

“Receiving Correction” • 2 Chronicles 26:16-19

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *The Confronter’s Bible*

1. For those who avoid confrontation like the plague, but know it occasionally needs to be done -
2. Take heart; a new resource has just been made available to you
3. You’ve heard of the *Rainbow Study Bible*, with passages dealing with different topics already pre-highlighted for you
4. Well a new version of it has just been released, it’s called the Confronter’s Bible
5. The next time you need to persuade a backslider that he or she is erring, you will have a ready reference to correct them
 - a. thanks to the new Confronter’s Bible you need no longer hem and haw with cryptic scripture references, subtle hints, or suggestive innuendoes about the error of his or her ways
 - b. complete with thumb indexing, you can flip right to highlighted passages
 - 1) rebuking is highlighted in “passion pink “
 - 2) sins to be avoided are in “stop- sign red”
 - 3) passages that warn about straying from the straight and narrow are in “off-white”
 - c. there is even a handy index that assists the confronter in deciding the best way to approach the erring brother or sister
 - 1) for example; should you confront via telephone? Only if the offender is over six feet.
 - 2) should you meet in a restaurant? Only if the confrontee is prone to verbal explosions
 - 3) in the event the rebukee does not respond to your "speaking the truth in love," try any of these suggested biblical alternatives
 - a) like Nehemiah, pull their hair (Neh. 13:25),
 - b) like Samson, set their fields on fire (Judg. 15:5),
 - c) or like Elisha did with the children who called him “Old Baldy”, call out the she-bears (II Kings 2:24).

B. *Correction*

1. Let’s face it, very few of us like to either *give* or *receive* correction!
2. While we’ll be the first to admit that we aren’t perfect, we certainly don’t want anyone pointing out *WHERE* we aren’t perfect
3. It’s important that we realize, rebuke and correction are a part of the *normal* Christian life
4. Consider 2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete,

thoroughly equipped for every good work.

- a. scripture leads us to truth
 - b. both at first
 - c. and then when we deviate from truth, scripture leads us back to it
 - d. this process of correction may take place in our own private time in the Word
 - 1) or in this setting
 - 2) or then again, when another believer comes to us and speaks to us personally
5. But the question and challenge this morning is this: **How are you are receiving correction?**
- a. do you take it humbly?
 - b. or do you get your defenses up and strike back?
5. Let's take a look at a story from 2 Chronicles that highlights the importance of receiving correction with a meek and humble spirit

II. TEXT

A. Set The Scene

1. We are in that period of the Jews history when Israel has been divided into two nations
 - a. to the north was Israel, and 10 of the 12 tribes
 - b. to the south was Judah, with the tribes of Judah and Benjamin
2. Chronicles focuses on the southern kingdom, so in this chapter we are reading about another of the kings that sat on the throne of Judah
3. His name was Uzziah, and his reign began with a genuine heart of loyalty to the Lord
 - a. as long as he sought God, he prospered
 - b. he built the military might of Judah to one of its strongest points
 - c. he even developed some new military technology and installed it on the walls of the city of Jerusalem, which he reinforced
4. His fame spread far and wide and the strength of Judah's army became secure
5. This is when Uzziah fell in to trouble!

B. V. 16

{16} But when he was strong his heart was lifted up, to his destruction, for he transgressed against the LORD his God by entering the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense.

1. Uzziah reigned for 52 years, and this event took place in the later part of his life
2. Because of the strength of Judah's army, he had been able to defeat several bordering nations and groups
3. And once secure, he fell in to the trap some of his ancestors had fallen in to
 - a. he began to think that it was his own smarts and strength that had made

- him great
- b. he shifted his trust from God to his military
 4. Lifted up by pride, Uzziah turned from loyalty to the Lord to confidence in himself
 5. Where Uzziah's pride differed from some of the previous kings,
 - a. is that they had turned from trust in God to the worship of idols
 - b. Uzziah didn't turn from God to idols,
 - c. he went in the other direction
 - d. he took it upon himself to worship God, as he wanted, rather than the way God had proscribed
 6. You see, God had told the Jews that the only people allowed in to the temple were the priests
 7. No one else was permitted there - on pain of death!
 8. But Uzziah became so confident in himself that he thought he was above the rules that applied to others
 - a. so he went in to the room called the Holy Place
 - b. this was the room in front of the Holy of Holies that held the sacred ark of the covenant
 - c. The Holy Place held the table of showbread, the golden lampstand, and the altar of incense
 9. It seems Uzziah was following in the tradition of many ancient kings who were the high priests of their religions

C. Vs. 17-18

{17} So Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him were eighty priests of the LORD; valiant men.

