

Is God Speaking To Me?

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[0 : 0 0] Well, if we could this evening, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read, the gospel according to John and chapter 16.

John chapter 16, and if we read again at verse 8. John 16 and verse 8, where Jesus says, And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.

Amen. Have you ever sat in church when listening to a sermon and wondered, is God speaking to me?

Is God speaking to me? Or have you ever been reading the Bible, reading a passage in the Bible and you're reading it and you're questioning to yourself, is God speaking to me?

How do you know when God is speaking to you? Because I'm sure there are times when you can be sitting in church and you're listening to a sermon or you're reading a passage of scripture or even something is going on in your life or even speaking to a Christian and you feel that God is speaking to you so personally and so directly.

[1 : 5 2] Because, well, whether it's the sermon you're listening to, it seems that it's almost written just for you. The sermon that you're listening to, it's so applicable to your life that you can relate to it so easily.

Or the passage in the Bible that you're reading, it speaks right into your situation and into your circumstances. And it addresses even the feelings and the anxieties that you may have that no one else knows about apart from God himself.

And, you know, there are times when things take place in your life and you can see the Lord's hand in it. And, you know, when these things happen with the word of God, you could say it's relevant to all the circumstances and situations in your life.

It sometimes, does it not, it sometimes leaves you asking yourself, is God speaking to me? Is God speaking to me? And, of course, the answer is yes.

God is speaking to you. And he's speaking into your situation and your circumstances. He's speaking personally and individually. God is speaking to you.

[3 : 0 0] And, you know, in this passage in John 16, Jesus teaches that God speaks into your life by the work of the Holy Spirit. Because it's the Holy Spirit who speaks into your heart and life by bringing conviction, the need for commitment, and the reality of condemnation.

It's the Holy Spirit who speaks into your life, bringing conviction, the need for commitment, and the reality of condemnation. Now, we don't often speak about the work of the Holy Spirit.

We did do a study of it in the prayer meeting recently. But we don't often speak about the work of the Holy Spirit because we often focus upon the work of Jesus Christ. And we focus upon, rightly so, we focus upon his death upon the cross and his resurrection on the third day.

But, you know, without the work of the Holy Spirit, none of it would mean anything to us. Without the Holy Spirit, the cross would be foolishness to us.

Without the Holy Spirit, the resurrection would be completely meaningless. Without the work of the Holy Spirit, we would never think or feel that God is actually speaking to us personally or individually.

[4 : 16] Because it's the Holy Spirit who speaks to us. It's the Holy Spirit, in fact, who inspired the Word of God. It's the Holy Spirit who makes the Bible a living Word.

Because this Word that's before us this evening, it's God-breathed. It's Spirit-filled. It's the divine breath of God the Holy Spirit. And, you know, as we listen to sermons, and as we sit and read our Bible, it's the Holy Spirit who makes Jesus personal to us.

It's the Holy Spirit who makes Jesus precious to us. It's the Holy Spirit, as we'll see this evening, who will bring clarity concerning conviction, commitment, and condemnation.

It's the Holy Spirit who brings clarity concerning conviction, commitment, and condemnation. And that's what I want us to think about this evening. I want you to sit where you are this evening and ask yourself the question, is God speaking to me?

Is God speaking to me? And I want you to see that when you come to church, and when you read the Bible, and even when you speak to other Christians, or even when you consider what's going on in your life, God is speaking to you.

[5 : 33] And God is speaking to you by the power and enabling of the Holy Spirit. And when God speaks to you, it's the Holy Spirit who is bringing clarity.

He's bringing clarity concerning conviction, commitment, and condemnation. The Holy Spirit brings clarity concerning conviction, commitment, and condemnation.

So we'll look first of all at the Holy Spirit bringing clarity concerning conviction. Clarity concerning conviction. Look again at verse 8, where Jesus says, when he comes, when the Holy Spirit comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.

Concerning sin, because they do not believe in me. Now, Jesus' teaching on the Holy Spirit, it took place in the upper room, only hours before his own trial and crucifixion.

