



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Basic Bible Doctrine, John 16

"The Spirit and the World"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we turn with thanksgiving, again to Thee. We thank Thee that Thou art the creator of the universe, and we thank Thee also for the glorious plan of redemption, which is the product of the wisdom and knowledge of our great triune God. We thank Thee and praise Thee that we are part of it, Thou hast thought of us in ages past and reckoned us among the elect of God. And we give Thee thanks and praise for that.

We rejoice, too, that Thou hast given us the Scriptures to give us guidance and direction while we're here. And Lord, we pray again that Thou wilt enable us to understand as we turn again to another portion of the Scriptures. Enable us to profit from our time here, and may the things that we study be means of preparation for us for the Christian life that Thou would have us to live.

We ask Thy blessing upon each one present, upon the needs that are represented by each one of us. We commit them to Thee. We thank Thee that Thou dost care for us, and that Thou art watching over us constantly. Now, Lord, be with us through this hour. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] Our subject for tonight as we continue our series of studies in basic Bible doctrine is, "The Spirit and the World." And we're turning to John chapter 16 for the great passage on the Spirit and the World. It is a very interesting exercise to take a Bible concordance and to pick out some important word and look up all the occurrences that are found in the Scriptures of that particular word. There are a number of things that one can learn from just looking at the occurrences of words that you might not learn in any other way. Just take the word spirit, if you were to just simply look up the occurrences of the word spirit, you would have some inkling of what the Bible teaches about the term spirit.

Now, let me give you an illustration. If you would look at the occurrences at the word spirit in the gospels, you would find a few interesting things. For example, there are remarkably few references to the Holy Spirit during the time of the gospels outside of two types of text, and these texts are texts about the relationship of the Spirit to the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. And secondly, prophecies of the coming of the Holy Spirit and the ministry that he will have, of which, for example, the Gospel of John has a great deal. You will also notice as you look at the simple occurrences of the word spirit in the gospels that Mark is unusually devoid of any reference whatsoever to the Holy Spirit.

So, there are remarkable things that appear from this. If you just look up the occurrences of the word in the gospels you would realize that the claim that during the time of the gospel period (when our Lord was here upon the earth) we had not yet come to the age of the Spirit would be justified because of the relatively few references to the Holy Spirit, outside of references that are prophecies of his coming in the age that will follow and references to the Spirit in the life of Jesus Christ. In other words, the Spirit does not assume the place of importance during the period of the gospels that he does during the period in which we are living.

There is another striking fact that emerges from the simple looking at the occurrences of a word in a concordance, and this time with special reference to the Spirit.

This particular place in John chapter 16 is the only place where the Holy Spirit is said to perform a work on the world. It is the only place, this particular section that we're looking at right here. And that place where it is said that he performs a work on the world is John chapter 16, verse 7 through verse 11. Now, let me read these verses. The apostle is giving us the words of the Lord Jesus Christ in the upper room discourse, and he says,

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."

Now, you can see that the principle theme of this particular passage is the Holy Spirit convincing the world. And he says that he is going to convince the world concerning sin, concerning righteousness, and concerning judgment. In the study of the Bible it's always helpful to take a look at the context, and in this case the context of the passage is an aide to its understanding. The Lord has just told the disciples, or the apostles, in the upper room that they are to expect the world's hatred. Turn back to verse 18 of chapter 15, he says,

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done

among them the works which no other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, they hated me without a cause. But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."

Now, you can see that the Lord has told them that they are to expect the world's hatred, and then furthermore, they are to witness of him in the midst of the world. Now, he repeats that in verse 5 through 7 of chapter 16. "But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." So, he has told them that they may expect the world's hatred after he's gone. But nevertheless, in the midst of the world's hatred they are to be witnesses of him. Well that raises a natural question. How is it possible for the apostles to meet the world's hatred and make an impression upon the world in its hatred? And the Lord's answer is very simply this, that the Holy Spirit will not only be with them, but he will enable them to take the offensive, because when he is come he will convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and judgment. Now, he said that when he announced to them that he was going away, verse 6, "Sorrow hath filled your heart." So, here is the comfort for the despair that the apostles had when they considered that the Lord Jesus Christ, who has been such a support for them, is now going to be absent from them.

