

"The Convictor/Convincer"

[John 16:5-15](#)

But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' 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. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 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. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Transcript:

Dr. Stewart:

So we've been studying the promises of God. I want to talk about the Holy Spirit as we continue. John 16:5-15 tells us much about that. This is the convincer/convictor. I want to give you a bit of testimony first, keeping in mind the work of the Holy Spirit. This is my life. When I was 19 years old, I trusted Christ in a second story, karate studio above the main street in Carbondale, Illinois. I was invited by a friend to go to a Bible study there. There was a moment when a guy presented the gospel to me and I trust Jesus Christ as my Lord, and Savior, but salvation was a process. I didn't feel any different. I had a calm assurance, a quiet joy that seemed to grow. Before that time, I was in a search, I was in turmoil. It was a long, long search. I kept looking for something, my heart was discontent. When I was 17 years old, I was in X ray school, Radiologic Technology school. When I started, I was a functional alcoholic, like my dad, and like my brother. I live with my oldest brother and his family. And he and I would go out to the bars frequently. Sometimes I chose to go out and drink on my own. I didn't like the taste that much. But it made me feel happy, important, part of the group. Until the morning after, those feelings are a little different. So there was no fulfillment in it and no peace. I often went out looking for ladies, those proved to be empty relationships. I got involved in some drugs, smoked weed and experimented with some other drugs and there was no enlightenment there. I remember one experience that I had when I was very high. And I was trying to read the Bible. You may be asking, Where did that come from? It so happened that a friend of mine, one of my partying buddies, told us when we were out one night about the horrors of Revelation. So I said, Hmm, you know, I'm not sure that I trust this guy completely. I want to read this for myself. So I got out our family Bible. I was really high. And I couldn't understand anything. But I did feel kind of this evil presence with me, kind of the demonic presence, possibly. I cried out to God for help. A few months later, He sent help in the form of a guy who came into a bar to invite

me to come to Carbondale to look with him at a house and considering going off campus living together. Then I was invited to that Bible study I mentioned to you, the Holy Spirit was at work on my heart for some time before I believe. I remember listening to a number of songs, secular songs. And one in particular seemed to have kind of a spiritual message. I was touched by it. It was kind of a searcher song. You know, there's a few searchers songs out there in secular music like Dust In The Wind. Have you heard that one? There was some real truth there. Not many answers but real truth. And this song that touched me was a similar song. A few weeks after I was converted, I heard this song again with new ears. The band is Little River Band in 1975. That's gonna date me a bit. The title is "It's a Long Way There". Let me read just a few of the lyrics to you. "People on their own are getting nowhere. I am on the road to see, if anything is anywhere and waiting, just for me. Every night I walk around the city. Seems like I'll never know that feeling of being together when I go. It's a long way there. It's a long way to where I'm going....But I feel like I've been here for the whole of my life. Never knowing home." Never knowing home. That last line struck me like a ton of bricks. Because as a new believer, the search was over. I knew where home was, we just sang that in the first song we sang here. I know I have a home. It's not far, my search was done. It was solid, my relationship with Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart. And he declared it to me. Those words are in our passage twice, you'll see it. He declared it to me, to my heart, through a secular song. Imagine that.

Now turn with me to John 16 and let's read verses 5 through 15. "I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I'm going to him who sent me. And none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' 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. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. Concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 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. He will glorify Me, for he will take what is mine, and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you."

Jesus has been telling his disciples, gently, for the last few chapters that he's going away, in John 14:3 and also 14:16. And now he says he's going back to the Father where he came from. And what's their response to this? How do they respond? John 16:6, sorrow fills their hearts. Why do you think they're sad? They're focused on their loss right there. They've been with Jesus and he's gonna be gone. They loved hanging out with Jesus. They hope to set up an earthly kingdom, but it's clear that's not going to happen, right? That was disappointing. Jesus gently rebukes them. He says no one asked, where are you going? You know, before this Peter and Thomas had both asked him about that. But not this time, their focus was on their loss, they're self centered. There's no one thinking of Jesus, right? He's the suffering servant. He's come. He's given a lot to come down to them. He said, I'm from God and I'm gonna go back to glory. And they're bummed out.