It's the last night of Jesus' life and ministry, and both he and his disciples, they have now, by this point, they've eaten the Last Supper together. Jesus has also instituted the Lord's Supper for the first time.

[6 : 49] Jesus has told his disciples that one of them is going to betray him, and that before morning, Peter is going to deny him. And he's also said to them that he's going to leave them and go back to his father.

And as you would expect, well, this is a lot to take in for the disciples as they sit around the dinner table. It's a lot for the disciples to take in, which is why Jesus says at the beginning of chapter 14, he says, let not your heart be troubled.

You believe in God, believe also in me. But you know, the overarching emphasis of the upper room discourse, which is John 13 to 17, the overarching emphasis of this upper room discourse was Jesus' teaching on the Holy Spirit.

And what's remarkable is that for John, who is the gospel writer, it seems that everything changed for John in the upper room. Because up until this point in John's gospel, John has said that Jesus' ministry and mission, his ministry and mission was to reveal the Father to us.

Because as John says at the beginning of his gospel, Jesus is the word of God. He's the one who became flesh. He's the one who dwelt among us so that we could behold the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

[8 : 08] And throughout his gospel, John reminds us that Jesus, he is the Son of God. He is the Father's Son. And his mission and ministry is to reveal God the Father to us.

Because when you read through John's gospel, time and time again, John tells us that Jesus is doing the work of his Father. And he's doing the work of his Father according to the will of his Father.

Because it's the Father who sent him. And John says that the only way to know God as your Father is to have Jesus as your Saviour. But as Jesus teaches here, the only way to know Him as your Saviour is through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Because the mission and ministry of the Holy Spirit is to reveal Jesus to us. Jesus reveals the Father, but the Spirit reveals Jesus. And you know, the illustration that's often given to describe the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, the illustration that's often given is the illustration of Edinburgh Castle.

I'm sure we've all seen Edinburgh Castle. If not, we've probably seen a photo of it. But on a dark night, when the floodlights are lit and they're all shining onto Edinburgh Castle, the floodlights, they reveal this grand structure and they show the beautiful architecture of Edinburgh Castle.

[9 : 30] The floodlights, they enlighten the darkness, they illuminate the structure and they reveal the beauty of this iconic monument. But you know, no one ever says when looking at Edinburgh Castle, no one ever says, well, what wonderful floodlights they are.

No one ever looks at Edinburgh Castle and says, these floodlights that they've got are brilliant. Because, well, that's not what the floodlights are actually for. The floodlights are there to attract and even to direct everyone's attention towards Edinburgh Castle.

And you know, in many ways, that's what happens with the Holy Spirit. It's the mission and ministry of the Holy Spirit to shine into the darkness of your heart and to enlighten your mind in the knowledge of Jesus.

It's the Holy Spirit who makes you see how glorious Jesus is as your King and how beautiful Jesus is as your Saviour. It's the Holy Spirit who enlightens and illuminates and reveals Jesus to you so that you're drawn to Him in the Gospel.

You know, my friend, it's the Holy Spirit who's working in your heart as you're listening to sermons, as you're reading your Bible, as you're speaking to other Christians, as you're looking at what's going on in your life.

[10 : 51] It's the Holy Spirit who's reminding you that God is speaking to you. And the thing is, tonight, you know that God is speaking to you. I don't need to tell you that because the Spirit is doing that already.

You know that God is speaking to you. And you know that because God is speaking to you, you're being drawn to this Jesus. And you know that this Jesus is full of love and care and compassion towards you as this unworthy sinner.

You're being drawn to Him because you know God is speaking to you. But it's as you're being drawn to Jesus, Jesus explains here. It's as you're being drawn to Jesus that you'll experience what we call conviction of sin.

That's what He says here. When the Spirit comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment concerning sin because they do not believe in Me.

Jesus says that when the Holy Spirit begins to work in your heart, He will bring conviction. conviction. He will convict, as Jesus says in verse 8, He will convict the world.

[12 : 07] And the word convict here, it means to expose. Where the Holy Spirit, He actually exposes your sin. The same word is used in John 3 where Jesus speaks about the darkness that sinners are in without salvation.