They do not fully understand, of course, everything that is going to transpire. Luke tells us they didn't even understand the significance of the cross that was to come, very few did. Some did, but the apostles were not among that company. They were confused by things, and now he tells them he's not going to be with them, he's going to leave them, the world is going to hate them, and they have the responsibility of testifying

of him in the midst of the hatred of the world. You can see how they might be very much disturbed and full of despair in the light of what he has just told them. So, the answer to their need is the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and we can see the effectiveness of it when we think for just a moment of what happened on the day of Pentecost in the life and ministry of just one of these, the Apostle Peter, when he stood up in front of that crowd that hated the Father and the Son, and gave that magnificent message in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Now, there are one or two little exegetical problems that I want to make reference to. I know that on Wednesday nights and in this series of studies we don't deal with exegesis particularly, because we're dealing with basic Bible doctrine. But there are one or two things that might help us understand this passage a little better. We note in verse 8 that the Lord Jesus says that he is going to reprove the world of sin. Now, there are different ways in which we can render the Greek expressions that are translated here, "reprove of." The Greek word is a word that can mean "to rebuke" or "to reprove" as it is translated in the Authorized Version. It can mean "to convict" as the American Standard Version has rendered it. It also can mean "to convince" as the Revised Standard Version has rendered it.

Now, it seems to me, and I cannot go into the laboratory of why I think this, but it seems to me that in this case the Revised Standard Version has hit upon the correct rendering. It is not rebuke. There is another very common New Testament word that means "to rebuke." That is not the word that is used here. It probably does not mean "to convict," but it does, I think, mean to convince. It is to convince. Now, the little word afterwards that is used with it, the preposition, he will convince the world "of sin" is a word that means "in regard to" or "concerning," or it has been suggested by a man who has written a little pamphlet on the translation of prepositions in the New Testament, in this case it might mean "the facts about." And let's just use that as a little bit of a periphrastic rendering. And then we render verse 8, "And when he has come, he will convince the

world of the facts about sin, of the facts about righteousness, and of the facts about judgment." There is only one other place in the Gospel of John where this precise occurrence of the verb and the preposition occur, and that's in the 8th chapter in the 46th verse.

Now, we have another little question about the rendering of verse 8, that I want to say just one word about. In the Greek text we could render this, "And when he is come he will convince the world of sin, or of the facts about sin, and the facts about righteousness, and of the facts about judgment; of sin, namely, that they believe not on me." Or we could render that word "because" as it is rendered in the Authorized Version. Now, in this case I think the Authorized Version is correct, so we'll leave it that "The Holy Spirit will convince the world of the facts about sin, because they believe not on me; of the facts about righteousness, because I go to the Father; of the facts about judgment, because the prince of this world has been judged."

One final word about the word world, does the word here refer to all men without exception? Very frequently people look at a word like this and say, "Well, it says world. That means everybody without exception." Now, again it will help you if you will just take a concordance and look up the Greek word Kosmos, which is the word found here, and you will discover that this word has a number of different meanings, and it does not in every occurrence, by a long shot, refer to everybody in the world, all men without exception. And in this case, of course, it is shown to be a faulty rendering by the very facts of history itself. Probably we are to give it the force that we have in the 1st chapter of the 9th verse where the Apostle John speaks about the light that comes into the world that lighteth every man in the world. The text that I'm referring to is "That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

Well, now the facts are that the light of the Lord Jesus Christ has not shined upon every man in the world. What John means by that is that if any man is enlightened, he is enlightened by the Lord Jesus Christ. He's the one who lights every man in the world

who is enlightened. There is no other enlightenment apart from him, is the meaning of it. Augustine, many years ago, pointed that out when he said, "This is just like a little village in which there is one teacher in the village. And one many say that so and so is the teacher in this village, teaches everybody in this village." Well, the facts are that he might not teach everybody in the village, but everybody who is taught is taught by him. So, here, when it says "He will convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment," we are to understand not every man without exception. There is no other way, however, to be convinced of sin, of righteousness, and judgment than by the Holy Spirit. He is the sole convincing agent of the facts about sin, of the facts about righteousness, of the facts about judgment. That expression, incidentally, is a term that was frequently used in legal usage for cross examination with a view to refuting an opponent, and thus it's a very suitable term for one who is called in the Bible "the advocate," the Holy Spirit. So, we're talking about the ministry of the Holy Spirit with respect to the world, and he will convince all who are convinced in the world of the facts about sin, of the facts about righteousness, of the facts about judgment.

