then you do not have a need to be saved from your sin. People do not believe in Jesus Christ because they don’t recognize the need to believe in Him; they don’t see or sense the utter sinfulness of sin.

Satan has duped us into softening sin and dulling our minds to the sinfulness and consequences of sin. Adultery is simply an affair or seeing to it that your needs are met. Homosexuality is just an alternative lifestyle that people are born with. Sorcery and witchcraft are spiritual awakenings. Drug addiction, alcohol addiction, pornography addiction, child molestation, and any number of other sins are diseases that cannot be controlled by the person afflicted by these conditions without medical and psychological help. If a child misbehaves today it’s off to the doctor’s office to get some drugs for ADD or ADHD instead of administering proper discipline.

You are not responsible for your problems, at least according to Satan and the world. And if it’s not your fault then why on earth do you need to be repentant and have need of a Savior?

We even see this in the rulings from our courts and the legislation coming out of Washington. It’s not your fault that you have no money and someone else has a bunch of it, so we are going to pass laws and render rulings that makes the man who has worked hard

all his life, give what he has earned to those who refuse to work. We are going to dismiss the biblical mandate to earn your keep since it's not your fault that nobody wants to pay you to be lazy and watch TV all day.

You don't need a Savior; you don't need to believe in Jesus; it's not your fault.

So the Holy Spirit is in the world to convict the world concerning sin. And the Holy Spirit uses those in whom He dwells to accomplish this task as we present the Word of God to those we come in contact with. And we present that Word of God in many ways. Sometimes we literally read and/or quote the Scriptures as we are led by the Holy Spirit to do so. Other times it is simply the act of us obeying God's Word that the Holy Spirit uses; but please understand that it is not you or the persuasiveness of your words that gets the job done, but the convicting power of the Holy Spirit as He applies the Word of God to their hearts and minds concerning sin.

If you are here tonight and you are not genuinely saved, I can't save you. I can't convict you of your sin. My words will never penetrate your heart. But God's Word in tandem with the Holy Spirit can bring you to conviction and repentance.

We have heard the phrase that people need to get lost before they can get saved, and it's true. As I have already spoken about, Satan has done a masterful job of convincing people that they are not lost and thus have no need to confess their sin, let alone repent and turn away from their sin.

Let me show you how the Word of God is used in tandem with the Holy Spirit concerning sin. God's Law is the standard. So answer the following questions:

- Have you ever told a lie? Go ahead, you can answer out loud; have you ever told a lie? God's Word says you shall not bear false witness, meaning you shall not lie.
- Have you ever stolen anything; even a pencil from work or school, or a stick of gum, or cheating on your taxes? God's Word says you shall not steal.
- Have you ever looked at another person with lust in your heart toward that person? Jesus says that is adultery of the heart and God's Word says you shall not commit adultery.
- Have you ever hated someone? Jesus says hatred is the sin of murder and God's Word says you shall not murder.
- Have you ever used God's name as a cuss word or in a disparaging way; even saying, "Oh God" when you do something wrong? God's Word says you shall not take the Lord's name in vain.

The Bible says that if we violate even one of God's Laws that we are guilty of violating the entire Law. So if you answered yes to any of the questions I just asked are you innocent or guilty of breaking God's Law?

If you are guilty of breaking God's Law you are responsible to pay the penalty or be punished for those crimes. The Bible says that no liar or thief or fornicator will inherit the kingdom of heaven. The penalty for sin is eternity in hell. The wages of sin is eternal death in hell according to **Romans 6:23a**. **Romans 1** tells you that you have absolutely no excuse and contrary to what the world says, it is your fault and you are responsible!

**There is none righteous, not even one; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.** You are a sinner and according to God's standard you fully deserve and will receive the condemnation of being damned to hell for all eternity to pay the price for your sins.

The combination of God's Word being declared and the Holy Spirit's activity in your heart and mind should have just convicted you of the sin in your life. It certainly wasn't me. The words may have been coming out of my mouth but I was only relaying to you what God says in His Word.

If you have never genuinely accepted God's salvation before you now have a choice to make. And the reason I say genuinely accepted God's salvation is because I am convinced and Scripture confirms that multitudes of people think they are saved when they really are not. Satan's greatest deception is giving people a false sense of security concerning their salvation. Beloved, regardless of if you walked an aisle or said a prayer at some point in your childhood or early adulthood, you are not saved if your life is not bearing the fruit of righteousness; meaning you are not living your life in obedience to God's Word on a consistent basis.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Gospel of **Matthew**.

**Matthew 7:13-27**

Jesus clearly reveals to us in that passage that genuine Christians will have the evidence of obedience in their lives, false Christians will not have that evidence, and multitudes will go to hell while all the while thinking they were headed to heaven.

So if you have never genuinely accepted God's salvation the choice you have is to ignore that conviction and leave this building with the knowledge that you will spend eternity in the fires of hell when you die, or you can acknowledge your sins, confess them before God, repent and turn away from your sins, and ask God to forgive you.

Because God's Word and the Holy Spirit don't stop with just conviction and condemnation. When you properly respond to the conviction you feel, God says **the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord**. God says you can be **justified by faith** and have **peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ**. God says that He **demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us**. God says **that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved**.

