

The Conviction We Need

by Robert Wurtz II

The sermon emphasizes the critical need for Holy Ghost conviction in the church and individual lives for genuine repentance and conversion.

Duration: 56:04

Scripture: Isaiah 28:1, Jeremiah 25:15

Topics: "Conviction Of Sin", "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher, Brother Finney, speaks for two hours on the subject of God's love. The congregation becomes intensely interested, with many people rising to their feet and showing various emotional reactions. Despite some people being distressed, offended, or angry, nobody leaves the house during the sermon. One man named Jay falls and rises in agony but eventually becomes still and motionless, leading to his conversion and effective work in bringing others to Christ. The sermon emphasizes the difference between knowing about sin and actually feeling the dreadfulness of one's sins, and highlights the need for the Holy Spirit to awaken and convict hearts.

Transcript

I want to start a session tonight that I've entitled, The Conviction That We Need. The Conviction That We Need. Way back in late 2003, God began dealing with me along the lines of repentance and along the lines of getting back to God and getting closer to God and getting rid of all the things that were encumbrances in my life.

And I remember getting up in front of the church one day when I was ministering and I made this statement. I said, you can pray any prayer that you want, but I'm praying for a double portion of Holy Ghost conviction to come upon my life. And that was my prayer then and it's my prayer today.

I believe that there's one thing that we need in the body of Christ is we need a manifestation of the Spirit of God that will bring good old-fashioned Holy Ghost conviction back into the services and our meetings. And I'm just thankful for God and I'm thankful that He has moved in my life and directed me in a lot of different ways. And He has, in fact, brought a double portion of Holy Ghost conviction into my life.

And God has really done a work in my heart over the last six months, even beyond what He had done in the ten years that I had walked with the Lord. He's really just moved in my heart to see revival. He's put an urgency in my heart.

But I want to talk tonight about the conviction that we need, the conviction we need as a church, as individuals, as a nation, and particularly in the services when we are trying to minister to the lost. If you'd like to follow in your notes, you're more than welcome to. Otherwise, you can just kind of listen along.

The necessity of Holy Ghost conviction. You see, in order for a person to be genuinely converted, they must first be genuinely convicted of their sin by the Spirit of God. See, I personally believe that the lack of genuine conversions in our day can be traced directly back to a lack of genuine conviction of sin.

See, the lack of conviction is a result of Christians having a mistaken notion, see, that they can win people to Christ by their methods and programs. See, I think that there is such a tendency today to move away from the old-fashioned methods, as it were, seeking the Lord in prayer and walking upright before God and all of the various things required to see God move. And they've been replaced with a lot of methods, and they've been replaced with a lot of programs, and the results that we're getting bear this out.

You see, few still believe that it takes the moving of the Spirit of God to genuinely save a person from their sin. Most take it for granted that just as soon as they open their mouth to speak about salvation, about the Bible, or anything of that matter, that the Holy Spirit is just going to automatically show up. See, the Holy Spirit is working in people's lives, don't get me wrong, but we need to pray that God will manifest Himself when we begin to minister.

And I believe that is a necessity in our day, the likes of which that haven't been in many years. See, the hardness of people's hearts is great, and you're not going to talk anybody into getting saved. You're not going to talk people into turning their life over to Christ.

They need to have good old-fashioned, Holy Ghost conviction moving to draw them near to God. See, ministers are ministering often in their own power, and it's one of the great tragedies of our day. They lean upon their own abilities and their own knowledge or their own training, and less on the Spirit of God.

And this is evidenced in the absence of genuine conversions to Christ. And it's also evidenced in the length with which you see people maintaining their walk before the Lord. You see people supposedly getting saved, and then two weeks later, they're out of church.

Well, what happened? They didn't genuinely get right with God. They didn't genuinely become born again to the Spirit of God. For those who have experienced genuine Holy Ghost conviction, they have not merely heard a sermon about God, but they have been brought into a real encounter with God.

I believe that's what is needed, especially among our youth today and those who are really searching for God. They need an encounter with God, and I believe it begins with Holy Ghost conviction. The reality of God comes home in the midst of great conviction.

And apart from conviction, the unbeliever may deceive themselves into believing they're a good person and that they really don't need God. And apart from the moving of the Holy Spirit, faith in Christ, for most, will simply not seem real, and the sermon will seem like a bunch of talk. And I believe that's the case.

When a person gets up and they're not anointed, you can tell right off, and God needs to be moving and operating in what the person is saying and doing. When God convicts, you must repent. When God convicts, you must repent.