But let's look now at the first of these works of convincing, in verse 9 he says he will convince the world of the facts about sin, because "they believe not on me." Now, notice the Lord Jesus does not say he will convince the world about sins, of the facts about sins. No, it's sin, because he is going to deal with the malady, not simply the symptoms, but the malady itself. And the "because" clause that follows gives the reason for this conviction, "because they believe not on me." That expression, "because they believe not on me" is the root and rationale for the very nature of sin.

We are so inclined to think of sin as immorality. We tend to think that a man is not a sinner who is not guilty of some outbreaking form of sin. One of the reasons, not the only reason I'm sure, that people do not seem to have any deep sense of sin is that they do not understand what sin is. There is very little right thinking about sin in the world. If you ask a man whether he's a sinner, or if you should tell a man that he is a

sinner, he understands you to mean by that that sin is some great, flagrant, outbreaking transgression. If you tell him he's a great sinner in the sight of God, he thinks perhaps you are accusing him of being a blasphemer, a perjurer, a thief, or an adulterer, or a murderer. Without deep and damning hatred of God in the human soul...one may have deep and damning hatred of God in the soul without any of these outbreaking forms of sin.

The same is true in our physical existence. There are many forms of diseases that have no corresponding outward symptoms. It is said in the great plague that devastated London several years ago, that if there appeared in the cheek one little, red spot, that meant that the person had the plague, and was certain to die. That was the only thing necessary, just that one little symptom, just that one little red spot. No need to go home tonight and look in the mirror, we're not living in the days of the London plague. But that was all that was necessary, that single symptom. Sin may not break out in a violent trampling of the Ten Commandments, but when the Lord God looks down into the hearts of men, he looks for the attitude of faith, and if unbelief is there, that man is a great sinner. There may not be yet the manifestations of that sin that would ultimately show given the right circumstances, but nevertheless there is a desperate and deadly hatred of God there in the human soul.

There is a large book of sins that we often omit or forget about, too. Those are the sins of omission, the things that we ought to have done, but we have not done. We tend to concentrate on the commission of sins, and of the commission of great outbreaking sins. The Bible does not. The Bible considers also the things that we have omitted doing, and also looks within the heart to the source of the sin, unbelief. Did you ever notice this fact in reading the Bible that three of the greatest arraignment in the whole world, in the whole word of God, on the subject of sin have to do with what is not done, not with what is done? "In as much as you have not done it unto these, you have not done it unto me," the Lord Jesus said. "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let

him be anathema, maranatha." And here, "of sin, because they believe not on me;" so, you see, the sins of omission are great sins, too.

But when the Lord Jesus speaks here "of sin, because they believe not on me," he's really talking about what is at the bottom of all sin. Now, if you were to pick up a systematic theology and look at the chapter on faith, you would find that, if it's a good theology, there will be a discussion of the nature of faith. And then, if you will look up the chapter on sin, you will find there is a good discussion of the chapter on sin. Frequently in the discussion of these two things, faith and sin, they are not put together. Some will say, "Well, sin is independence of God. Sin is selfishness. Sin is rebellion against God." But basically, selfishness, rebellion, independence are all products. Every sin is a product of our attitude toward God, faith or unbelief. That is the fundamental nature of sin, unbelief. In the Garden of Eden, why did Adam and Eve sin? Well, they sinned because they didn't believe the word of God, that's why. So, when they looked at the fruit, and they took of the fruit, it was because they did not believe "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shall surely die." Unbelief is the root of all sin. It shows itself in rebellion, independence, selfishness, and ultimately manifests itself in the sin of Cain who slew his brother Abel. But sin is unbelief.

