

THE BIBLE VIEW

In This Issue:

[What Do You Do with the Message?](#)

[Conviction's Purpose](#)

[Why Conviction is Necessary](#)

[Never-ending Guilt](#)

[Conviction of Sin](#)

[Angry at First, Saved at Last](#)

[Other](#)

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What Do You Do with the Message?

Bill Brinkworth

Paul had often corrected the carnal Corinthian church in his writings to them. He received no joy from rebuking them for their sin and weaknesses (II Corinthians 7:8), however, he rejoiced over the results of his correcting them. They weighed his remarks about their sin, found the accusations were correct, saw that it was wrong in God's eyes, were sorrowful over their iniquities, and then corrected their behavior (II Cor. 7:8-9). Paul's verbal stand against their wrong-doing helped them repent of what they were doing wrong.

That is usually the intent of every preacher that preaches behind the pulpit. They labor over the portion of the Scriptures God has laid on their heart to preach and deliver that message. Many times the preacher would rather not say what he has to say. He knows very well how some will react. The preacher has a duty, however (II Cor. 7:12). That duty is to deliver the truth, no matter how hard some may take it. As did Paul, the preacher is to put

the spotlight on spiritual problems in our lives. Once we see the error, it is up to us to correct the wrong-doing.

Some hear the message pounded from the pulpit, and do as the Corinthians did. They heard it, and most likely did not like what they heard. Then they realized that it was not the preacher that was rebuking them, but God Himself, from His own Word. When the seriousness of the matter was realized, they became “sorrowful” over the matter. They become so sad about what they had done that they committed themselves not to do it again. The Holy Spirit’s work through the preacher’s sermons had done what it was intended to do!

However, many react differently to a sermon. Instead of getting their sin or spiritual weakness corrected, they get mad at the deliverer of the Good News. It is not unusual for some to storm out of the church, never to return, blaming the preacher for, “... personally attacking me and embarrassing me before the whole church!” Quite often, the preacher has no idea that his words hit the mark the Holy Spirit was aiming at, or to whom it applied.

Others react badly by discrediting the Spirit’s tugging at their heart by convincing themselves, “The preacher doesn’t know what he is talking about,” “That Scripture was for another time, and doesn’t apply today,” “I don’t agree with what he said,” and on and on the excuses flow. The truth of the matter is that the Holy Spirit spoke to their heart, and they refused to obey what He was convicting them of doing.

Preaching is a media God often chooses to speak to our hearts. However, God speaks to our heart, it is up to us to heed the warning and to turn from our ways. Have you heard His commands? Did you get glad and repent, or did you get mad and not correct what He desired you to change?

“When God’s Word convicts you of sin, don’t shoot the messenger; heed the message!” — Barbara Brinkworth

Conviction’s Purpose

Erkshine — 1475

In a dangerous storm, the mariner will cast silk and satin overboard, and the most valuable things, rather than allowing themselves to perish. Even so, God raises a storm of conviction in a man's conscience. It threatens the everlasting shipwreck of one's soul. So that he will not eternally perish, he should heed the conviction and cast away his confidences, sin, and legal righteousness and cling to Christ.

“God hath yoked to guilt the pale tormentor, misery.”
— William C. Byrant

Why Conviction is Necessary

Hare, 1871

Without the conviction of sin by the Spirit of God, in vain would the Son of God have come in the flesh. In vain

would He have died on the cross for the sins of mankind and mankind would not, nor could not, have been saved.

Unless a man is well aware that he has a horrible disease, he will not think of asking for the remedies which might cure him, nor would he take them no matter how others plead for him to take the cure. If he mistakes the convulsive fits of a fever for the vigor of health, he will not consent to practice that abstinence by which his fever might be subdued.

Unless we are fully convinced that our souls are tormented by the deadly, clinging disease of sin and that no earthly power or skill can heal them, will we think of applying earnestly for health from the great Physician of souls?

“Guilt upon the conscience is much like rust upon iron. The rust defiles and consumes the metal by degrees gnawing and creeping into it. At length, it has eaten out the very heart and substance of the metal. Guilt does that to man.” —Dr. South

Never-ending Guilt

D. L. Moody

When I was in London, I went into a wax museum. I entered the chamber of horror. There were wax figures of all kinds of murderers in that room. There was Booth who killed Lincoln, and many of that class. There was one

figure I got interested in, who killed his wife because he loved another woman, and the law didn't find him out.

He married this woman and had a family of seven children. Twenty years passed away. Then his conscience began to trouble him. He had no rest. He would hear his murdered wife pleading continually for her life. His friends began to think that he was going out of his mind. He became haggard, and his conscience haunted him until he went to the officers of the law and told them that he was guilty of murder. He wanted to die. Life was so much of an agony to him. His conscience had turned against him.

My friends, if you have done wrong, may your conscience be awoken and heeded. May you testify against yourself. It is a great deal better to judge our acts and confess them than to go through this world with guilt's curse upon you.

“Your conscience could be God speaking. Ignore at your own peril!”

Conviction of Sin

Hare, 1871

No human teacher can convict anyone of sin. Conscience cannot do it. Law in none of its forms, human or divine, can do it. The Gospel itself cannot even do it. Although the Word of God is the sword of the Spirit, yet, unless the Spirit of God draws forth that sword, it lies powerless in its sheath.

Only when the Spirit of God wields it, is it "... quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Therefore, the work of convincing the world of sin is one that only the Holy Spirit can do. Our Saviour was mercifully pleased to send the Comforter to produce conviction in mankind.

Angry at First, Saved at Last

D. L. Moody

In Dublin, I was speaking to a lady in the inquiry-room when I noticed a gentleman pacing up and down before the door. I went forward, and said: "Are you a Christian?" He was very angry and turned on his heel and left me.

The following Sunday night I was preaching about "receiving," and I asked the question, "Who'll receive Jesus now?" That young man was present, and the question sank into his heart. The next day he called upon me — he was a merchant in that city — and said, "Do you remember me?"

"No, I don't."

"Do you remember the young man who answered you so roughly the other night?"

"Yes, I do."

“Well, I've come to tell you that I am saved.”

“How did it happen?”

“I was listening to your sermon last night, and when you asked, ‘Who'll receive Him now?’ God put it into my heart to say, ‘I will,’ and He has opened my eyes to accept His Son as Saviour.”

“Conscience should not be guided by the Gallup poll.”