See, many have the mistaken notion also that they will repent when they get ready. See, this is dangerous thinking because the Spirit of God will not always strive with man. Moreover, God will send people who continue to sin with a high hand of spirit of slumber.

Thomas Shepard, writing in 1645, hints these words. When the wills and affections of men drink at the fountains of forbidden pleasure, God will cause them to experience spiritual drunkenness. When they insist on imbibing the things their hearts should be weaned from, things which should be bitter to them, God will give them up to this.

And in this sense, the prophet calls the kings, the priests, and the people the drunkards of Ephraim. That's Isaiah 28, verse 1, and also Jeremiah 25, 15 to 18. See, the Lord puts His cup of just judgments, He continues, in the hands of those He intends to destroy.

And He bids them to take pleasure in their sins. See, they lose all fear of death and judgment, even when both of them are at the very doors. See, this is the atmosphere that exists when there is no Holy Ghost conviction present.

But John 6, verse 44 reveals plainly that no one can come to the Father unless they are drawn of Him. See, the Spirit of God is striving with all of man to some degree. And the intensity of this striving is greatly increased upon an individual when men and women travail in prayer for their soul.

You want to see people get saved? You need to pray for them. You need to pray. You need to travail in prayer for them.

I was reading something about Daniel Nash just this week, and I can't recall exactly where the source was that it was said that when he would go out into the groves and he would begin to travail for the souls of people, and he would begin to go through his prayer list and point by point begin to pray, people could hear him praying in the groves a half a mile away. A half a mile they could hear him praying away. And I believe that it takes that kind of a walk with God in order to be able to genuinely see people come to salvation and that kind of love for souls as well, that they could see them and God would hear our prayer.

The Spirit of God is striving with all people to some degree, but the intensity of the striving is greatly increased, I believe, when people travail in prayer for that individual soul. But on the other hand, as stiff-necked sinners, as it were, refuse God, He will give them over to their sins. See, Isaiah 29 and 9 gives us a glimpse into this process.

Here we read, They are drunken, but not with wine. They stagger, but not with strong drink. For the Lord has poured upon them the spirit of deep slumber, and He has closed your eyes.

Again, Thomas Shepherd, he comments on this saying, Sometimes it means spiritual judgments because of the sin and therefore refers not so much to misery in general as in spiritual misery, when the Lord gives men up to a reprobate spirit. And Jeremiah speaks of the calamity of the people and they're being dashed one against another. And drunkenness, he says, prepares them for this misery.

You know, that's a fearsome thing to begin to think about what it would be like to be able to sin and not feel conviction. To be able to continue in sin and not feel conviction and not feel convicted, not feel God moving. Or to go into a church where God was going and moving, but rather because you were so hardened, you were not able to feel what God was doing in there, not be able to feel the Spirit of God in your heart.

Every time you resist the Holy Ghost, when He convicts of sin, you are that much more difficult to reach because of the combination of your own hardness and God's response to your high handedness. See, I've often told our congregation that what happens is, is when we take a place where God is trying to move and the Spirit of God is moving, and as it were, our heart is like ground often in Scripture. And whenever you find that the heart needs to be tilled up or the fallow ground is because there's a lot of hard places there.

Well, why is the hardness present? Well, it's because someone was quenching the Spirit. The Bible talks about how the Spirit of God is like rivers flowing from our belly. That's that spaky of the Spirit.

And when we think about quenching the Holy Spirit, we need to think about creating a hard spot in our heart. And it takes the Spirit of God to come in. And we begin to resist the Holy Spirit when He's trying to convict us.

We are hardening ourselves, and each time we do that, we are much more difficult to reach than we were before. Conviction. Conviction.

A confrontation with God. See, conviction is God personally confronting you over your sin. That's what conviction is.

Conviction, in part, is the illumination and the revelation of a person's guilt before God. Do you remember when God convicted you of your sin? Do you remember when you got saved? Do you remember when you turned to God? Do you remember how you felt and what it felt like to be under such tremendous conviction of sin? Conviction, it is the added sense of the dreadfulness of your sin beyond that which is naturally produced in your conscience. See, before you get saved, your conscience will bother you.

You're worried a lot of times, well, did someone see me, or whatever. Or your conscience, of course, is also trying to steer you to do right. But this is different than Holy Ghost conviction.

God works through your conscience, of course, but the fact is, Holy Ghost conviction is a whole new level than just using or having your conscience at work. The Holy Spirit came into this world to convince man of sin. If you look at that word in the Greek, it also is translated in other places as rebuke.

