

Sermon #107 — John's Gospel

Title:                    **THE EXPEDIENCE**  
   **AND**  
   **THE COMFORT**

Text:                    John 16:7-14

Date:                    Sunday Morning — January 16, 2011

Tape:                    *John #107*

Subject:                *The Necessity of Christ's Death*  
   *And the Comfort of the Holy Spirit*

Reading:                *Isaiah 52:13-53:12*

Introduction:

The title of my message this morning is **THE EXPEDIENCE AND THE COMFORT**. My text is John 16:7-14. Here our blessed Savior tells us that His death upon the cursed tree as our Substitute was for us a matter of expedience, something needful and profitable for our souls. Then He tells us why that is so.

(John 16:7-14) “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. 8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 Of

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sin, because they believe not on me; 10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. 12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, [that] shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew [it] unto you.”

**Proposition:** The sin-atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ is the only way sinners could ever obtain God’s salvation, the only way we could ever know God, the only way fallen man could ever live in communion with the Triune Jehovah.

**In Galatians 3:13-14 the Spirit of God tells us exactly the same thing.**

(Galatians 3:13-14) “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for

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us: for it is written, Cursed [is] every one that hangeth on a tree: 14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

### **THE EXPEDIENCE**

First, let me show you the expedience of our Savior’s death. Then, I will tell you a little about the comfort of His Holy Spirit.

(John 16:7) “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.”

**“If I go not away”** — It was necessary for the Lord Jesus Christ to go away. He must be lifted up upon the tree. He must suffer and die. He must rise from the dead, ascend back into heaven and appear in the presence of God for us. **Otherwise, we could never have been saved.** The purpose of God, the Word of God, the promises of God, and the covenant of grace

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would all have been defeated and proven a lie. This is what our Savior meant when he said, — “**It is expedient for you that I go away.**” — Behold the Lord Jesus, hanging upon the cursed tree, and learn the meaning of those words.

Standing at the foot of the cross, as I behold the Holy One nailed to the cursed tree, covered with His own blood and the spit of an enraged mob, made to be sin, forsaken and cursed of God His Father, yet, realizing that this is the work of God’s own hand, I am lost in astonishment! I am filled with reverence and awe (2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13).

“Yonder (Amazing sight!) I see  
The incarnate Son of God  
Expiring on the cursed tree,  
And weltering in His blood.

Behold, a purple torrent run  
Down from His hands and head,  
The crimson tide puts out the sun;  
His groans awake the dead.

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The trembling earth, the darkened sky,  
Proclaim the truth aloud;  
And with the amazed centurion, cry,  
‘This is the Son of God!’”

Awed as I am with reverence for my crucified Lord, still there is a question that I cannot suppress, a question that reason and sound judgment cannot fail to ask. The question is, Why? Why did the Son of God suffer such a death? Why did God so torment His beloved Son and kill Him in such a horribly ignominious way?

- Was it to save my soul? I know that He died that I might live. He suffered, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring me to God. But was there no other way for the omnipotent God to save me?
- Was all this done to demonstrate the greatness of God’s love to me? Indeed it was (Romans 5:8; 1 John 3:16; 4:9-10).

(Romans 5:8) “God commendeth his love

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toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

(1 John 3:16) “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.”

(1 John 4:9-10) “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. (10) Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.”

“Jesus, who left His throne on high,  
Left the bright realms of bliss,  
And came to earth to bleed and die,  
Was ever love like this?”

But, surely, God could have revealed His love to me in some other way. Why did He slay his Son? **What necessity was there for the Son of God to suffer**

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**and die upon the cursed tree?** What was the expedience of His death?

Only one answer can be found to that question — **The justice of God had to be satisfied.** There was no necessity for God to save anyone. Salvation is altogether the free gift of His grace. But, having determined to save His elect from the ruins of fallen humanity, the only way God could save His people and forgive their sins was by the death of Christ. — “*Without shedding of blood is no remission*” (Hebrews 9:22). The justice of God had to be satisfied in order for God to save His people; and the only thing that could ever satisfy the justice of God is the blood of Christ.

“*If I go not away, **the Comforter will not come** unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.*” — **Had Christ not gone away the Holy Spirit would never have come in His office capacity as the Comforter** of His people, Reprover of the world, Teacher of truth, and Glorifier of Christ. **There would have been nothing for Him to do!** Had Christ not gone away, there would have been...