Now, one might ask the question, well if the Lord Jesus Christ says, when he's on the earth, that sin is not believing in him, then what about all those centuries before hand when he was not here? Well, I can see a person might say, "Well, there were promises of the Redeemer to come, and men did believe those promises, and they did look forward to the coming of the Redeemer." The idea that it would be impossible for a man in the Old Testament to have a personal faith in a Redeemer to come is ridiculous in the light of the statements of the Old Testament. They did have a faith in a personal Redeemer who was to come. The levels of faith of individuals in the Old Testament were varied. Just like the levels of faith in the New Testament times are, just like the levels of faith in this congregation are. There are some of you sitting out there who have a very good

knowledge of theology, and there are some of you who are new in spiritual things. We do not judge the faith of whole age by any one of these groups of people. It's obvious that Anna and Simeon and others had an outstanding faith, and it's certainly clear that Isaiah the Prophet did and David did, who knew that he was a prophet, who knew Messianic prophecies, so Peter the Apostle says. But there were many who did not. There were many who had only a very immature kind of faith. That's evident; the apostles were among them, incidentally. "They understood none of these things," Luke said.

But how about then, these Old Testament individuals? Well, in the Old Testament sin was essentially faith or unbelief that is it hinged upon that issue. But in the Old Testament it was a faith in the word of God and in the revelation concerning God. But that is expanded and unfolded as the ages go by, in the progress of divine revelation God adds to his body of truth, and the object of faith expands and grows. And so, when the Lord Jesus says of sin, "Because they believe not on me," it formally, it was unbelief in God. Now, it's unbelief in God's man, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is essentially the same thing, faith in the divine program of revelation as found in the word of God. So then, the work of the Holy Spirit will be to convince the world of the facts about sin, "because they believe not on me." That's why we preach constantly in the New Testament, and that's why we preach constantly in Believers Chapel, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shall be saved." And if you do not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, you have committed great sin.

Now, the second thing that the Spirit is going to convince the world of is righteousness. Verse 10 reads, "Of the facts about righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more." If verse 9 is man-ward, then verse 10 is Christ-ward. The convincing pertains to his righteousness incidentally, not the world's unrighteousness. Now, that's an interesting thing, because in our preaching we don't stress that, so we? He will convince the world of righteousness, because the world is so unrighteous, we might

say. No, of the facts about righteousness, "because I go to my Father and ye see me no more." So, the convicting work of the Holy Spirit pertains to his righteousness, not the world's unrighteousness. Well, what does our Lord mean by that? Well, in this case, we have to infer, he doesn't unfold precisely what he means, so we have to infer.

And remember when you're listening to a preacher you have to distinguish between three levels. Number one, what does the text say. Believe that in spite of what the preacher says. Number two, when the preacher makes an inference from the text or when he says that the text means such and such, you don't believe that like you believe the text. You remember, he is a human being, so he can be wrong. But now, if he should infer from the text something else, well then you believe that even less. So, you believe the text; you don't believe what he says about the text like you believe the text; and when he says that he is going to deduce something from the text, you believe that even less. Now, he might be right on all three, but you need to be on your guard, and you need to learn to distinguish between what the text says, what the preacher says the text says, and then third, what he infers from the text. That's a very important lesson, some people never learn it. Some people sit in a congregation for twenty-five years, and they'll say, "If Dr. Johnson believes it, then I believe it." Or if some new teaching comes and it's propounded, someone will say, "Well, what does Dr. Johnson believe? I believe what he believes. When he changes his mind, I'll change my mind." That's not the right way to go about it. I appreciate it if it's in my case; this is true all over the country, no matter who the teacher is. I appreciate the high regard that you accord an individual and me in particular when you say something like that. That means that you have confidence in my teaching. Well, I'm glad that you do, because I appreciate that. But nevertheless in the final analysis our confidence is to be in the Scriptures as they are taught us by the Holy Spirit. We should be wise, but preachers are not the final word.