Where Jesus, He said, we even read it this morning, Jesus said, the light has come into the darkness light has come into the world but people love the darkness rather than the light because their works are evil.

For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light lest his work should be exposed. So the thing is, people don't come to Jesus because when you start being drawn to Jesus, the floodlight that is the Holy Spirit, He shines into the darkness of your heart and your sin becomes exposed.

But what Jesus says here is that when God is speaking to you and when you're being drawn to Jesus, you'll experience this conviction of sin because of the work of the Holy Spirit.

And as you're being drawn from darkness into light, your sin, in which you could hide your sin because it's in the darkness, but as you've been drawn out of darkness into the light, your sin is very quickly exposed by the light of the gospel.

[13 : 35] And when the Holy Spirit brings that enlightenment and exposure, then there's clarity and there's conviction. But Jesus says that when the Holy Spirit exposes sin, He specifically exposes the sin of unbelief.

And that's who the world is that Jesus describes in verse 8. When He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment. The world is the unbelieving, unconverted, uncommitted person.

So, if you're in that category, that's you. You're part of this unbelieving world. And yet, it's the world, it's the same world that we're told in John 3, as we were saying to the children this morning, the same world that God so loved, the unbelieving world that God so loved that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him would not perish but have eternal life.

And so, my friend, the specific sin that the Holy Spirit enlightens and exposes is the sin of unbelief. the sin of unbelief. That's what Jesus says in verse 9, concerning sin because they do not believe in me.

And it's this sin that's exposed because every other sin that we commit, that can be forgiven. But the sin of unbelief, that cannot be forgiven.

[15 : 08] My friend, the unforgivable sin as Jesus describes is the sin of refusing Christ as your Savior. It's the sin of rejecting Jesus as your Lord.

It's the sin of resisting the free offer of the Gospel all your life. It's the sin of refuting the work of the Holy Spirit as He strives with you week by week, day by day.

That's why Jesus said that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven because to blaspheme, as you know, it's to do something in vain, just like taking God's name in vain is blasphemy.

But you know, to commit the unforgivable sin, it's to die without salvation. It's to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit. It's to say that God's salvation has been accomplished in vain because to refuse God as your Father and to reject Jesus as your Savior and to resist the Holy Spirit as your Counselor and even Comforter is to say that God so loved the world in vain.

Christ died on the cross in vain. The Holy Spirit has strived with me in vain. My friend, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. It's an awful sin.

[16 : 24] It's an awful sin. Unbelief is the unforgivable sin. And you might be saying to me, Murdo, I do believe.

And the amount of, well I've spoken to almost all of you about this. You all say to me, I do believe. I believe everything you're saying. I believe everything the Bible teaches about God and Jesus and heaven and hell.

I believe it all. But my friend, I want to say to you that even Satan believes. And Satan trembles. Satan believes the Bible.

But if you really believe, there needs to be evidence. there needs to be commitment. There needs to be a confession. If you really believe, because the Bible says that if you believe in your heart, you must confess with your mouth.

If you believe that Jesus is your Lord, you must confess Jesus is your Lord. And that's how you're saved. That's the only way to be saved.

[17 : 33] My friend, God is speaking to you. And he's speaking to you by the Holy Spirit. And it's the Holy Spirit who will bring clarity concerning conviction. But secondly, it's the Holy Spirit who will bring clarity concerning commitment.

Clarity concerning commitment. We'll read again in verse 8. When he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment.

Concerning sin because they do not believe in me. And concerning righteousness because I go to the Father and you will see me no longer. As Jesus continues to teach about the mission and ministry of the Holy Spirit, he explains that when you're sitting in church under the preaching of the gospel or when you're reading the Bible or when you're speaking to a Christian or looking at your circumstances, it's the Holy Spirit who is revealing Jesus to you.

It's the Holy Spirit who is drawing you to Jesus. It's the Holy Spirit that's making Jesus precious to you and it's the Holy Spirit who is enlightening your mind and exposing your sin.