Can you have a little empathy for Jesus here? That's his place. That's his home. It's our home to. To get home he knows he must go through the cross. He must be tortured and beaten and spit upon and stripped and humiliated and crucified so that he can redeem a people to himself. He will reconcile hostile enemy hearts to himself. He will fulfill His Father's plan and provide perfect righteousness to the wicked, who have none of their own. He will be raised from the dead, he will have God's seal of approval on his perfect work. He will spend time with his disciples and ascend into heaven to take his place at God's right hand. And all this happens according to God's sovereign plan, in agreement with his will. If Jesus had not fulfilled all, if he had not done it perfectly, would he be allowed to sit at God's right hand? No, it wouldn't happen, not with a God who's of pure eyes than to behold evil. He can't overlook any wickedness. But the disciples are so selfish, they don't ask, Where are you going? They've seen the example of Jesus, who is the man of sorrows, he gets outside of himself, he's constantly serving others with a happy heart. Yet they sit in sorrow, Woe is me. Woe is me. "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth that is to your advantage that I go, if I don't go away, the Helper will not come to you."

Wait a minute, Jesus said, it's to our advantage. How can that be? He's the Son of God, He loves us. He teaches us, He protects us. I mean, he calmed the wind and the waves. How could it be to our advantage to lose him? Jesus has already told them, a number of times, things about the Holy Spirit. John 14:16, He's to be with you forever. Verse 26, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I've said to you. Okay, we're listening now. I don't see how this can be better, but fire away. Chapter 16 verse 8, "And when he comes", that's the Holy Spirit, "He will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judge", the spirit is to be at work in the world. That could be helpful. Jesus, if we look back at the beginning of chapter 16 in verse two, he tells them about their opposition, and what kinds of things they are going to suffer as they go out. What's going to happen to them? They'll be put out of the synagogues and killed. That's pretty harsh, isn't it? Then they'll say, it's because we're serving God. We did this. I mean, that's what Paul, before he was saved, did, right? So what kind of guy was he towards Christians? He was a persecutor and he imprisoned Christians. What happened to Steven? He was stoned to death. Paul was right there, participating. It would be good to have God's help, visible help, against those guys, the opposition.

The Spirit will convict. What does that mean? The word convict means or it can mean to convict or convince, convict is to prove guilty and convince is to persuade a person to believe, both apply. In Romans, the gospel proves that the whole world is guilty before God, that's the conviction of the Holy Spirit. As they would read Paul's words, that they take that to heart, whole world guilty before God. Paul, speaking of the Gospel says, "knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others", 2 Corinthians 5:11. That's to convince. The spirit is at work in both, convincing and convicting. The Ministry of the Holy Spirit is to expose men sin and present the truth about Jesus Christ. When sin is exposed, they have a choice to repent, turn from their sin or to continue in it. Then they have a choice regarding Jesus, the spirit reveals Jesus as the Savior from sin. It's their choice to trust Him or reject Him. The result, new life in Christ or hardening of the heart and eternal punishment.

So we see in John 16:9-11, there's a three part conviction by the Holy Spirit: sin, righteousness and judgment. Let's look at the first one, verse nine, "concerning sin, because they do not believe me". The ultimate sin is to do what? To reject Christ, God's Son. Consider God's perspective for a moment. He sent His son, his only son, to die in our place, to remove our sin, bring us into fellowship with Him forever. To accept this incredible offer, you must love Jesus and accept what he has done for you and turn from your sin. If you refuse or make no choice, you reject his beloved son. Can you understand how that's the greatest sin of all? In fact, if we look at every sin, we find in every sin, the root, the root of unbelief, in my worry, in my cheating, in my loss, I ultimately don't trust God with what he's given me. I want more, I will have it.