Now he says, "of righteousness, because I go to my Father." I'm going to suggest to you that the fact that Jesus Christ has gone to the Father, his departure to the Father,

and his exaltation to the right hand of the Father is the proof of his righteousness. In other words, he would never have been able to rise from the dead, by the power of the Holy Spirit, ascend to the right hand of the Father and be exalted there at the right hand, were his ministry, his work, his life, not well-pleasing to God. It was not possible, Peter says, "that he should beholden of death." That is a recognition by God the Father that his ministry was in the center of the will of God from beginning to end, and therefore death could not hold him, the divine Son. The fact that he's at the right hand of the Father is that which is designed by God to convince the world of righteousness. So, his departure, his exaltation is the proof of his righteousness, and also it is the proof of a finished work, that what he has done on the cross is acceptable and acceptable for our sins.

The third thing that the Spirit will convince the world of is judgment. Now, I know if we have not read the dependent clause, "Because the prince of this world is judged," we would have thought that he would have said, "The Spirit will convince the world of the facts about judgment, because they are sinful." But the facts about judgment are considered Satan-ward. If the first verse in man-ward, and the second one Christ-ward, this is Satan-ward; it has to do with Satan's judgment. "Of judgment, because the prince of this world has been judged;" it's not the sinners' judgment that the Spirit will convince the world of the facts about, but of Satan's judgment. So, it's not the judgment to come that he will talk about; it's the judgment that has come in the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ. When there he overcame principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly in his triumph on the cross. He overcame sin and Satan there. So, this statement, "the prince of this world has been judged," this perfect tense has been written from the standpoint of the future. "The prince of this world has been judged." Now, that judgment has not yet been carried out in its entirety. It has taken place, Satan is still free, but ultimately he shall be bruised underfoot, and consigned, finally to the lake of fire.

Well, a question might arise at this point. If the Spirit's going to convince the world of sin, convince the world of righteousness, convince the world of judgment, how

is the Spirit going to do this? How is he going to convince the world of the facts about sin, of the facts about righteousness, of the facts about judgment? What is the means? The newspapers? Some special book? The writings of Hal Lindsey? [Laughter] What is the means by which he will convince the world? Well again, now we must look at the context and see if we can find a clue from the context.

Well, we can read through it again, but I'm sure that sooner or later some of you would catch it. Notice what he's just said in the preceding verses, verse 7, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." So the Comforter is going to come to the apostles. He's going to be sent to the apostles. How is the Comforter going to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment? Why, he's going to convince the world of the facts about sin, of the facts about righteousness, and of the facts about judgment through you. That is, through the apostles, through believers. This is how he's going to do it. For as the divine plan unfolds, we are told, he has already said this, the Holy Spirit is going to come and indwell every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Every single believer, the moment he believes in Jesus Christ, is permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit. That is something absolutely unique. It never occurred previously.

Now, I know some of you will go scurrying through the Old Testament, and you will say, "Well, what about Gideon or what about Samson or what about Bezaleel?" What about David? Oh, there are a few references in the Old Testament where it says the Holy Spirit was in them. But if you'll pay careful attention to the context you will see that those references are only to the work of induement with power. Never is the Holy Spirit permanently indwelling any believer in Old Testament times. It was absolutely new and unique, and it came on the day of Pentecost. In fact, the Apostle John says it would have been impossible. He says, "Jesus stood up on the last day, that great day of the feast, and said, 'If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me as the

Scripture has said, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water." Now John adds this, "But this spoke he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive, for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because the Jesus was not yet glorified.

Now, I have some good friends, they're covenant theologians, they just really get nauseated at this text, in a nice way. Because they like to believe that everything in the New Testament is found in the Old Testament. They don't like to recognize that there is some progress in the divine program, because they don't like to think that a dispensationalist might be correct about something. Well now, in this case I'm afraid that my friends who are covenant theologians are wrong. In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit was not indwelling men as he is indwelling men now. That's plain, and we just have to conform our theology to the word. Oh sure, they might be right about some things, and dispensationalists might be wrong about some other things, but in this case the dispensationalist is correct.

On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came, and he came in a special new way then. That is truth because there has intervened the death of Christ and the resurrection, which is necessary for the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit. So, how then is the Spirit to convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment? He's is to do it by the walk, by the witness, by the worship, by the Christian life of the believers in this age. That's how he is to do it. In other words, from the human stand point the responsibility rests on us who live in this age to be the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit in the convincing of all who are convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.