It's the Holy Spirit who convicts you of your sin of unbelief and convinces you that you need to commit your life to Jesus Christ. And that's what Jesus says here.

[18 : 51] He says that the Holy Spirit gives clarity concerning commitment. He says concerning righteousness because I go to the Father. and you will see me no longer.

What Jesus is affirming here is that without him as your saviour, you can't go to the Father. Without Jesus as your mediator, you are separated from God.

Without Jesus as your Lord and King, you're not righteous. You're unrighteous. You may think that you're self-righteous, but you don't have the perfect righteousness that's required to gain acceptance with the Father.

You don't have the righteousness that's needed in order for you to gain approval and acceptance with the Father in heaven. Because as Isaiah reminds us, we have all become as an unclean thing.

Our righteousness is as filthy rags, and our iniquities, they have taken us away from God. And because of your sin and your unrighteousness, there's this great chasm between you and God.

[20 : 10] This great chasm that separates you. And the only way to go to the Father, the only way to be reconciled with a holy God is through faith in Jesus Christ.

Isn't that what Jesus says back in chapter 14? I am the way and the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father but through me.

No one can go to the Father's house, says Jesus, except through me. No one can come home to the Father except through Jesus. And you know, my unconverted friend, that's what Jesus is affirming to you.

That in order to go to the Father, you must have the same righteousness as Jesus himself. Because as it stands, your righteousness and even your self-righteousness, it will not gain you approval or acceptance with God the Father.

Because anything you try and do in order to be made righteous, it will not make you acceptable to God. So I want to say this clearly to you.

[21 : 18] There's no point trying to live a better life. There's no point trying to be a better person. there's no point trying to make yourself worthy before you come to Christ.

The Bible says you come to him as you are and you come to him now. So there's no point trying to read your Bible more and be in church more, which is all good things, or do good works before you come to Christ.

You come to Christ now. And you see that he's the only one who can make you righteous before a holy God. He's the only one.

Nothing you do will make you righteous. He's your only access to the Father. He's the only one who can make you acceptable before God. But as it stands tonight, as an unbeliever without God as your Father and Christ as your Savior and the Holy Spirit who's convicting you and convincing you, as it stands tonight, you are guilty, unrighteous, a sin-sick, hell-deserving sinner who's under the wrath of God awaiting his judgment.

And there's a sad statement to say about you that you're still in that condition after all these years. You're still a guilty, unrighteous, sin-sick, hell-deserving sinner under the wrath of God awaiting his judgment.

[22 : 52] It's an awful condition to be in. And without doubt, God is speaking to you. God is speaking to you. He's not speaking.

It's not a man who's talking to you, my friend. God is speaking to you. God is speaking to you and he's speaking to you tonight and he's reminding you that you've rebelled against God.

You've rejected Christ thus far. You've refused the Holy Spirit and without the righteousness of Christ, you can't come to the Father. Without the righteousness of Christ, you stand naked and exposed before a Holy God.

And if you're experiencing conviction of sin tonight and your need of commitment to Christ, that's only because God is speaking to you. Because when God speaks to you individually, personally, directly, do you know this?

He cuts to the heart. With God, there's no messing about. He cuts right to the heart. That's what happened on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came in power.

[23 : 58] As Peter preached the gospel, those who were in the congregation were told that they were convicted of their sin. They were convinced that they needed to commit their life to Jesus Christ and were told that they were cut to the heart.

They were cut to the heart. And that's what the Holy Spirit does when He speaks to us. He enlightens our mind and He exposes our sin and He cuts to the heart.

Cuts right to the heart. He shows us our desperate need to make a commitment to Jesus Christ. And you know, my friend, when God is speaking to you, the Holy Spirit convinces you that you need to be saved and that you need to have the perfect righteousness of Christ.

Because to reject the only righteousness that can present you faultless before the throne of God is foolishness. To reject this righteousness that's an offer to you is foolishness.

You need the righteousness of Christ. And there's only one place to find it. And that's through faith in Jesus Christ. He has secured a perfect righteousness for all who believe in Him.