You think about that. The Holy Spirit has come to rebuke man for their sin. Robert Murray McCain writes, the most powerful sermon in the world can make nothing more than a natural impression, but when God works through it, the feeblest word makes a supernatural impression.

That one statement there is enough to go home with tonight. You see, God can work just through a few short words that we would speak if we had spent time agonizing in prayer before God, and could do more with that than He could do with what the flesh would think was the most eloquent sermon ever written. See, because the bottom line is, if there isn't Holy Ghost conviction, we've got serious problems.

Many a poor sermon, he continues, has been the means by which God has converted a soul. Child of God, he says, oh that you would pray night and day for the lifting up of the arm of God. What's he talking about? He's talking about conviction.

He's talking about God moving. He's talking about the importance of spending more time in prayer for our sermon than I believe even that we do preparing our sermon. I believe it's important.

When God raises His arm, as it were, to confront men and women in their sin, they cannot help but be bowed low. I believe that's what Holy Ghost conviction does. See, the Holy Spirit, when He comes upon us in our impenitence, He will begin to bring us to where we can be humbled before the Lord.

See, the word of God will bear fruit on its own, even if a minister were to get up and preach without seeking God. But that fruit is nowhere near to the level that God's word can produce under the God-given unction of the Holy Ghost. You see, people can get up because God's word will not return into him void.

See, somebody can get up and they can speak the word or they can read the word and God's word is not going to return void. But the thing is, we need to know that when we get up to minister, we need the anointing of God. We need the Spirit of God to be present upon the people.

McCain continues, O brethren, O brethren, conviction of sin is no slight natural work upon the heart. There is a great difference between knowing that vinegar is sour and actually tasting and feeling that it is sour. There is a great difference between knowing that the fire will burn us and actually feeling the pain of being burned.

And just in the same way, there is all the difference in the world between knowing the dreadfulness of our sins or even as Parris Readhead said, the enormity of our sin and feeling the dreadfulness of your sins. It is all in vain that you read your Bibles and even hear us preach, McCain says, unless the Spirit, unless the Spirit use the words to give sense and feeling to your dead hearts. See, the plainest words will not awaken you as long as you are in a natural condition.

And if we could prove to you by the plainness of arithmetic that the wrath of God is abiding on you and your children, still you would not be moved. You would go away and forget it before you even reached your own door. Ah, brethren, he says, he that made your heart can alone impress your heart.

It is the Spirit that convinces of sin. And I believe that tonight. I believe that.

See, this is why it is imperative that we yield to the Spirit of God when He is dealing with us. It is imperative that we do so. Genesis 6-3 tells us clearly that the Spirit of God will not always strive with man.

Charles Finney comments on this message in his message titled, The Spirit Ceasing to Strive. Here he writes, It should always be understood that whenever the Spirit can really be said to strive with an individual, that that individual must be resisting. So you think about that.

The Bible talked about, and I believe it was Acts chapter 7, it was Stephen preaching. He said, you do always resist the Holy Ghost. As your fathers did, so do ye.

But what is intended by his striving? This striving then, I would observe, is not a physical striving, but a moral influence, a persuading, and a reasoning, and a convincing. So you have to be convinced that you are a sinner. You have to be thoroughly convinced that you need the grace of God.

You need to be thoroughly convinced that only Christ can save you in your condition. Moreover, Finney describes the great danger of those who continually resist. He continues, One word more.

When the Spirit strives, men are in great danger of putting off submission day after day till at least the Spirit leaves them. They try to think about religion, but do not come to the point. Ah, they do not know the infinite danger they are in of being left amidst all this palavering.

Ah, while thy servant was busy here and there, behold, the Spirit was gone. You know, that's a fearful thing. That is a fearful thought to think that the Spirit of God would cease to deal with us because we had quenched, and quenched, and quenched the Holy Spirit.

But God warned us clearly in Genesis 6-3 that His Spirit would not always strive with man. They must wait till they have done this thing or that thing, he says. And thus they go on.

In other words, they think in their mind, I'll get right with God when I get ready. God will always be dealing with me. He'll still be dealing with me.

He'll still be dealing with me to get this certain thing out of my life or that certain thing. But what we've got to fear is that we would find a place of hardness in our hearts where we're no longer sensitive to the Holy Spirit in that particular area. And I believe that's what it means to sear your conscience with a hot iron.

It's a dangerous thing. But day after day, then He continues. The Spirit strives with them till at length He takes His flight.