You can see this worked out in the Book of Acts. Right when the Holy Spirit comes on the day of Pentecost, what happens? Well, there's a man by the name of Peter, he is *primus inter pares*; he is the first among equals. He's the leader of the apostles. No question about it, he is the leader of the apostles. But he doesn't have any special prerogatives because of that. He's not greater than them, he's not the First Bishop of Rome. But he is the leader, and he stands up, and in verse 22 he gives his message to

explain these phenomena which have taken place on the day of Pentecost. These strange signs, and then the speaking in tongues, and he stands up and he is explaining. These fellas haven't had too much to drink, they're filled with the Holy Spirit. That's what the Old Testament said.

And he cites the passage from Joel, and then he begins his direct appeal to them in convincing them of the facts about sin. He says, "Ye men of Israel," verse 22, "Hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know. Him being delivered by the determinant counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." So the Apostle Peter here is verse 14 through verse 23 is the instrumentality for the convincing or conviction of the world of the facts about sin. And then in verse 24 through verse 32 the theme changes to that of righteousness. And finally, in the latter part, verses 33 through 36, I think it's safe to say those words are in harmony with the theme of judgment, so that what the Apostle Peter does on the Day of Pentecost is to be one of the first to carry out this ministry of the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised the apostles, that he would in them and through them convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and judgment.

When the Ethiopian eunuch was returning after having been to Jerusalem, and imbibed all that he could of religion and still didn't have Christ and salvation, God moved, God the Holy Spirit moved a man by the name of Philip. And Philip the evangelist went up along side his chariot, found him just happened accidentally to be reading Isaiah chapter 53, of all of the texts of the whole of the Old Testament suitable for him. Why even a neophyte in biblical teaching could lead someone to Christ from Isaiah 53, couldn't you? Well, so Philip gets up in his chariot with him, and there he begins to preach Jesus Christ. He is the instrumentality for the conviction of the eunuch of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.

Now, you might say, "Well, what's the need of having Philip the evangelist there? After all that was an expensive trip." A lot of people say that you know. Why does so and so have to buy a plane ticket and go preach to so and so? They've got people that can preach there. Why did Philip have to leave that revival that was going on, of which he was part and parcel, and why was he sent down to talk to this one man there? After all, the Ethiopian eunuch had the one thing necessary for salvation, didn't he? What did he have? Well, he had the only good thing he found when he came to Jerusalem. That was the Bible. He had a scroll of the Book of Isaiah; so, if a man has the word, and the Holy Spirit is free to bring light to him, isn't that enough? Why do you need a man, why do you need Philip? Well, you need Philip, because God usually works through men. He works through the word, through the Spirit.

Our salvation is traceable to the word as it is applied by the Holy Spirit, but it is most frequently done through a man. And even when a man comes into a hotel room, I have had friends converted this way; my first Bible teacher was a man who was converted in his hotel room. He picked up a Gideon Bible, and he read it. Someone might say, "Well, that shows you don't need anything but the Bible. You don't need any man." No, you need somebody to put the Bible there. You need the Gideons to put the Bible there. So, usually in this age, not entirely, usually God works through the Scriptures, as they're applied by the Holy Spirit, through the instrumentality of men and women. So, that's what he means, I think, when he says he's going to leave, the Holy Spirit's going to come, and every one of them will have the Holy Spirit to convince the world, through them. If he were to stay, well we wouldn't have this great privilege. That's why he says,

"Nevertheless I tell you a truth, it is expedient for you that I go away." It's for your benefit. It's for your profit that I leave, for the Spirit will come to everyone.

Cornelius, Cornelius was a man whose prayers had up for a memorial. Now, Bailey Smith might do a little exegesis on Acts chapter 10 in the light of that. I don't have time to give you my explanation of it, after all, it's an explanation, it's not what the text

says, remember? It's only a deduction from it. But Cornelius, one might say, "Well, surely Cornelius didn't have to have Peter take that long trip up there in order that he might be saved." Well, evidently the Holy Spirit thought it would be profitable, and so he moved on Peter by means of a vision, and brought Peter and Cornelius together. And there, that was like putting a match to dynamite. And Peter preached that great sermon, the Holy Spirit in efficacious grace brought Cornelius to faith in the Son of God. He needed words whereby he might be saved, even though his prayers had gone up for a memorial to the Lord God. He evidently was a person whose heart had been prepared by the Holy Spirit. God hears the prayers of individuals whose hearts have been pre-prepared by his own Holy Spirit. But Peter was needed. So you and I, why are we here? Why are we here? Why are you in Dallas, Texas? Why are you not in heaven? Why, you're here in order to accomplish a particular task, your task. You are to be the instrumentality by which others are touched, through the Spirit with the facts about sin, the facts about righteousness, and the facts about judgment, as he says.