So do not make the mistake of your lifetime; the ultimate and totally unnecessary mistake of dismissing the conviction you felt, or still feel, from God's Word and the Holy Spirit concerning your sinfulness. Beg for God's mercy right now. Pray to Him right now even before this sermon is over and experience true forgiveness and peace.

For those of you who are forgiven, those who are genuinely saved, you most likely felt some conviction as well; because the Holy Spirit doesn't discontinue His work in your life just because you are saved. He still convicts you concerning sin to progressively make you holy and to mold you into the image of Jesus Christ. Salvation does not mean perfection in this life as long as we are still confined to these fleshly and carnal bodies. We are perfect in Christ and are completely forgiven from the aspect of our eternal destiny, but we will

continue to struggle with sin when we choose to walk in the flesh instead of walking in the Spirit.

Any conviction you felt or still feel is the Spirit drawing you to confess as well, as **1 John 1:9** teaches believers to do: **"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."** And if you do not believe you have to deal with sin after salvation, **verse 8** says, **"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."**

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **Galatians**.

### **Galatians 5:16-25**

The conviction you may feel right now is based on your choice to walk in the flesh instead of in the Spirit. Maybe you are causing strife or disputes or dissention, or are jealous or envious, are struggling with anger, or something else along those lines. These are deeds of the flesh and as long as they are evident in your life you are allowing Satan to have the upper hand in your life and are relegating the Holy Spirit to nothing; you are setting your desire on the flesh and its passions.

The Holy Spirit is convicting you concerning sin to crucify the flesh and its deeds, and to instead pursue love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control; to set your desire on the Spirit.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **Romans**.

### **Romans 7:14-8:8**

Paul affirms to us that this battle will rage within us as long as we choose to walk in the flesh and set our minds on the things of the flesh. But if we will choose to walk in the Spirit and set our minds on the things of the Spirit we will experience victory over the flesh. The flesh has no hold on you. As a believer you have no obligation to the flesh whatsoever. You do have control in this regard. You can never truly say that the devil made you do it or you accidentally fell into sin because you have the choice to walk in the flesh or to walk in the Spirit.

So again, if you are a genuine believer and the Holy Spirit is convicting you concerning sin, He is calling you set your mind on the things of the Spirit and to eliminate the things of the flesh from your mind.

What does God's Word say concerning your current struggles? What is the Holy Spirit convicting you of and what is He leading you to? What principles of God's Word are you ignoring or putting off? What worldly standards are you employing in dealing with your problems? What grudges are you bearing? What offences are you holding on to? What burdens are you carrying that should have been cast on the Lord long ago?

Turn back with me in your Bibles to the Gospel of **John**.

### **John 16:9**

Unfortunately, the Holy Spirit has to convict Christians for the same reason He has to convict non-Christians; **because they do not believe in Me.**

Beloved, every time you sin your life proclaims that you believe in Satan more than you believe in Jesus. Every time you choose sin over righteousness you shout to the world that Satan's ways are right and God's ways are wrong. The same issue of unbelief plagues us when the Holy Spirit has to convict us concerning sin.

You may be thinking that I have gone a little too far with this assessment but take a moment to think it through. If you completely and wholly and utterly believed in Jesus you would choose to do what He says without hesitation; obedience would be immediate and non-negotiable. When you hesitate to consider your options you are considering alternatives to what God says in His Word, you doubt that God's way is the best way, and thus you do not believe in Him. It's really that simple folks.

We're obviously not going to get to the work of the Holy Spirit in righteousness and judgment tonight, so let's wrap things up by turning with me in your Bibles to the **Psalms**.

### **Psalm 1:1-3**

The key to believing God and walking in the Spirit is presented to us in this tremendous and familiar passage. The psalmist begins by showing us the progression that leads to sin; or unbelief as we have seen. You cannot walk, stand, or sit with sin.

Walking in the counsel of the wicked simply means you are flirting with sin by considering what the world has to offer; dabbling with the things of the world or sticking your toe in the water so to speak. As mentioned earlier you are watching what the world watches, reading what the world reads, listening to what the world listens to, and you are not discerning the good from the evil; you are walking in the counsel of the wicked and are basically in agreement with them.

Standing in the path of sinners means you are now engaging your mind and imagining what you are missing out on. You are calculating the benefits of doing what the world does with no regard to the consequences. Selfishness has now taken control and your flesh is aching to be satisfied.

Sitting in the seat of scoffers means you have jumped in with both feet and are now fully engaged with both mind and body. Sin is no longer at the door you have opened wide the door and invited sin in to party with you.

God says you are blessed if you stay away from even beginning this progression. And if you avoid this progression from the onset you will delight yourself in God's ways. You will find utter joy and fulfillment in setting your mind on the things of God day and night.

You will be firmly planted in God's truth and will be fully prepared to handle absolutely anything that comes your way. You will produce the fruit of the Spirit in your life and God will prosper you in whatever you do.

So there you have it. Whether you are a genuine Christian or not you have a choice when the conviction of the Holy Spirit comes.

Let's pray.