You should reflect that every moment you are resisting, you are in infinite danger of His leaving you. My spirit shall not always strive. Genesis 6, 3. See, Holy Ghost conviction is not a pleasant thing.

It is the very revelation of your filth and iniquity in the eyes of God. Real Holy Ghost conviction moves beyond the emotions and it attacks the will. It may weigh upon a person with such a heaviness and agony that observing it carries a similar effect as it were to watch a child taken to spanking.

I'm sure we've all seen that. There's few things that are less pleasant than having to watch a child be spanked. And I believe that a lot of people, when they see the Spirit of God moving on people, especially pastors and evangelists and preachers, they see God dealing with people and bringing them to that place and beginning to, as it were, bring them to a place of brokenness and for some reason they just can't handle it and they start intervening in all sorts of kind of different ways.

You see, in an age of humanism, this is nearly unacceptable. But when the weight of God's dealing settles down upon the people, many cannot handle it. And they'll seek to uplift the atmosphere or the place or the person.

You see, they'll try to uplift them. If the sermon is getting real heavy, they'll start to say something or lighten up or other things like that. I remember hearing Leonard Ravenhill talking about ministers that would get up and say some kind of jokes or get up or make light of things.

One of the worst things you can do is break the atmosphere or the moving of the Holy Spirit when he's bringing conviction to a people by cracking a joke or doing something like that. But people can't stand that intensity. A lot of ministers can't and they need to learn to do that because God is dealing with people at these times.

See, this humanistic way is to lift up a person who God has laid low in their sins. But God has used great conviction to humble them. And instead of God lifting them up, often the minister tries to lift them up.

But that's not what the Word said. The Bible said if you will humble yourself before the Lord, the Lord will lift you up. It is not our job as ministers to do that.

We could give an encouraging word and we can preach the gospel to them, but we need to let God have time to deal with people and give a chance for the conviction to really work through in their heart. See, it is as though often many ministers are trying to distract the person from the moving of the Holy Spirit. See, they can't handle a solemn service.

I've been in a lot of cases and I've seen this happen even when I have taught or ministered, there would be such a spirit or a solemn atmosphere present where people were really pondering and considering their sins and all of this and people can't handle that so they feel they need to uplift and I believe God needs to work at those times. See, the great revivalists never did such a thing. They allowed God to do His work thoroughly.

See, the revivalists took an approach like into the method that Ray Comfort talks about that they would preach the law, they would show the people their crimes before God, and then when the people were humbled and broken, okay, under the weight of their sin, then they would offer them the gospel. See, a person has to find a place of brokenness. They have to realize the enormity of their sins before they could ever truly turn to the Lord.

And I think there are a lot of quote shallow conversions that take place because God is not able because people would intervene or whatever the minister, not giving God time to move. There's a lot of shallow conversions that are taking place or surface conversions and these people really weren't even changed. And we say they backslid.

No, they were never saved. It was because God didn't get a chance to work, to pray and preach, pray and preach. Charles T. Finney understood that without the Spirit of God he could do nothing.

He was helpless within himself to bring men and women to repentance and faith. You know, we hear a lot about his preaching, but you know, he had a prayer partner. Actually, he had a couple of them.

He had Abel Clary and he also had Daniel Nash and they would pray and there were others that would bind together with him and pray that God would bring conviction. I've even heard accounts that he would get up to preach or heard it said he would get up to preach and he couldn't really even raise his voice because the conviction was already so great upon the crowd that maybe the people would just go out into a frenzy or something if he was to get loud so he'd have to speak. Really softly even when he would preach because conviction was so great.

But what he could do, what he could do, he could pray and preach. He could pray until he prevailed with God and conviction of sin would come. See, he could patiently prepare and preach.

Just like the lawyer that he studied to be, he would spend days or even weeks anointedly bringing a case against the people when he preached as though they were both the defendant and the jury. And when it was all over, when it was over, with the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God would compel them to concur with the guilty verdict that God had passed down to them already. You see, I believe, as I said earlier, that Holy Ghost conviction is a confrontation with God.

God is going to confront you over your sin. He's going to deal with you personally. Charles Finney utterly relied upon God when he went to the pulpit.

He relied upon God to give him both the right words to speak and the unction with which to deliver them. The results were astonishing. They were astonishing.

It was not uncommon for the Spirit of God to so come upon a person with such great power that they would literally fall out of their seats and cry out in agony during the service. I have never seen that happen. I have never seen that in my day.

