

THE BIBLE VIEW

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“Some Other Time!”

Bill Brinkworth

Paul was taken to be judged before the Roman procurator, Felix. False accusations were flowing against the preacher from envious, bitter Jewish leaders that resented Christianity. The Roman judge heard from the accusers.

Felix, however, was not ignorant of who Christians were (Acts 24:24), and what they had been teaching. Perhaps, he had heard around the city about Christ, or how Christianity had been sweeping the country-side. He had his opinions about Christianity, and he was wise enough not just to hear the complainer’s side of the story.

Felix then allowed Paul to speak. Instead of cowering under the authority of the man that was managing the affairs for the Romans, Paul took the opportunity to talk to the ruler about spiritual things. The preacher spoke of living a righteous life, not indulging in sin, and about the judgments God would bring. Even though Paul’s judge, as history tells us, was known for his cruelty, murders, and even considered himself licensed to commit any crime he desired, Paul did not waiver or hold back on any of the truths from the Word of God. Felix could have easily given the word, and Paul’s life would have been snuffed out, but Paul boldly preached on.

The preaching did affect the procurator. Acts 24:25 records that Felix trembled at what he had heard. His fear did not guide him to repentance, however. He dismissed Paul and promised that they might speak again. He had the opportunity to be saved, but he put it off. Felix missed a time he could have been saved.

Many are so much like Felix. They hear the convicting message from the Word of God. It cuts deeply into their heart. Conviction of past sins floods their memories. Uneasiness of their sinful past robs them of their peace. They often have the opportunity right then and there to confess Jesus as their Saviour and to get their sins forgiven, but they put it off. “Tomorrow” or “later,” they justify.

For some reason that “other time” never comes. All too often they miss the last opportunity they had for salvation. They often get so close to salvation but miss an eternity with Jesus. Never say “no” to God’s provoking of your heart about anything, especially salvation. You may never have tomorrow!

“We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)” II Corinthians 6:1-2

Second Chances

Bill Brinkworth

“Oh, I’ve heard that before,” replied Gail.

“You did? When was that?” I had just spent 45 minutes telling her how to get saved, how she must know that she was a sinner, how she needed to believe that Jesus died on the cross for her sins, and that she needed to ask Him to save her from a deserved Hell.

“Well, let’s see. I’m 38 years old now, so I was about 30 when someone else told me I must ask Jesus to save me. There just wasn’t time then, with raising the family and all. When I was 25, I heard on the radio how I needed to trust the Lord for my salvation. I felt that I really needed to ask Jesus to save me, but I guess I just put it off.”

“Oh, yes,” she continued, “when I was about 12, someone took me to Sunday school. I remember the teacher showed me how I could be saved. All the other kids got saved, but, well, I guess I felt I could do it some other time.”

“Well, Gail, you’ve heard the message before. God loves you so much that He hasn’t given up on you. He keeps trying. How about right now asking the Lord to save you?” I pleaded.

“I, I ... just can’t. Maybe some other time. I’m just not ready yet!” She again evaded the invitation.

That night, I learned quite a bit about how God works in people’s lives. It was clear He keeps trying, again and again. Most people have heard the Gospel message many times, and each time they tell God “no” by not obeying, their heart gets harder and colder to the things of God.

Probably, when Gail first heard the Good News, she was tempted to make the most important decision for her eternity. For whatever the reason she said “no” to the Lord’s prodding.

Her heart stiffened against the calling of the Holy Spirit in her life. It was hardened even more the second time. By the time she heard the message the third time, it was rock hard and by all appearances it looked like it would never be softened again. She said “no” to God one time too many.

Since that night, I have observed that most of the people I have talked to about the Lord have also “heard it before.” Maybe they heard it from their grandmother, parent, friend, Sunday school teacher, a television preacher, or even read it from a Bible tract left in a public bathroom. Many that have put their salvation off before will still make excuses to put it off again.

I marvel at the way God keeps on trying. He never quits on us — if there is an interest on our part. What matchless love and compassion God has for us. How sad it is to hear one, who has heard the story before, say “no” one more time.

One time, it will be their last opportunity. They will not have that “next chance.” Many hope that they can get saved on their deathbed. It has happened. However, there is no guarantee that they will have that opportunity. Even if they have that last chance, there is no telling that their hardened heart may say “some other time” to God’s invitation.

“How many times do you think you can tell God “no”?”

The Obstacle

C. H. Spurgeon

I was speaking to a young lady in the inquiry-room some time ago, and she was in great distress of mind. She seemed anxious to be saved, and I could not find out what was the trouble between God and her. I saw there was something that was keeping her back. I quoted promise after promise, but she didn't seem to take hold on any of them. Then we got down on our knees, but still there was no light. Finally, I said to her, “Is there anyone against whom you have bitter feelings?”

“Yes, there's a young lady on the other side of the room, talking to your wife, whom I can't forgive.”

“Ah, I've got it now. That's why the blessing won't come to you; why you can't have any peace over the matter.”

“Do you mean to tell me,” said the young lady, looking up in my face, “that I can't be saved until I forgive her?”

“Apparently it is an obstacle between you and the Lord. No, you can't, and if there are any others whom you hate, you must forgive them also.”

She paused a moment and then said, “I will go.”

It seems that my wife and the other young lady had been going over the same ground and just at that time the other young lady had resolved to come to ask this one's forgiveness. So they met in the middle of the room, both saying at the same time “Will you forgive me?”

Oh, what a meeting it was! They knelt together; joy beamed on their souls, and their difficulties vanished. Both of them were saved, and in a little while they went out of the room with their arms around each other and their faces lit up with a heavenly glow.

Conviction

Hare

Unless you have been convinced you are a sinner and feel guilty about your iniquities you cannot be saved. If you have not experienced the convicting tug from the Holy Spirit, the Gospel cannot be the wisdom and the power of God for your salvation. Christ Jesus cannot have been made your wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

A man who was born in a prison, and had spent his whole life in it, might not be aware that there was anything peculiarly dismal with his situation. Should he have any exposure to what freedom was outside his prison, he would never want to go back to his barred cell. Conviction from the Holy Spirit is man's glimpse of life without sin's eternal stranglehold.

“For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.” *Psalm 38:4*