Secondly in verse 10, righteousness this is the other side of the coin of sin. When we start to see our sin as God sees it, we understand our depravity, that's the depth of our own sin, and the perfection of Jesus righteousness. MacArthur says this, not only does the spirit convict unbelievers of their sin, but also of the necessity of having the perfect righteousness of Christ, Matthew 5:48. When their wickedness is compared to his sinless holiness, their sin is seen more truly for the detestable evil that it is. And the sinner is face to face with the impossibility of salvation by any effort, work or achievement he may do. There's nothing we can do, of our effort, work or achievement, to bring us salvation. The Lord statement-because I go to the Father, and you no longer see me-provides the supreme evidence of His righteousness, His acceptance, into the Father's presence. When the Father highly exalted Jesus and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, Philippians 2:9, He, himself, testified to Christ's righteousness. Those who heed the Spirit's testimony about their utter sinfulness and Christ's perfect righteousness, those who respond to the gospel in genuine faith are instantly clothed in righteous, white robes. Their sins are placed fully on him and his death at the hands of God's holy justice. He paid the penalty in full. He paid it all. Hendrickson says about verse 10, "because I go to the Father and you see me no longer", the world represented, at that time, by the Jews was about to crucify Jesus. It was going to say, He ought to die, John 19:7 Hence, in the name of righteousness, it was going to put him to death. It proclaimed aloud that he was anything but righteous, it treated him as a wicked man, John 18:30. But the exact opposite was the truth. Though rejected by the world, he was welcomed by the Father, welcomed home, by way of the cross, the cross which led to the crown, he was about to die and he was about to receive his reward. Philippians 2:9-11, "Therefore, God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Jesus, the righteous one, John 8:46.

And the third part of the convicting work is in verse 11, the Holy Spirit convicts concerning "judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged". Satan is the ruler of this world and he is defeated. Jesus destroyed his work by His death and resurrection. Satan came to blind men to the truth and he came to take them to hell and eternal sufferings. He came to get men so bound to their sin that they could never get loose, that they would sink down to hell unable to extract themselves. But Jesus Christ came to destroy the works of the devil, to forgive sin and free men from its chains. He brings life and resurrects men out of spiritual death, translating them from the kingdom

of darkness to the kingdom of light. He promises them a home in Heaven, with Him forever. They are no longer sentence to spend eternity in hell, if they trust him by faith. On the last day, "the devil who deceived the world is thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur... to be tormented day and night forever and ever.", Revelation 20:10. And by that act, God makes clear, it's not only Satan, but a few verses later, there's the great white throne and men stand before Him to be judged by their own works. Those, who have trusted in Jesus Christ, don't stand in that judgment. Those who are standing on their own works are there. And they will be judged and thrown in the lake of fire as well. Anyone around you that might intimidate you, some wicked person who seems bigger than life here, who seems so on top of things and able to do whatever they want, every person will be judged. And God's justice will be done. Their doom is sure, just as Satan's doom is sure, Revelation 20.

We've seen Jesus speaking of the Spirit here, and when he breathes out the Spirit at the end of John and we see the Spirit come in tongues of fire in Acts chapter two. Then we see Peters first sermon, Acts 2, and the elements of his sermon are these three things: sin, righteousness and judgment. The sin of rejecting Christ-You, by the hand of lawless man, crucified and killed him, Jesus, this Jesus whom you crucified. Righteousness-Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved by God. And judgement-Save yourselves from this crooked generation, evil men. Acts 2:37-41 shows the result of this preaching. The Holy Spirit powerfully used this preaching. "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said, brothers, what shall we do? They repented and were baptized. And there were added to them that day 3000 souls."

No one can be saved outside the convicting and regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. John 16:12, "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now." Jesus was patient with his disciples and kind. He didn't rebuke them, but gently leads them. He gives them milk instead of meat. Why could they bear this truth? Well, we already said that they were in great sorrow. That was a part of it. But there's more to it. A very important factor. They simply couldn't handle the truth he had for them. The word bear does not mean to endure or tolerate. The word has the idea of weight, sheer weight. It was too heavy for them. There's a famous Christian lady who was a in a Nazi concentration camp in World War II. You may know her name, Corrie ten Boom. Her father was a watchmaker. And he had a bag with his tools. And one day, as a very young girl, she was reading the newspaper. She asked her dad, What is a sex crime? And he asked her to pick up his tool bag and bring it to him. And she tried and she said, I can't do it, it's too heavy. And her father said, The explanation of this sex crime is too heavy for you to carry just yet. These truths were too weighty for the disciples. The significance of the cross, the resurrection and the ascension-before those things even took place-they could not get it, they could not handle it. They didn't have the Holy Spirit. MacArthur says that the disciples view Jesus as a political and military deliverer. They expected him to drive out the hated Romans, restore Israel's national sovereignty, and bring in the Messianic kingdom, with the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises. They simply could not grasp the concept of a dying Messiah, who came not to vanquish the Romans but to conquer sin and death. For example, Jesus prophesied about his own death in Luke 18:31-34. You can't get more specific than this. I just read the Gospels and I'm thinking, Jesus kind of spells it out, doesn't he? That's what he's gonna do here. "And