I have been in a lot of services and I have never seen that. I have been in a lot of places where I really thought God was moving, but I have never seen somebody cry out. Or even as the Apostles, when they were ministering, they would cry out, Men, what shall we do? See, I think one of the greatest and most powerful sermons, and really the shortest sermon that was ever preached, was probably by Paul the Apostle when he said, We are all here.

Do thyself no harm. But the conviction was so great that God moved within them circumstances because he was there. And of course, we know the story.

The man was converted. Not only was he converted, I believe he was baptized. Before the night was over, he was washing the wounds of Paul the Apostle.

See, that is Holy Ghost conviction. That is what happens when God shows up. That is the way it was to an extent in Charles Finney's day.

At times, the people had to be stilled, or the preaching could not continue for the crying and the agony. And you think about that. You think about God moving upon the people to where the minister had to steel the congregation, or just had to quit preaching altogether and just move out into the crowd and begin to pray with the people because the moanings and the groanings under the enormous weight of their sin and the conviction of the Holy Spirit that would be present.

Lessons from the past. Lessons from the past. See, in the fall of 1827, the Great Awakening was well underway.

Finney had been dealing with a great resistance to the revival at New Lebanon while preaching there. And the woman by the name of M.S. almost begged Finney to come up and say, will you come preach in my town of Stevenson? See, Finney was able to go. He was able to go.

This church was in a mess. Let me just say that. I didn't have time to really write it in in the notes or anything, but this town was in a mess.

See, the church was in a mess. The pastor had backslidden away from God. He had become an infidel and everything and things were in shambles.

But here was this woman that we don't even have her name. She's this M.S. that prevailed and prevailed in prayer with God. And then she went to Brother Finney and she said, I need you to come and preach in Stevenson.

This is the backdrop of him going. Finally, he was able to go. And the enemy was greatly moved to try and stop this revival.

Finney recounts, accordingly, the next Sunday after preaching the second time, one of the young converts that knew Lebanon offered to take me up to Stevenson in his carriage. When he came in his buggy to take me, I asked him, Have you a steady horse? Oh, yes, he replied. Perfectly so.

And smiling, asked, Well, what made you ask the question? Because, I replied, said Finney, if the Lord wants me to go to Stevenson, the devil will prevent it if he can. And if you do not have a steady horse, he will try to make him kill me. He smiled and rode on.

He smiled and rode on. And strange to tell, before we got there, the horse ran away twice and nearly killed us. His owner expressed the greatest astonishment and said that he had never known of such a thing before.

You see, the devil don't want to see holy ghost conviction. He don't want to see a move of God. See, I believe the devil knew who Charles G. Finney was.

I believe he knew who he was. He did everything he could to try to stop him or to keep him from being able to minister. But God had other plans.

And I believe it was greatly in part to people praying. See, no doubt the devil knew that God was about to pour out His Spirit on this church that was nearly in shambles. The former pastor of the church, who we'll just call Mr. B., had backslidden and become an infidel.

But there was a couple of women that were prevailing in prayer for a move of God in the face of insurmountable opposition. And God answered their prayer. See, Finney recounts some of the events of the services as God began to move.

He said, the spirit of prayer in the meantime had come powerfully upon me. Now just think about that for a minute. The spirit of prayer coming upon us.

Have you ever prayed until God anointed you to pray? Have you ever just prayed until the Spirit of God came upon you and you knew that you reached a different level because the Spirit of God was anointing you to pray? And you knew it was God. That's what he's talking about. The spirit of prayer, in the meantime, had come powerfully upon me.

And it's been the case in time with Miss S., the praying power so manifestly spreading and increasing the work, so took on a very powerful type, he said, so much so that the word of the Lord would cut the strongest men down and render them entirely helpless. Entirely helpless. I could name many cases, he said, of the kind.

One of the first that I recollect was on a Sunday when I was preaching on the text God is love. Think about that. That's your text.

Three words. God is love. There was a man by the name of Jay, a man of strong nerves and of considerable prominence as a farmer in that town.

He sat almost immediately in front of me near the pulpit. And the first that I observed was that he fell. He fell and writhed in agony for a few moments.

But afterwards, he became still and nearly motionless, but entirely helpless. He remained in this state until the meeting was out. And then he was taken home.

He was very soon converted and became an effective worker in bringing his friends to Christ. You know, a lot of ministers probably when they've seen that happen would have stopped preaching. I don't believe Brother Finney did.

I believe he kept preaching. I believe he kept preaching and kept on just saying what God would have him to say. One man was sitting in the seat unable to move.