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- no blood to sprinkle,
- no righteousness to reveal,
- no salvation to bestow,
- no Mediator to glorify.

**Without question, the Holy Spirit was in the world from the beginning** (Genesis 1:2; Psalm 51:11). Without Him the prophets could not have prophesied and the Old Testament saints could not have been saved. But **He was not poured out upon all flesh** (the Gentile world), for the gathering of God's elect from the four corners of the earth, until Christ died and ascended back to heaven. **This coming of the Holy Spirit was the direct result of Christ's accomplished redemption and His exaltation and glory as our Savior** (Galatians 3:13-14; John 7:39; Psalm 68:18; Joel 2:32; Acts 2:33).

(Galatians 3:13-14) "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed [is] every one that hangeth on a tree: 14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise



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of the Spirit through faith.”

(Psalms 68:18) “Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them.”

(Joel 2:32) “And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.”

(Acts 2:33) “Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.”

## **ONE CONDITION**

**In the infinitely wise and orderly arrangements of the covenant of grace all the blessings of the**

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**covenant were conditioned upon one thing.** And that one thing was the obedience of Christ as the Surety of God's elect, His righteousness and blood atonement. As God the Holy Spirit is the Conveyor of all grace, He would not come to convey to us the blessings of grace promised in the covenant until our Surety had earned and purchased them for us. The sending of the Spirit was the fruit of Christ's purchase. Therefore He could not come until the purchase was made. But, inasmuch as Christ has by His blood purchased God's elect from under the curse of the law and purchased for us all the blessings of the covenant, the Spirit of God must and shall come to every redeemed sinner in irresistible, saving power. **He comes to seal to us all that the Father promised and the Son purchased by giving us life and faith in Christ and preserving us in grace** until the resurrection day.

Our Lord had just told his disciples that He must suffer, die, rise from the dead and ascend back to His Father in heaven, that there He would prepare a place for them, and that at the time appointed He would come again to receive them unto Himself. Then He

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assured them that upon His ascension back into heaven He would send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to minister to them.

These things are all recorded in John 13, 14, and 15. They should have flooded the disciples' hearts with joy. The disciples should have been full of questions about these great, mysterious, and wonderful things. Instead, sorrow filled their hearts. Then the Savior spoke to quieten their fears and show them the necessity of His going away, His death upon the cursed tree, His resurrection, His ascension, and His heavenly exaltation. He said, "*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.*"

Pause a moment and learn a lesson: — **Those things that appear to be most grievous in their experience are often most expedient in their end.** Thank God that He does not deal with us according to the folly of our own wills, but graciously gives us what He knows is good for us!

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An expedience is that which is, being constrained by necessity, the best course to follow. Our Lord, in this place, is essentially saying, “It is both necessary and good for you that I should suffer, die, rise from the dead, and go back to my Father in heaven.”

**The expedience of our Savior’s death should be obvious to anyone:** — Had He not gone away, had He not suffered and died as our Substitute upon the cursed tree and ascended back to heaven, and we could not have been saved.

- He could not have finished the work which he had come to do (Hebrews 10:5-10).
- God could not be just and yet justify them that believe (Romans 3:24-26). — “**There is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour**” (Isaiah 45:21).
- There would have been no atonement for sin (Hebrews 9:22).
- We could never have obtained the forgiveness of sin, reconciliation to God, peace, pardon, and righteousness (Colossians 1:20-22).
- We would have no Forerunner, High Priest, and Advocate in heaven (1 John 2:1-2).

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- There would have been no way of access to God for guilty sinners (Hebrews 10:19).
- Christ could never have saved His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21).

### **THE COMFORT**

Now, let me tell you just a little about the comforting work of the Holy Spirit. How does God the Holy Spirit comfort chosen, redeemed sinners? Hear what the Lord Jesus tells us in the next verse (John 16:8). — *“When He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”* This is the errand upon which the Spirit of God has been sent into the world. This is the work of the Holy Spirit as the Comforter of God’s elect.

- **He is the Spirit of Truth.** He reveals to and teaches chosen men and women the truth of God. **Apart from the illumination of the Spirit no one can know the truth.**
- **He is the Spirit of Reproof.** By the preaching of the Gospel the Spirit of God speaks to the hearts of

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His people to rebuke, reprimand, and reprove them for their sin and unbelief.

- And **He is the Spirit of Conviction**. By the preaching of the Gospel He effectually convinces God's elect of their sin, Christ's righteousness and of God's judgment of sin by Christ.