taking the twelve, he said to them, 'See, we're going up to Jerusalem and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. For he, Jesus, will be delivered over to the Gentiles, and be mocked, and shamefully treated and spit upon. And after flogging him, they will kill him. And on the third day, he will rise again.' You got it in a nutshell, right? You see it? You know what's going to happen? Right? You've been told the whole story. Did they get it? No, they didn't get it. It says this, verse 34, "But they understood none of these things." The meaning was hidden from them. The Spirit has to reveal this spiritual truth. Jesus also did not give the disciples further revelation because they didn't have the Spirit's indwelling, they lack the power to grasp it.

John 16:13, he's the Spirit of Truth, he's all about Jesus. Jesus, who was the way, the truth and the life. He does not speak of himself. His focus is on Jesus Christ. He doesn't drive, he leads. He leads into all truth. Isn't that encouraging for us? As we go through life and we have perplexities and difficulties. You've got a book, a book that God has given you, and there's truth and you have a spirit that will lead you into all truth. That's a tremendous promise isn't it? He doesn't skip the parts you don't like either, does he? He'll shoot straight with you, even when it's painful and awkward. The Father and the Spirit, they're one in essence, he hears, he will speak, verse 13. And it says in verse 15, "Everything the Father has his mine." They're one, just as Jesus and the Father are one. The Spirit will never violate the principles of God's Word. He is a prophetic spirit. He inspired John to write Revelation, and the other books of Old Testament prophecy. Verse 13, "He will declare to you the things that are to come". Verse 14, "He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and he will declare it to you". The ultimate purpose of the Spirit's revelation is to glorify Jesus. He doesn't speak of himself, just as Jesus glorified the Father. Is glory important? It seems to be a reoccurring theme, don't you think? Like throughout the whole Bible, glories all over it. And that's why we have that little saying; What's the chief end of man? What's the most important thing man could do? To glorify God and enjoy him forever. Well, the Trinity is no different. They're all over glory, aren't they? They glorify one another.

He doesn't speak of himself just as Jesus glorify the Father. Notice, the Spirit speaks and it's a declaration. It's not a wimpy whisper, or hesitating whine, he declares it! Just like Peter was declaring in Acts 2, Men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to by God, with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him, in your midst as you yourselves know. He proclaims the gospel in boldness and power by the Spirit. But he's speaking to men, notice here, who is this address to? It's declared not the world but to who? Look at verses 14 and 15. He will declare it to you. That's what I experienced in my testimony, Spirit spoken to you. Does the Spirit speak to you? Like when your conscience gets the better of you and you start to see your sin. Also through the Holy Word as you study it. And he speaks through the wise counsel of others. As I considered the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, I cannot help but consider what happens, not just through salvation, but through my Christian life, like when the Spirit convicts us about things that need to change in our lives. Seems one of the greatest gifts the Spirit gives to us is when he shows us our sin. It covicts us as believers.

We're told this is a lifelong battle in Galatians, between the flesh and the Spirit, the remedy is walking in the Spirit. And if we walk in the Spirit, we will not gratify the desires of the flesh. Wow, that's very key isn't. Walking is a conscious step by step activity. Likewise, we must choose to walk in the Spirit. As we do, it keeps us from fulfilling the desires of the flesh. I read some excerpts of a small book. It's about killing the enemy within. It's talking about the flesh, by a guy named Lundgaard, I want to share a little section out of that book, "I've written a whole book that describes many ways to fight the flesh. But of all these, they are but preparations for the ultimate work of killing the flesh. They help steady the mind, rein in the affections and discipline the will. If they will not destroy the flesh's work, unless that is, they are combined with faith." Faith is the kryptonite. And what was kryptonite? You remember what happens to Superman when he's exposed. He becomes like a big blob, right? Or like a wooden stake to a vampire, like Dracula. You catch him in his coffin during the day and pound that thing through his chest and it takes him out. Or a silver bullet to a werewolf. That's faith. It's our kryptonite, our wooden stake, our silver bullet. Faith has to be the only thing that destroys the flesh because salvation comes from the Lord, Jonah 2:9. Faith is to be the only thing that destroys the flesh because the whole work of our salvation is God's from beginning to end. It isn't simply that God accepts us in Christ when we believe, then sends us off to be good little Christians on our own. Our growth in holiness is His work too, Philippians 2:13. The good news of Jesus is not just that we get out of hell free, but that we become like Jesus himself, and are made to live and reign with Him forever in the new heaven and the new earth. And this good news is all by faith from first to last, from beginning to end, through and through Romans 1:17.