The conviction was so great in this service. Finney finally had to get up and go to him. There was another man that was on the other side of the pulpit he talks about during the same message that was so overpowered by the conviction that was present that he was unable to leave.

These were just some of the examples of what was happening. Charles Finney had afterward made an appointment to preach in their schoolhouse, he writes, on that street. And when I arrived, the house was very much crowded.

I took for my text, the curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked. The Lord gave me a very clear view of the subject and I was able to bring it out with truth effectively. I told him that I understand that there was not one praying family in the whole district.

The fact is, the town was in an awful state. The influence of Mr. B, their former minister now an infidel, had borne its legitimate fruit and there was but very little conviction of the truth and reality of religion left among the impenitent in that town. But you know what? You know what? I believe that's when a person is ripe for a good old fashioned move of God.

This meeting, this meeting, he continues, that I have spoken of, resulted in the conviction of nearly all that were present, I believe, at that meeting. That's what I call a move of God. A move of God is not just when a few people get up and they come forward and they cry maybe at the altar or something like that.

I believe a move of God is when the entire congregation begins to get down on their face before God, including the pastor and the minister. As time went on, the revival spread. It spread in that neighborhood and that in one family alone there were 17 hopeful conversions.

Finney recalls, there were several families in that town who were quite prominent and influenced who did not attend the meetings. It seemed that they were so much under the influence of Mr. B that they determined not to attend. However, in the midst of this revival, this Mr. B died a horrible death.

You think about that. You think about the judgment of God that begins to come when the Spirit of God is present. You see, when the Spirit of God begins to move, I believe the margin of error, as I've heard other people say, begins to dwindle.

You don't want to begin to put your mouth on the things that God's doing if it's a genuine move of God, nor do you want to attribute things to God that are not Him at the same time. But this man, Mr. B, died a horrible death and this put an end to his opposition. Before it was all over, God had opened the door to have nearly all those who would not attend the meetings succumb and many of them had been hopefully saved.

Praise the Lord. The revival at Wilmington. The revival at Wilmington.

In conclusion, in conclusion of this lesson, I would like to point out a situation that Charles Finney faced that is similar to what we see in churches today. See, it happens he had to deal with a group of theology students, I believe they were, and others that were of this persuasion that people must wait on God to act sovereignly if there is ever going to be a revival. You know, if you study Charles Finney's lectures, you know that he did not believe that.

He believed that God would move, that people would pray and seek God's face and begin to preach. He believed that God would honor His Word, He would honor the people of God, He would honor the prayers and He would begin to move. This was not a view that God's sovereignty like we would have today, but it was one in which that led to fatalism and even passiveness.

It is similar to our day in this regard, in this regard, that bad theology and beliefs can greatly hinder a revival. You know, there are a lot of people that think, well, revival is not coming, there is not going to be a revival, people are too far gone. No, I don't believe that.

I believe that we could prevail in prayer before God and we could see a revival in our own lives, in our own churches, and in our city, our community even, our nation, everywhere. The traditions of men also hinder a move of God and pride or stubbornness is a great reason for it all. Ideas long held and methods long held can at times hinder the moving of God and they can snuff out a revival.

You see, when God starts moving, you got to get in the flow of what God is doing. You can't reach back to the things that you know didn't work and begin to bring them into what God is doing. You need to seek the face of God.

You need to know how God is moving and that's one thing that I appreciate about Charles Finney. When he would get up to preach, and this is something, honestly, that I cannot do. I cannot minister without notes or some type of notes.

I don't even try to get up and minister without notes, but he would just seek the Lord for hours or even days and fill himself with the Word of God. And in so doing, he would get up in the pulpit often without even having the subject text to preach and just utterly lean on the Spirit of God as he would minister and God brought tremendous, tremendous results. See, Charles Finney writes, As soon as I could see my way clear to leave Steventown, therefore, I went to Wilmington and I engaged in labors with a man or a pastor named Mr. Gilbert.

I soon found that his teachings had placed the church in a position that rendered it impossible to promote a revival among them until their views could be corrected. And you think about this, and there are a lot of places that are this way. You may not believe this, but there are a lot of churches that I believe that the people are dragging their feet because they don't want to see a man of God come in and preach.

They don't want to see a move of God. They don't want the Holy Spirit to move. They say with their mouth they want the Lord to have His way, they want God to move, but in reality they want God to move only in accordance with what they want to see happen and oftentimes God ceases to move and the Spirit of God is basically stifled from doing what He's wanting to do.