Now, let me just conclude with a deduction. In the ultimate analysis, of course, or in the final analysis the Spirit alone can convict. Therefore, in our ministry there must always be a stress on the spiritual side of the ministry. Prayer regarding all of our ministry as individuals who preach and teach the word, many of you do here. Prayer regarding the very place that you minister the word of God, prayer concerning the people to whom you minister; that's more important than emphasis on human methods. It's unfortunate in Christianity that we often think that we are failures in ministry, because our methods are not right. I've never yet known a Spirit-filled godly man who knows the Scriptures, and who preaches in the power of the Holy Spirit, who is not effective. I have yet to find one who is not. But I've found a lot of people who know a lot about methods, who are ineffective. That's the fundamental thing. The Holy Spirit is the one who saves individuals. It is he who teaches men. It is he who uses men. Therefore, as servants of God, all of us, whether teachers or not, just Christians, we're all servants. It's so important

that our every day life be guided by the Holy Spirit. He'll throw us into contact with this person or that person, in order that we might be what he says here, "means for the convincing of the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

I'm inclined to think that the Spirit's ministry of convincing of sin belongs to the doctrine of common grace. There is a conviction of sin that falls short of salvation. I think that's what is involved here. Everybody who is saved is one who has experienced this conviction, but all who have experienced this conviction are not necessarily saved. Efficacious grace is that which saves. Common grace is something else. Common grace, incidentally, is called common not simply because its effects touch all men. Some do not touch all men.

But because it produces ordinary effects which may fall short of saving effect, there are three categories of common grace. There are his general blessings to all creatures, even animals; food, drink, clothing, shelter, according to his good pleasure. The fact that you have on, tonight, clothes you can in measure stand out in the cold and not be frozen to death, that's common grace. The fact that you have food, some of you have too much, that's an evidence of common grace, food, clothing, drink. You have a place to which you go from this building, and you can sleep, be warm tonight, be protected from the elements. That's common grace. Paul speaks about it in Acts 14, verse 17, among other places. Then the general operation of the Spirit by which he, without renewing our heart, exercises moral influence upon men through his revelation. That's common grace. Our world would be a whole lot worse if God did not exercise common grace. Probably all of us would be in danger of dying constantly, like John Lennon did just last night. Now, we do have those things that take place. Things are not what they used to be, but generally speaking, God in his grace has restrained sin. He has promoted order and civil righteousness, generally. We are seeing a breakdown of a great deal of that, but what we have is the product of common grace, civil government.

And then the operations of the Spirit by which he influences men toward redemption, but does not secure redemption. For example, do you know that every single child brought up in a Christian home, even when the home is just part Christian, that is one person is Christian, the father a Christian or the mother a Christian; did you know that every single child is said, by the Apostle Paul, to be sanctified. Not saved, sanctified, the privilege of being brought up in the home of a Christian is sanctification for the child. The privilege, the benefit of just such an environment, that's part of common grace. That's not saving grace, it's common grace. So, the Holy Spirit performs his work. We are the recipients of his permanent indwelling. Our obligation, very simply, is to be the instrumentality for the work of the Spirit in convincing the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. May God help us to do it. Let's bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father we are grateful to Thee for the things that we learn from holy Scripture. We thank Thee for the presence of the Holy Spirit, what a wonderful transaction took place when Thou didst bring us to life and give us him as a permanent resident in our bodies and lives. Oh God, help us to be responsive to him, and may Lord we truly serve thee in a way that will glorify thy name and reflect the gratitude that we have that we are saved by thy grace. For Jesus' sake, amen...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]