[25 : 10] And that's the righteousness you need. The promise of the gospel is that Jesus, He was made sin for us. And by being made sin for us, we could be made the righteousness of God through Him.

It was the great exchange. My sin transferred to Christ. His righteousness transferred to me. And it's through faith alone, in Christ alone, that we're made righteous and we gain acceptance with the Father.

It's not by anything we do, just by accepting the free gift of God, which is eternal life. You know, it's through faith that Jesus becomes to us Jehovah Sidkenu, the Lord our righteousness.

It's through faith. And you know, it's no wonder Robert Murray McShane, it's no wonder he could say that before God was speaking to him by the Holy Spirit. Do you remember how the hymn went?

He confessed in the first verse, I once was a stranger to grace and to God. I knew not my danger, I felt not my load. Though friends spoke in rapture of Christ on the tree, Jehovah Sidkenu was nothing to me.

[26 : 27] But you know, when God spoke to him, when God began to speak to him through sermons, through reading the Bible, through other Christians, through providence, when God spoke to him by the Holy Spirit enlightening his mind and exposing his sin, McShane could then say, when free grace awoke me, by light from on high, then legal fear shook me, I trembled to die, no refuge, no safety in self could I see.

Jehovah Sidkenu, my saviour must be. And you know, as clarity concerning conviction and commitment, as that came by the Holy Spirit, McShane finally confessed, my terrors all vanished before the sweet name, my guilty fears banished with boldness I came to drink at the fountain, life-giving and free.

Jehovah Sidkenu is all things to me. Now my friend, can you say that? Can you say, Jehovah Sidkenu is all things to me.

That's what you need to be able to say. Because God is so speaking to you concerning the conviction of sin and your commitment, your need of commitment to this saviour, that you must come to him today.

Because today if you hear his voice, do not harden your heart. Do not harden your heart. But my friend, if you don't respond and if you keep resisting conviction of sin and if you keep refusing commitment to the saviour, there's one thing the Holy Spirit also convicts you of and gives you clarity about and that is that your end will be condemnation.

[28 : 22] your end will be condemnation. And that's what I want us to consider lastly and very briefly. That when God speaks to us, the Holy Spirit, he brings clarity concerning conviction, conviction of sin, our need for commitment and also condemnation.

That when God speaks to us, the Holy Spirit brings clarity concerning conviction, commitment and condemnation. So lastly, clarity concerning condemnation.

He says, when the Spirit 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. It is closing statement about the mission and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus says that the Holy Spirit will convict and convince sinners concerning judgment. And the word judgment here refers to the final judgment and particularly the day of judgment.

[29 : 33] And your Bible will remind you that on that day we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account of the things done in the body whether good or evil.

And our day of judgment it will either be the day when Christ returns with the glory of his Father and the holy angels or it will be the day of our death.

Because as the Bible says it's appointed unto man once to die and after that the judgment. And you know my unconverted friend it's the Holy Spirit who convicts you and reminds you that God will not always strive with man.

It's the Holy Spirit who speaks to you and reminds you that you need to repent. It's the Holy Spirit that convinces you that there will come a time when a day of opportunity will be over and that God's grace that has been held out to you freely for so long it will be withdrawn and you'll have to stand before a holy God before his great throne without the righteousness of Christ.

And you know it's the Holy Spirit who's confirming to you again and again that it will not end well. It will not end well if you're still outside of Christ on the day of judgment.

[31 : 07] And you know why do I say all this to you? Do you ever think that? Why do I say this to you again and again? It's out of a great concern for your soul and for you as someone who is both body and soul.

Why do I warn you? Because if you're still outside of Christ on the day of judgment it will not end well. It will not end well.