See, they seem to be afraid to make any effort this people did lest they should have to take the word, work rather, out of the hands of God. They have the oldest of the old school views of doctrine and consequently their theory was that God would convert sinners in His own time and that therefore to urge them to immediately repent in short is to attempt to promote a revival or to attempt to promote a revival was to attempt to make man Christians by human agency or human strength and thus to dishonor God by taking the work out of God's hands. But see, the fact is we have to preach.

See, the Scripture tells you clearly how shall they hear without a preacher and how shall they preach unless they be sent and all of these things are still true to this day. It said, I observed also and he's still

speaking here that in their prayers there was no urgency for an immediate outpouring of the Spirit and that this was all in accordance with the views that they had been educated in. You think about this, when someone has been educated to the place to where God can't move that is a fearful thing.

That is a fearsome thought. Conviction on the pastor. Conviction on the pastor.

See, bad theology can aid in the enemy's ability to snuff out all desire to see a move of God among men. We're told in Scripture to pray to make the gospel take the gospel to the world but many are just waiting on God. How many of you hear that? Have you ever heard that? We're just waiting on God.

Well, you know, we're just waiting on God. You know, I believe God is waiting on us to get on our knees and pray and seek His face and turn from our wicked ways and begin to search and seek after Him so that He could send revival. I believe God already wants to send revival.

I believe God is willing to send revival if we would just get ourselves in a place of prayer and begin to do what He wants us to do. What it often amounts to, what it often amounts to, is an excuse. It's an excuse for laziness and it's a justification that's based on some kind of pretense of piety.

Well, we just want God to move in all this. But what is worse, what is worse, is when people hold views that they refuse to admit are wrong or methods that they refuse to admit do not work and are wrong and are not what God is doing. It is not what God's Word teaches even.

And they even know that they are wrong. This would be the situation, of course, that Finney would soon meet head on. And we take up this story.

Finney writing says, it was plain that nothing could be done unless Mr. Gilbert's view could be changed upon this subject. I therefore spent hours each day conversing with him on his peculiar views. We talked the subject all over in a brotherly manner.

And after laboring him in this way for two or three weeks, I saw that his mind was prepared to have my own views brought before his people. And the next Sunday, I took for my text, Make to yourselves a new heart and a new spirit, for why will you die? I went thoroughly into the subject of the sinner's responsibility and I showed what a new heart is not and what it is. I preached about two hours and did not sit down till I had gone as thoroughly over the whole subject as very rapid speaking would enable me to do.

Now you think about this. He is speaking rapidly on this subject for two hours. And in that length of time, he says, the congregation became intensely interested.

Great numbers rose and stood on their feet in every part of the house. The house was completely filled and there were strange looks in the assembly. Some looked distressed, some looked offended, others looked intensely interested and not infrequently when I brought out strongly the contrast between my own views and the views in which they had been instructed.

Some laughed, some wept, and some were manifestly angry. But one thing I want you to notice before I go on here is that nobody was indifferent. No one was indifferent.

Watch this. But I did not recollect that any got up and left the house. It was a strange excitement.

In the meantime, Mr. Gilbert moved himself from one end of the sofa to the other in the pulpit behind me. I could hear him breathe and sigh and could not help observing that he himself was in his greatest anxiety.

See, when Brother Finney talks about anxiety or people who were anxious or things like that, he's really talking about the Spirit of God was dealing with them.

However, I knew I had him. And his convictions passed, but whether he would make up his mind to withstand what had been said by his people, I did not know. But I was preaching to please the Lord and not man.

I thought that it might be the last time I should ever preach there, but purposed that in all events I was going to tell them the truth, the whole truth on that subject, whatever the result might be. And you think about Charles Finney and you think about that attitude and you think about how 100,000 people were saved in the Rochester revival. Some accounts of 500,000 people have been saved throughout his ministry and probably untold more.

And the influence that is with us to this day, I have to ask one simple question. What is the difference between his method and ours? I believe it can be summed up with that last passage that I just read and I'll read it one more time. He said, I purposed at all events to tell them the truth, the whole truth on that subject, whatever the result might be.

If it meant him not getting to preach in that pulpit again, if it meant him losing friends, if it meant whatever, he preached what God would have him to preach and that's the result of it, the results that we read about. The second great awakening is what we read of. So what happened with the pastor? What happened with him? What happened with the church? The church was very much in agreement with the message of Finney, but he was not out of the woods yet.

I must also remark here, I must remark this, and I think this is very true, it would be a sad thing that God would have to raise up a whole generation of young preachers, and I believe he's doing that. I believe he's doing that. To replace those who refuse to minister the true gospel for whatever reason.