### **LEGAL TERM**

The word that is translated here "*reprove*," and in the margin "*convince*," is a legal term. It speaks of the work of a jury in a court of law. When a man is charged with a crime, upon hearing the testimony of others and weighing the evidence, if the jury sees that the man is beyond any reasonable doubt guilty, being convinced by the evidence given, they find the man guilty and he is convicted. Feelings may enter into their emotions. But feelings must not enter into their judgment. You see, feelings have nothing to do with conviction. Conviction is the result of unanswerable arguments and irrefutable evidence.

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When God the Holy Spirit comes upon a sinner in saving grace and power, He convicts him, by the unanswerable, irrefutable Word of God, of sin, righteousness and judgment. **This conviction is the sovereign prerogative of God the Holy Spirit. He accomplishes it by almighty, irresistible grace.** Man may open the Word and preach it. But only the Spirit of God can effectually open the heart, apply the Word and convict the sinner.

When our Savior says, “*He will reprove the world,*” He is not suggesting that every person in the world will be the object of the Spirit’s work. That would make His work a failure, for all are not convinced. Our Lord’s meaning is that the Holy Spirit will effectually and savingly convict His elect throughout all the world, Gentiles as well as Jews, some of every age, some in every nation. He will savingly convict every elect, redeemed sinner by the irresistible power of His grace.

## **HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTION**

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The comfort of the Spirit is Holy Spirit conviction. And **Holy Spirit conviction is essential to saving faith in Christ.** I do not say that Holy Spirit conviction is a prerequisite, or condition that must be met before a person can trust Christ. That is a dreadful mistake in the thinking of many. Our Lord never calls upon sinners to be convicted and then believe on Him. You must simply trust Christ. Trust Him and you are saved, forgiven of all sin, and have eternal life. **There are no conditions to faith. There are no prerequisites for you to meet,** doctrinally, experimentally, or emotionally, before you can believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

**However, our Lord does tell us plainly that one distinguishing characteristic of saving faith is that it is always accompanied by Holy Spirit conviction.**

- Where there is no conviction, there is no conversion.
- Where there is no conviction, there is no faith.
- Where there is no conviction, there is no knowledge of Christ.



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- Where there is no conviction there is no saving union with Christ.
- Wherever there is true, saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, there is Holy Spirit conviction.
- And wherever there is true Holy Spirit conviction, there is true, saving faith in Christ.

The two always go together.

The question that must be answered is this: — **What is Holy Spirit conviction?** I have heard and read many answers given by men to that question, which have no foundation in the Word of God. Most people think that Holy Spirit conviction is a feeling of deep remorse for sin, a dreadful sense of one's lost condition, a terrifying fear of God's wrath, and/or an ardent desire to be saved. These things may, and very often do, accompany Holy Spirit conviction. But nowhere in the Word of God is conviction described in such terms.

**If we would know what Holy Spirit conviction is we must look to the Word of God alone, putting out of our minds the opinions of men.** What you and I may think and feel about the matter is of no

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importance. We only want to know what God says. And this is the way God our Savior describes Holy Spirit conviction...

“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; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged” (John 16:8-11).

### SIN

So Holy Spirit conviction deals with these three things: sin, righteousness, and judgment. **“He will reprove the world of sin.”** — When God the Holy Spirit comes to a sinner’s heart in saving power and grace, this is the first thing he does: — **He reproves, convinces, and convicts the sinner that he is a sinner, deserving eternal damnation.** Where there is no Holy Spirit conviction of sin, there is no saving faith in Christ. **When a man experiences real conviction of sin, he takes sides with God against himself, justifying God in his own condemnation**

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(Psalm 51:4-5). The Spirit of God so thoroughly convinces a man of his sinfulness that he gladly takes his place with the publican and cries, “*God be merciful to me, I am the sinner.*”

He convinces us of **the fact of sin**. We have sinned against God. In our father Adam we rebelled against God, we were born with hearts of rebellion and sin, and we have chosen the path of rebellion against God. We are all sinners by nature, sinners at heart, sinners by choice, and sinners by deed.

The Holy Spirit convinces us of **the fault of sin**. Our sin is much more than an act of evil against man. Sin is an affront to God. It is an attack upon the throne of God. It is a denial of God’s right to be God. Sin is a monstrous attempt to rape God, to rob Him of His dignity and glory as God. — “*Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.*”

In conviction, the Holy Spirit convinces us of **the folly of sin**. It is the most foolish thing in the world that a man should sin against God. Sin is utter madness. What fool will dare to stand against the

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Almighty?