In fact it's the Apostle John who was given that solemn revelation from Jesus about the final judgment. When you read in the book of Revelation chapter 20 John says then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it from his presence earth and sky fled away and no place was found for them and I saw the dead great and small standing before the throne and the books were opened then another book was opened which is the book of life and the dead were judged by what was written in the books according to what they had done and the sea gave up the dead who were in it death and hell gave up the dead who were in them and they were judged each one of them according to what they had done then death and hell were thrown into the lake of fire this we are told is the second death the lake of fire and then the warning comes from Jesus if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life they were thrown in the lake of fire and you know

I take no joy in reading that to you but you know it's the Holy Spirit who convicts you and reminds you every time you're sitting in church or every time you're reading the Bible or every time another Christian is speaking to you about your soul and your state or in your sin it's the Holy Spirit who convicts you that your name is not yet written in the Lamb's book of life and it needs to be written and it's the Holy Spirit who convinces you that your name must your name must be written in the Lamb's book of life and you know it ought to show us this passage ought to show us the grace and mercy of Jesus towards lost sinners it ought to show us how good God really is towards you because that he would graciously and mercifully warn you that's how loving God is that he's giving to you a message he's giving to you a way of escape he's giving you a rescue plan he's put the whole plan in action and all he's asking you to do is come that's how good he is to you he's asking you to come he's giving you as Jesus says here he's giving you clarity concerning condemnation because the judgment and condemnation of God is a subject everyone wants to avoid nobody wants to talk about this and yet Jesus is telling you openly and plainly he's telling you lovingly and even gently he's telling you that because of your sin you deserve condemnation you deserve the wrath and punishment of God because you're refusing God as your father you're rejecting

Jesus as your savior you're resisting the Holy Spirit as your comforter God is speaking to you God is speaking to you my friend and Jesus is reminding you this evening that it's the Holy Spirit alone who gives clarity concerning conviction he gives clarity concerning your need of commitment and he gives clarity concerning the reality of condemnation it's the Holy Spirit who convicts you and he's pressing upon your heart the reality of sin the need for righteousness and the promise of judgment my friend the mission and ministry of the Spirit is not to make you comfortable in church the mission and ministry of the Holy Spirit is not to make you relax in the presence of a holy God the mission and ministry of the Holy Spirit is not to tickle your ears and just just to warm your heart and pat you on the back and tell you how good you've been coming to church that's not the mission and ministry of the Holy Spirit his mission and his ministry is to make you sit sit up and listen so that you'll respond to the gospel and tonight my friend

[35 : 53] God is speaking to you and he's speaking to you about sin righteousness and judgment but are you listening are you listening may the Lord bless these thoughts to us let us pray oh Lord our gracious God may give thanks to thee that the Lord one who is so gracious a God who has provided for us a way of escape a God who has provided for us a new and a living way in and through thy son Jesus and help us Lord we pray not to reject the father or to resist the son or even to run from the work of the spirit in our lives but Lord we pray that we would come on bended knee coming like the publican of old confessing God be merciful to me a sinner Lord we pray that there would be rejoicing and even reconciliation tonight over sinners repenting bless us we pray bless thy truth to our souls continue to strive with us we ask oh Lord leave us not to ourselves but work in us and through us for thy glory and for the extension of thy kingdom bless us in the week that lies ahead a week Lord that is always unknown to us but known only to thee and Lord what better way to begin it than by committing our lives into thy hands

Lord do us good and we pray take away our iniquity receive us graciously for Jesus sake Amen We shall bring our service to a conclusion by singing the words of Psalm 85 Psalm 85 the Scottish Psalter page 340 Psalm 85 and we're reading or singing from verse 8 down to the end of the psalm Psalm 85 at verse 8 I'll hear what God the Lord will speak to his folk he'll speak peace and to his saints but let them not return to foolishness to them that fear him surely near is his salvation that glory in our land may have her habitation truth met with mercy righteousness and peace kissed mutually truth springs from earth and righteousness looks down from heaven high yea what is good the Lord shall give our land shall yield increase justice to set us in his steps shall go before his face these verses of

Psalm 85 to God's praise I'll hear what the Lord will speak to his folk speak peace unto his saints God let them all return to foolishness to them not fear that surely near is his salvation that glory in our land may have her habitation who met with mercy righteousness and peace kissed mutually truth brings from earth unrighteousness looked down from heaven high yea what is good the

Lord shall give our love shall yield in praise justice to set us in his steps shall go before his face the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forever more Amen