I believe God's raising up a generation. I've heard the likes of people like Brother Jesse minister in his messages, and as a matter of fact, I've even passed his messages on, even today I've passed one of his messages on to a young man and he's only been out of prison several months and he was greatly touched by this message that he administered and given his testimony and all that, and I believe God is raising up a lot of young people that are going to tell the truth no matter what the cost is, whether they ever get to go back and preach at that church again, whether they ever get to go back and speak at the youth meeting again, whether they ever get to go back or whatever the case may be, they're going to preach what God has to say, and I believe that. So what happened to him? What happened to him? They were not out of the woods.

You see, we see this in our day as well. We see it in our day. Humanism, religion, secularism has so influenced preaching that I am afraid that most have even lost sight of what true preaching really is.

You see, I believe what was considered preaching today would be considered teaching probably in the days of sinning. I wonder what it would be like to sit and hear this man minister because he created a tremendous stir when he would minister about his methods, about the things he preached, and all of this. You don't get this by getting up and just teaching something.

You get this by doing something that the people have never seen before. See, Finney later went to his house, the house of the pastor, Mr. Gilbert, and here he recounts, When I arrived at Mr. Gilbert's, his wife

and shock at what they're hearing. Because even in all of their years, they could not imagine ministry like that. You see, it was new school to him, but it's old school to us.

But would to God that we would employ it in our day. In closing, I would just like to simply ask, are you willing to return to the old path of preaching with Holy Ghost conviction? Are you willing to pray and to fast until the Spirit of God descends upon the congregation with great power and conviction? Are you willing to see God to confront the unrepentant personally, personally for their sins? Can you bear the weight of a solemn service for hours or maybe even days? Finally, what level of conviction is needed in our day of declension? Would it not be greater than the days of Charles Finney? Would it not be greater than in the days when people would fall out of their seats or cry out in agony for mercy for their sins? How much prayer and fasting will it take to raise, as it were, the hand of God's Holy Ghost conviction to meet handily with the high-handedness of our times? Heavenly Father, Lord, Lord, I disclose tonight. Lord, I've heard this message that I feel is so burning in my soul and my spirit and my heart.

Lord, maybe someone tonight is listening to this message. Lord, maybe they just need to be encouraged along just to say what saith the Lord. Maybe God has been dealing with them and dealing with them.

Lord, maybe you've been dealing and they will not minister. And maybe tonight, God, you will just press them one more time to speak the words that you would have them say, to have the boldness that Charles Finney had, even the face of the pastor disagreeing, maybe, or even the congregation disagreeing. God, that we would follow the leading of your spirit.

Lord, that we would not be presumptuous in our ways, but God, we would do what saith the Lord, that we would have the boldness to do it. God, I also pray tonight that you would bring upon us that spirit of prayer that Charles Finney so talked about. Lord, the spirit of prayer that would come upon Daniel Nash, Lord, God, or Abel Clary, Lord, when they would pray for days, days, sometimes even weeks, fasting as they prayed to see a move of God among the people.

Lord, give us an urgency. God, I pray that an urgency would come upon the hearts of the people, the likes of which, God, they have never known. Lord, I pray that if it is necessary, God, that you would wake people up in the wee hours of the night and begin to seek your face, Lord God.

Lord, in the quiet times, Lord, that they would walk with you. Lord, they would get rid of the secret sin or the things in their life that is standing between you and them. God, the things that are standing between you answering their prayers or not.

For God, if we regard iniquity in our heart, surely you will not hear us. God, I pray for everyone listening tonight. God, I pray even for myself, Lord, that you would send once again a double portion of your spirit, a double portion of Holy Ghost conviction into my life, God.

Convict me even, I pray, God, of the pride of the things, Lord, of the sin that would try to come in and creep in. God, walk with me. God, convict me, Lord.

God, I want to hear your voice. God, I want to hear you speak to me, God. I want to be in that place with you.

Lord, I pray for sermon index, finally, God. Lord, that your hand would be upon them. God, that when people would come to this site, Lord, that they would feel Holy Ghost conviction.

Lord, that they would be convicted, God, Lord, of their sin, that they would be convicted, Lord, to even want to begin to share the gospel with others, begin to walk upright with you, O God. Lord, we pray these things. Lord, we pray that you would protect even the service again, God.

Lord, we pray that you protect each and every one. Keep your hand upon us, O God. Anoint each and every one of us as we go to minister, I pray, in Christ's name.

Amen.

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