Here's how to work your faith. Number one, by faith you will fill your thoughts with the purpose of Christ's death. Jesus died to slay the very lust that entangles you. In fact, it has trapped you precisely because you're no match for it. You may be worn and exhausted from the grief and shame of it. Ready to throw up your hands and surrender to a life of sin but there is, stored up in Christ, plenty of strength to relieve you, Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." In your deepest distress and anguish, consider the fullness of grace, the riches, the treasures, this strength and might and help that are stored up in Him for your help. To work faith in Christ's power over your flesh, your thoughts might run like this: I am poor. I'm a weak creature. I am as unstable as water. I can't conquer my own flesh. My corruption is too much for me and is a step away from ruining me. I don't know what to do. My soul is a desert, a cave full of dragons. I've made promises and broken them. Many times I thought I'd won and would be delivered but I was deceived. I can tell that if I don't get some help right away, I'll give up on God and make shipwreck of my faith. But here at death's door, I raise up my weak arms. I look to you, Lord Christ, with all grace in your heart, all power in your hand, more than able to slay all my enemies. You make me more than a conqueror. You can only put the misdeeds of the flesh to death by the Spirit, Romans 8:13.

And who sends and commands the Spirit but Christ. He commands the Spirit to come to us, he sent the Spirit to you. "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses. But one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence that we

may receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need.", Hebrews 4:15-16. Think about the faithfulness of the One who has promised to help you. Christ help comes as surely as the sun will rise in the morning in its appointed time. But my Spirit, says the Lord, in your struggle against sin, never forget your duty. But neither forget the power of the Spirit. The killing of the flesh is your duty, but it is His work. If by the Spirit, you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, Romans 8:13.

By faith we apply all the means of God's grace that he's given to kill the flesh. Humility-which makes us small, in the midst of a great God. Worship-sin can't survive the conditions of God being feared and revered. Learning to see sin as sin-calling it like it is, owning your sin, no excuse, learning to hate it. In loving God we learn to hate sin. Those things are absolutely congruent. They go together, don't they? The fear of the Lord is to hate evil Proverbs tells us. The Spirit alone convinces your heart of the danger of sin, without the Spirit conviction the flesh will thrive. The Spirit alone supports us when we cry out to God in distress over sin. The Scripture says that the Spirit is the real power of prayer, giving life and vigor and strength in our prayer. It makes it persuasive to God. When we can't drag ourselves out of bed, he enables us to cry out with groans that cannot be expressed, Romans 8:26. Even when we can't speak, he speaks through the Spirit, through us. You will win. You will fight. And you will see your flesh crumble. It is God's pleasure not only to rescue you from hell, but to glorify you with Christ by making you like him. You will see through your flesh's most deadly deception, you will turn your eyes away from the most appealing idols, and you will grow in self discipline and courage. But this is no time to puff out your chest. It's Christ's blood, tenderness and mercy on you. It is His Spirit's power, filling you every step of the way. In every victory lift your hands to heaven. Give thanks and rejoice with a grateful heart in your deliverer. He is faithful. Soli Deo Gloria, To God alone be the glory.

Let's pray. Lord, we're thankful for your Spirit. You've not left us alone, but you come after us. We know that we're lost in our own sins, in our own ways. And you have pursued us, convicted us, brought us to a knowledge of our own guilt and sin and brought us to a knowledge of the truth that Jesus Christ is all and all, that he is Savior and Redeemer, Reconciler. We're thankful that we have bowed our need to Jesus, to trust him. And we pray that you'd help us, by your Spirit, to learn to hate sin more. Help us to daily hate sin that we would kill it, by the strength of faith and your Spirit. We thank you for these things that you provide for us, to make us look more like Jesus. In His name, amen.