God the Holy Spirit convinces us of the filth of sin. He shows us that sin has made us loathsome and obnoxious in the sight of God. It has rendered both me and all that I do unacceptable to a holy God.

The Spirit of God convinces us of the fountain of sin. Sin arises from our own evil hearts. Sin is not so much what we do as it is what we are. Because man's heart is a fountain of evil, it brings forth nothing but corruption, vileness, and sin.

And the Holy Spirit convinces us of the fruit of sin. — *“The wages of sin is death.”* The just reward of my sin is eternal damnation.

Salvation does not come by anything the natural man can do. A person cannot be saved by repeating a prayer, by walking a church aisle, by making a decision, or by being baptized and joining the church. Salvation comes to helpless, dead sinners only by the mighty, effectual operations of God the Holy Spirit. Salvation is the result of Holy Spirit

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**conviction.** Our Lord Jesus declares that when the Spirit of God comes in saving grace to a sinner He will convince that person “*of sin, because they believe not on me.*”

When the Spirit of God convicts a person of his sin the convicted sinner is graciously forced to see and acknowledge his guilt before the holy God (Psalm 51:3-5). And he sees that he is utterly without ability to change his nature.

I know that the whole world has sinned and is guilty before God. But **the Lord God has graciously shown me that I am guilty, deserving of His wrath, and without excuse before Him.** The evidence is all in. It is irrefutable. I am convinced. I am guilty. From the depths of my filthy soul I cry, “*God be merciful to me, the sinner!*” This conviction is contrary to nature. It is the work of God the Holy Spirit.

**The specific issue of conviction is unbelief.** All men know by nature that such things as robbery, adultery, and murder are sin. But **it is a supernatural work of God the Holy Spirit that convinces us that**

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unbelief is sin. Indeed, unbelief is the greatest of all sins, and the most damning. Unbelief is the heart of man declaring that God is a liar (1 John 5:10)! Every sin is damning. But no sin is damning as unbelief. The heathen are lost for want of knowledge. But those who upon hearing the Gospel refuse to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ are lost for want of faith, by their willful, obstinate unbelief. So their unbelief shall be their condemnation. It is unbelief that keeps them from entering into rest. Unbelief deserves and shall have the unmitigated, everlasting wrath of almighty God in hell. Blessed is the man or woman who by the Spirit of God is convicted of sin and turned from unbelief to faith in Christ!

## RIGHTEOUSNESS

When the Spirit of God comes in saving power to a sinner, He convicts the sinner of righteousness. — *“Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more”* (John 16:10). — The basis of this conviction is the fact that Christ has ascended back to His Father in heaven. What is this conviction of righteousness? It is the conviction that

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God demands righteousness, that I cannot produce righteousness, and that the Lord Jesus Christ has brought in an everlasting righteousness by his obedience to God as the sinners' Substitute. **Blessed be God, our Savior's name is JEHOVAH-TSIDKINU, — THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS!**

Behold the crucified Christ, slain under the penalty of sin, buried, risen again, ascended back into heaven, exalted to the throne of everlasting glory, and be convinced that He has brought in an everlasting, all-sufficient righteousness for all who trust Him. — *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus...For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us...Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us”* (Romans 8:1, 3, 4, 34).

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**The Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled all the requirements of righteousness by his obedience to God as our Representative** (Romans 5:19). As a man He did all that God in His law requires of men. And He did it for His people, to work out a righteousness that God might impute to and bestow upon His elect.

**In His death as our Substitute Christ satisfied righteous and just penalty of God's law due to our sins** (Galatians 3:13). He redeemed us from the curse of the law by being made a curse for us. He was made to be sin for us. Our sins were imputed to Him. And God punished Him, to the full satisfaction of justice, for our sins, so that He might in justice forgive our sins (Romans 3:24-26).

**Now, since Christ was made sin for us and died for our sins, all for whom He died are made the righteousness of God in Him.** Every sinner who trusts Christ is righteous before God, made righteous...

- By Righteousness Imputed in Justification.



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- And by Righteousness Imparted in Sanctification.

Just as the Lord Jesus Christ was made sin for us by God's work alone, we are made the righteousness of God in Him by God's work alone.

