

July 6/25 – Leaders' Guide

John 16:4b-15 "It is to your advantage that I leave"

Read John 16:4b-15

1. The disciples are grieving Jesus' impending departure. Where does Jesus shift their focus and what impact does he envision that shifted impact will have on them?

Jesus desires to shift their focus from his impending departure to consider where he is going.

He is going to his Father's house where he is preparing the final consummation of the Kingdom of God, the ultimate marriage of heaven and earth.

If he goes to the Father he will send to them the Helper – the advocate – the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit will lead them into all truth – the truth about Jesus. He will take the words of Jesus and bring them to the disciples. He will also reveal to them the things that are to come – namely the death and resurrection of Jesus.

He anticipates that this news will so impact them that their sorrow will give way to joy, their fear give way to courage, their uncertainty give way to clarity.

This question is to help participants to get into the head space of the disciples and to begin to hear this as they would have heard it.

This section of John is all about the person and work of the Spirit. For the Spirit is a Holy Spirit, come to make us holy, come to make us whole. The Spirit comes to restore us to our created purpose, to reflect Jesus and so bring life and flourishing to the world around us. The Spirit does this primarily by the work of conviction. This was a word used in the ancient courtroom for the cross examination of a witness. It was all about asking a lot of tough questions to show the holes in the story, to undo the fabric of a person's view of things. To undo our sense of reality so that we might enter more into God's reality, the reality of the Kingdom.

2. The Spirit convicts the world (kosmos). Kosmos is defined as human society ordered without reference to God. What are some examples of Kosmos that are most apparent today?

This is simply a reflection question that could take up a huge amount of time. Give enough time to get a wide range of answers out on the table.

In the sermon Tim reflected on how many people see this word as pointing to a dichotomy – you have the church and the world – an "us" and a "them". The reality is that every single one of us have areas of our lives that are ordered without reference to God. By your own example encourage some personal reflection on the areas of our own lives that are ordered without reference to God.

The more personal we can make it the more applicable the following questions will be.

The Spirit convicts the kosmos, so that it is no longer Kosmos, no longer ordered without reference to God. This conviction happens in three areas:

3. (vs. 9) The Spirit convicts of sin, the areas of our lives and world that are not ordered in reference to God. Jesus says that the heart of sin is unbelief, a lack of right reference to him. In the sermon Tim reflected that underneath every act of sin is unbelief – a lack of trust in who Jesus is and what he has done for us. When you reflect on the areas in our world, and in our own lives that are ordered without reference to God – can you identify the lack of trust – the unbelief that sits under it?

In the sermon Tim gave the example of his recent struggle with jealousy. This example may trigger for others something that they would want to reflect on.

I was wrestling recently with jealousy - jealous of the praise another was getting for something central to my sense of self - my identity - what aspect of who God is was I not trusting that led to this jealousy - that in Jesus I'm beloved - delighted in - the praise of others - while nice - can't hold a candle to that - my identity as good at this thing - is nothing compared to my identity in Christ - in the end I was thankful for the conviction of jealousy - my subsequent confessing it to this person - for it drove me more into Jesus - The spirit convicts concerning sin because we do not trust in Jesus.

4. (vs. 10) The Spirit convicts of righteousness, because Jesus is going to the Father. Jesus has told them that he is going to the father to prepare a place for us. He is preparing the final consummation of the kingdom of God, a glorious future where our world would be shot through with the love, justice, beauty and peace of the living God. How will coming to see what the kingdom of God will look like enable us to no longer be kosmos?

Our sense of rightness, justice, human society rightly ordered is culturally conditioned and constantly changing. This conviction is meant to give us a clear sense of what the world would look like if indeed God was King. Revealing righteousness will show us where we are in step with God's way, and where we are not in step so that we might respond accordingly.

5. (vs. 11) The Spirit will convict of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. How is the coming of judgement good news?

Very often we hear the word judgement as pointing to an entirely negative reality. God is coming to judge, to punish - so watch out, repent, turn away.

In N.T. Wright's book surprised by hope one of the main biblical realities Wright invites us to see is that the promise of judgement is incredibly good news. He gives the example (if I remember rightly) of a widow who is being disadvantaged

by a greedy landlord. The news that a judge is coming to make right all wrongs is welcome and incredibly good news for the widow.

We live in an incredibly complex world in which every single one of us are at the same time, in various ways, both the victims and the perpetrators of the injustices and wrongs in our world. The coming of judgment then should on the one hand bring us to sober reflection on the ways we contribute to the brokenness of our world, but also on the other hand fill us with incredible delight. Indeed the judge is coming to put all that is wrong right again!

6. The Spirit brings about this conviction by guiding us to and glorifying Jesus. Making Jesus, his love, his grace, his words the most weighty, important, significant reality in our lives. Can you describe a time in your life where the Spirit brought about change and transformation by pressing the words, the character, the work of Jesus home to your heart?

This is a personal reflection question designed once more to help people to see the work of the Spirit in their lives. As a leader I would encourage you to think through this question ahead of time so that you can have a story ready to share to help spark peoples awareness.

Here are the three examples Tim gave in the sermon to potentially help 'seed' your conversation.

You see some of us here are consumed with guilt - there's something we've done that we just can't forgive ourselves - the Spirit glorifies Jesus - that his forgiveness would be the most weighty - the most significant - the most beautiful thing to us - a salve for our guilt

Some of us here are wrestling with worry and anxiety - not only due to the state of the world - but perhaps our lives are out of control - by circumstance - a person - a relationship - the Spirit glorifies Jesus - that his love - his presence - his sovereignty becomes the most weighty - the most significant - the most beautiful thing in our lives - an anchor - a solid foundation in the chaos.

Some of us are bound up with fear - a fear that holds us back from giving generously to the needs around us - a fear that keeps us from stepping out in love and service of others - particularly those who are different from us - the spirit glorifies Jesus - shows us the beauty - the weight - the significance of his generosity - his deep love of us - even in our unloveliness - shaping our hearts to step out of the fear and into generous love.

The Spirit glorifies Jesus - I might encourage you then - if you sense something about Jesus beginning to move you - excite you - thrill you - don't move off it too quickly - linger there - rest there - allow the spirit to fan that thing into flame - to press it down further.