

Scriptural Truths

E-Mail Meditations

The Lord May Come . . . Perhaps Today . . . Behold, I Come Quickly . . . Rev. 22:7

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Conviction and Salvation

Introduction

We live in a world where things are no longer right or wrong, “freedom of speech” and so called liberation rule the day. Man is so willfully blinded, conviction is an unknown, and things are not getting better. There is an increasing spiritual deadness. Man has not learnt the lesson from Adam, Eve, and Satan. Satan promised them liberty saying: “Ye shall be as god’s (Gen. 3:5). The moment they partook of the forbidden fruit they found themselves in slavery. Gone was the peace they had with creation, God, each other, and within themselves. No one took responsibility for their own actions but blamed someone else (Gen. 3:12, 13). Sounds very much like today. It is so exceedingly easy for something to “shock” us the first time we see or hear it, then if seen and heard often enough, the situation becomes the norm and we are no longer “shocked” by it. We live in the world that increment by increment it is degrading in every possible way. Man is horrified when he thinks that Hitler murdered six million Jews, yet in the United States and Canada almost 60,000,000 babies have been murdered. It is called abortion. Because we don't see this happening, it is just a figure and we have become deadened to it, and such becomes just a matter of “normal” life! Today murder, whether by gangs or individual thugs, is to a great extent the norm as is the openness of the homosexual lifestyle. There is an increasingly deadness to what is right or wrong for in rejecting God man has lost his moral compass and with it the blessing of conviction. Ultimately, it does not matter what I think is right, or what society accepts as being normal, but how does the Moral Governor of the Universe evaluate it. Foolish is the individual who can ignore God’s law of gravity and not fall. If he jumps off a cliff there are consequences for ignoring or despising, or even worse, denying the God who gave the laws.

What Is Conviction?

“Conviction” in the Lord’s priorities of communication

When the Lord spoke of the coming of the Holy Spirit and His work, He mentioned several activities:

- a) “The Comforter . . . He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance” (Jn. 14:26)
- b) “When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth . . . and he will shew you things to come.” (Jn 16:13)

Before the Lord speaks of these activities He speaks of the Spirit’s reproofing, convicting works: “And when He (the Holy Spirit) 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, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.” (Jn 16:8-11). For the individual, who is a sinner, the first priority is to convince them of their sin of not believing in Him. It is not rejecting that He is the Christ, or the Son of God, or has come into the world, it is the believing that He alone is the exclusive way of salvation, and only by wholly depending on Him is there salvation. Salvation is

never the work of Christ supplemented by my works, an intimation that His finished work of being a substitute for sinners is not sufficient. What an insult to God and Christ.

What conviction is, or is not

Conviction of sin is not just having a guilty conscience or being ashamed of the wrongs committed. Neither is it the sense of consternation and dread due to the knowledge that sin will be punished. Neither is it the knowledge of right and wrong, yet conviction will possibly result in these responses.

Conviction is that work of the Holy Spirit that produces an inward burdened awareness of personal guilt which will result in varying degrees of being distraught because of personal rebellion against God, and the conscious awareness of the approaching judgment for my sin. It can result in an intense uneasiness which cannot be explained, an awakening of the memory of activities long forgotten which can result in even deeper desolation, and like Pilgrim in Pilgrim's Progress feel a burden of such despair that all the individual longs for is relief from the burden of sin.

There is the recognition that meeting the holy God is too dreadful to contemplate, and sin, no matter how insignificant it seemed at the time, rises like a mountain before ones eyes. All self effort to get release mocks the burdened soul. All religious activities leave one empty and no earthly entertainment, irrespective of how exciting and satisfying it was before, it is now obnoxious.

Why Does the Holy Spirit Convict?

The nearest picture is that of a law court. The prosecuting lawyer presents evidence upon evidence of crimes committed while the individual knows there is no defense, no appeal, for he is fully aware of his personal guilt of every crime. In conviction of sin, the Holy Spirit is the prosecuting attorney as the individual hears the condemning charges. There are not a few, but as He in factuality brings before the court of God and the individual the sins of lies, stealing, taking God's name in vain, covetousness, all accumulated through the days, weeks, months, and years. It is not a few foolish wrongs but serious acts of disregard for God and His laws. Then He presents the most serious charge of all; "Guilty of crucifying and rejecting the Son of God as Saviour". The individual stands before the God who gave His Son, standing before the Christ who bore sin's penalty for the individual, then the foolishness of rejection fills the soul.

Then the Holy Spirit points the individual to the "old Rugged Cross", and looking at it there is seen the Saviour in agony, forsaken by God, and bearing the penalty for their sins. At that "old rugged cross" they listen to Him speak and He cries loud enough for them to hear: "Father forgive them they know not what they do" (Lk. 23:34), that is, they do not understand the seriousness of their rebellion. Then as it were looking down from that accursed tree, He informs the individual the most wonderful burden relieving news. It is in two parts:

- a) There is a way for forgiveness, to have the record of all the crimes ever committed completely blotted out.
- b) It is a free gift, a glorious offer of generosity and love waiting to be accepted.

The Holy Spirit opens sin blinded eyes to see that on that cross Christ paid the price and offers to the individual the free gift of forgiveness, liberation, and the assurance that they shall never come under the wrath of God, the relief in knowing that their sins are gone.

There is a story told of Corrie Ten Boom whose family was responsible for securing the deliverance of many Jews from Nazi Germany. On a certain day when in the concentration camp, she was brought into the commandant's office where he showed her a piece of notepaper. She knew what it was, for there in his hand was a paper and written in her handwriting was the names of the Jews she had helped. The penalty was death. For reason unknown the commandant looked at her, and then taking the paper threw it in the fire. At that moment the condemnation against her was removed. The apostle Paul informs us that on the cross of Calvary the Lord took the handwriting that was against us, that bore witness to our guilt, and took it out of the way by bearing the penalty of our Hell for all eternity: "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances (laws) that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." (Col. 2:13, 14)

The Great Salvation

God now offers to the whosoever the gift of eternal life. At this time of year millions of people across the world will be offered gifts, some will be small tokens of friendship and love, others will be treasures as long as life lasts, but before they can be the individuals the proffered gift must be received. God holds out to each individual the gift of eternal life, the

assurance of Heaven at the moment of death, His perpetual companionship for the balance of life, and the knowledge that they will never perish in the Lake of Fire in weeping and wailing for eternity.

Right now He is holding out that gift, it will not be held out forever, and the reality is this could be the last time it will be held out. When the twin towers collapsed on 9/11 thousands ran in panic through the streets of New York, looking for a way of escape from the dirt clogged cloud. If only a secure place of refuge opened up for a moment of time how there would have been a rush for it, a place of safety. Christ is the hiding place of safety from the condemnation of sin and judgment of God, and all one has to do is enter in by accepting God's generous free gift of salvation. The hymn writer has well expressed the invitation in the words:

O come sinner come, O why do you delay?
The pressing invitation is that you should come today.
Tomorrow has no promise, that it can give to you,
Tomorrow is eternity just hidden from your view.

Then come, sinner, and, salvation is free for all,
It may be the last time, you'll ever hear the call.

O come sinner come accept the proffered grace
For death may soon be calling you, into its called embrace.
The summer will be ended, the harvest will be passed,
Your lamentation then will be, my soul is lost at last.

**Where will
you spend
ETERNITY?**

... Rowan Jennings

www.scripturaltruths.org

e-mail: scripturaltruths1@shaw.ca

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