## **JUDGMENT**

(John 16:8-11) “And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 Of sin, because they believe not on me; 10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.”

**Looking upon my own heart**, in the light of God's Word, I am thoroughly convinced of my own depravity, guilt and sin before God. I know that I deserve His infinite wrath. **Looking upon that Man in heaven Who is God**, Who was once made to be sin for sinful man and is now freed from sin, I am thoroughly convinced that His righteousness is infinitely meritorious and sufficient to give all who

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trust Him eternal, immutable acceptance with the holy God. **And looking upon Christ's conquest over Satan by His death upon the cursed tree, I am thoroughly convinced of judgment, convinced that judgment is finished for all for whom this great and glorious Savior died at Calvary!** This is the work of the Holy Spirit. When He saves a sinner He convinces him of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. This conviction of judgment is threefold.

1. **God will judge all sin** (Acts 17:31). As the Lord God judged Satan for sin, casting him out of heaven, binding him by the cross of Christ, and sentencing him to everlasting destruction in hell, so He will judge the sins of all men and women in the last day. None shall escape the justice and wrath of almighty God. *“The soul that sinneth, it shall die!”*
2. **God's judgment of men for sin is just.** Sin is more than an act. It is a principle of enmity against God in the heart of every man. It is treason against the King of heaven and malice against our Creator. The goodness and justice of God demand that wickedness be put out of the earth and that sinners

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be punished with everlasting destruction (Psalm 11:4-7). Should God punish me forever in hell, He is perfectly just to do so. Should He punish you forever in hell, He is just. We deserve eternal damnation.

3. **For God's elect judgment is over!** The Lord God judged our sins in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He made His dear Son to be sin for us and punished us for sin, to the full satisfaction of His holy justice in His darling Son. The proof that judgment is over for the believer is the fact that Christ has taken Satan into captivity, delivering us from the fear of death (Hebrews 2:15).

**If you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, you have nothing to fear from God, His law, or His justice.** Your sins are forever forgiven. You have been made perfectly righteous in Christ. You are complete in him. And for you judgment is over.

Read on...

(John 16:12-14) “I have yet many things to say

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unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, [that] shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew [it] unto you.”

### **DIVINE GUIDANCE**

God the Holy Spirit comforts us by revealing the Gospel to us; and He comforts us by guiding us, sweetly, effectually guiding us into all truth.

**Matthew Poole** rightly observed that the word here translated “*guide*” implies that the Holy Spirit both reveals the truth to God’s saints and bows our wills to the truth He reveals. He not only shows us what the truth is, He bows us to the truth.

- Divine Sovereignty
- Absolute Predestination
- Unconditional Election
- Limited Atonement
- Irresistible Grace

## **THE EXPEDIENCE AND THE COMFORT**

- Sure Perseverance
- Divine Providence

Though this text is primarily a declaration of apostolic inspiration, it clearly has application to all believers. **The Spirit's work in a person is not over when he has been convicted.** The Holy Spirit graciously guides all believers into all truth that is needful, useful, and profitable for them. He does so through the ministry of the Word, causing saints to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-16). This is not a promise of universal, spiritual knowledge. But it is a promise of true spiritual knowledge. As the Spirit of God, through the Word of God, shows us the things of Christ, He guides us into truth, for Christ is “*all truth*” (John 14:6). And all who are saved by His grace bow to, receive, and love His truth.

**“He will show you things to come.”** —These “things to come” are things that shall, most assuredly follow as the result of Christ's accomplished redemption.

- The Sure Salvation of All the Redeemed
- The Complete Forgiveness of All My Sin

## **THE EXPEDIENCE AND THE COMFORT**

- The Resurrection Glory of the Redeemed
- The Everlasting Praise of the Redeemer

**“He shall glorify Me.”** — Here our Savior tells us that “*all truth*” revealed and taught by the Spirit of God glorifies Christ. Anything that is of God glorifies Christ, not the preacher, not the church, not a man, but Christ. By this you may determine whether any doctrine or ordinance, religious work or religious experience is of God: — Does it, or does it not glorify Christ alone? God the Holy Spirit gives comfort to our souls by glorifying our blessed Redeemer.

- In His Accomplishments
- As Our Savior (1 Corinthians 1:30-31)
- In His Word
- In His Providence
- In Our Hearts — Creating Faith in Christ!

Blessed expedience! Blessed Comfort! Blessed Savior! Blessed Comforter!

Amen.