

PROVING THE WORLD WRONG (Pete Burton)

- Where have you seen God at work in your life this week? (Share any brief examples and encouragements).
- Was there anything from Sunday's message which you found particularly inspiring or challenging?
- Was there anything else you particularly noticed?

John 16:4b-15

^{4b}I did not tell you this from the beginning because I was with you, ⁵ but now I am going to him who sent me. None of you asks me, "Where are you going?"⁶ Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things. ⁷ But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ about sin, because people do not believe in me; ¹⁰ about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; ¹¹ and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. ¹² 'I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. ¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. ¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.'

- Jesus tells his disciples, 'it is for your good that I am going away'. What do you think the world would be like now if the resurrected Jesus had stayed behind instead? What might the community of Jesus followers have grown into? Would it have ever become the church?
- Why did Jesus think the disciples would be better off with the Holy Spirit than with him physically present?

We tend to talk about the Spirit in the context of our individual lives and in the life of the church. We are transformed as the fruit of the Spirit grows in us. The church is empowered for mission and the work of the kingdom through the operation of the gifts of the Spirit. We don't talk a lot about the work of the Spirit in the world (Greek, *Cosmos*). But Jesus here is speaking about how the Spirit 'will prove the world to be in the wrong about **sin** and **righteousness** and **judgement**...

- What do you think the world gets wrong about sin?¹
- Now look at verse 9. Jesus says, 'about sin, because people do not believe in me'. What does Jesus mean by this?
- What do you think the world gets wrong about righteousness?
- Now look at verse 10. Jesus says, 'about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer'. What does that have to do with righteousness?
- What does the world get wrong about judgement?
- Now look at verse 11. Jesus says, 'and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.' What do you think that tells us about what judgement is really about?
- How can we show the world what 'true vertical' is?
- If the Spirit of truth has come to lead us into all truth, why do you think Christians still find so much to disagree about?
- What is still hopeful about this promise?

¹ See, for example, these lyrics from the Pet Shop Boys, 'When I look back upon my life / it's always with a sense of shame / I've always been the one to blame / For everything I long to do / no matter when or where or who / has one thing in common too / It's a, it's a, it's a, it's a sin...' <https://www.petshopboys.co.uk/lyrics/its-a-sin>