{18} And they withstood King Uzziah, and said to him, "It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have trespassed! You shall have no honor from the LORD God."

1. When some of the priests saw Uzziah start to go in to the temple, they went immediately to Azariah, the high priest, to warn him
2. Azariah sent out word to the rest of the priests there on the temple grounds to meet him at the Holy Place
3. This group of priests then went in to confront the king
 - a. they reminded him that only the priests were allowed to enter the sacred rooms
 - b. they told Uzziah what he was doing would not be blessed by the Lord
 - c. because *sin* can never be blessed by God
4. It's Uzziah's reaction to Azariah's rebuke that we want to focus on today, but let's not miss an important point here . . .
 - a. Uzziah thought he could worship God any way he wanted to - but he was wrong
 - b. God can only be worshiped the way He has provided
 - c. we cannot come to God *our* way, we must come *His* way, or we cannot come at all
 - d. there is a lot of fuzzy thinking today about what pleases God and makes

a person acceptable to Him

- 1) majority opinion has it that all a person has to do is be *sincere*
 - 2) and live in such a way that you *don't hurt anyone else*
 - 3) the popular idea is that the two things God requires to enter heaven are *sincerity* and being *nice*
 - 4) nothing could be further from the truth
 - 5) we do not devise our own way to God – we follow His, or we do not come to Him at all
 - 6) now, the great joy is that God HAS MADE A WAY FOR US TO COME TO HIM
 - 7) Jesus said, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father but through Me.”
 - 8) the Way to heaven, the way to the Father, is through the Son
 - 9) any other way is a dead end!
- e. so, let me ask you; how do YOU come to God?
- 1) how do you think you will gain heaven?
 - 2) by being good? By being religious?
 - 3) are you following in Uzziah's footsteps by trying to come to God on your own?
 - 4) it won't work – and God will not honor you
 - 5) you must come through the way God has given – through faith in Jesus Christ
 - 6) who died for your sins and rose again from the dead to give you new life

D. V. 19

{19} Then Uzziah became furious; and he *had* a censer in his hand to burn incense. And while he was angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead, before the priests in the house of the LORD, beside the incense altar.

1. Notice Uzziah's reaction; this is the critical issue
2. Rather than humbly repenting of his error, he grew angry
3. And his anger was directed at the priests for pointing out his sin
4. Note how the writer puts it; **“while he was angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead”**
5. This leprosy was an immediate judgment from God
 - a. not just for his sin of usurping the place of the priest
 - b. but for his rejection of the priests' rebuke
 - c. if Uzziah had come to his senses and repented of his pride,
 - d. no doubt this judgment would not have befallen him
 - e. it was the maintaining of his pride and his refusal to repent that led to leprosy

E. Receiving Correction

1. As I mentioned at the outset of today's message, correction is a part of the normal Christian life
2. Because none of us is perfect, and never will be this side of glory, we are constantly in need of change

3. We are all being conformed to the image of Jesus
4. Sometimes the change is in small things; other times, we need a major overhaul
5. But the point is this: we all need to make *corrections*
6. And the only way we can make them is if we are being made aware of them
7. As we've already seen, 2 Timothy 3:16 tells us that the scriptures are given for our *reproof* and *correction*
8. But the great challenge for us is the *attitude* we bring to being corrected
9. When someone points out error in your life, how do you respond?
 - a. that someone may be the Holy Spirit
 - b. or that someone may be your husband or wife
 - c. they may be a parent, or maybe even a child
 - d. they may be a friend, another Christian
 - e. they may even be an unbeliever!
 - f. it doesn't really matter WHO is doing the correction
 - g. the issue is: How do you respond?
10. Are you like Uzziah?
 - a. do you grow angry?
 - b. do you get hostile?
 - c. do you fire back an "Oh yeah?!? Well, that's none of your business!!"
 - d. "Who made you God?"
11. Or do you listen and respond with humility?
 - a. knowing and owning, that in fact, you *aren't* perfect
 - b. and that having others occasionally reminding you of the fact is a good thing

F. Called To Correct

1. Do you realize that we are *called to correct* one another?
2. That's right; as we follow Jesus, we are to take responsibility for both encouraging and admonishing one another
3. In Romans 15:14 Paul writes . . .

Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

- a. this word *admonish* is a wonderful word which means to "gentle call attention to"
- b. it pictures someone who warns another but does so with great tact and care
4. What a needed reminder: while we focus today on how we *receive* correction, let's not forget the importance of making sure that when we go to another *with* correction we do so with the right heart and attitude
 - a. we cannot be haughty or with a "know-it-all" spirit
 - b. we must go with a care that seeks to restore the other
 - c. we must go in humility and gentleness
 - d. if these things do not mark our approach, then it would be best to remain silent and pray that God would send someone else who can be

more effective than we

5. In Hebrew 3:12-13 we read this . . .

{12} Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;

{13} but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

6. To *Exhort* means to come alongside for the purpose of re-directing
 - a. it pictures someone who sees another deviating from the right path
 - b. and they draw close so they can counsel them to re-focus and come back
7. Let’s face it, few people who fall away from the Lord are really tight with God on Monday night, and then wake up on Tuesday morning and decide to fall away
 - a. they slip away slowly, over time
 - b. it is usually some small thing that causes them to deviate from the Lord
 - c. but with time, they get farther and farther away
 - d. like a jet that is just one-tenth of a degree off course
 - 1) for the first few miles, it will not be all that far off it’s path
 - 2) but give it several hours and it will be hundreds of miles off course
 - e. so it is in our spiritual lives
 - 1) there may be some little thing that causes our passion to cool
 - 2) there may be some minor sin that causes us to deviate from the way
 - 3) and at first, others don’t see that we are erring
 - 4) but after a few weeks, it becomes clear something is wrong
 - f. how we need others to come alongside and say, “Hey, what’s up?”
 - 1) it seems your path has strayed
 - 2) why are you going this way?
 - 3) can I help put you back on track?
8. There is a cultural trait we Americans have that has been raised to the place of a right and in fact, a virtue
9. But taken to an extreme, it can seriously harm and hinder our call as the followers of Christ to admonish and exhort one another
10. I’m referring to the premium our culture puts on *privacy*
 - a. the first reaction many people have when they are corrected is –
 - b. “What business is it of yours?”
 - c. well the answer to that question is simple –
 - d. as believers, the integrity of the walk of our brothers and sisters in the faith *is* our business
 - 1) we cannot live their lives for them
 - 2) and we cannot force them to do what is right
 - 3) but we are called to care for one another, to pray for one another, to admonish each other, and to even rebuke each other when we get off track
 - e. in 2 Tim 4:2 Paul wrote . . .

Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

f. then, in the very next verse , he wrote this . . .

{3} For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;

{4} and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

- g. if there was ever an era that needed to heed the call to challenge each other to godliness, it would be the one in which we live
 - h. for certainly, the days foretold by Paul are upon us
 - 11. When someone close to you is getting off track in their walk with the Lord, do the loving thing and seek to restore them by this three-step process . . .
 - 1) Pray for them – that the Spirit would convict them and give them a heart to repent
 - 2) Pray for yourself – that God would give you the right attitude and words to share
 - 3) Then go and correct them
- ***) Remember this test for your motives before you confront:
- a) Why are you pointing out another's error?
 - b) Is it to put them down, or build them up?
 - c) if you cannot say that you have a genuine concern to restore them to an unhindered walk with Jesus, then go back to step 2

F. When Corrected

1. What do you do if *you* are the correctee?
2. You listen!
3. And then take what is said before the Lord and ask Him to apply it to your life
 - a. not everything that is said may be true
 - b. but look for what is so you can be ministered to by it
4. Do not respond in anger to those who confront you, even if they do not come in the right spirit
5. Maybe the Lord would have you confront them on *that* issue, but your admonition will only be received if you have shown grace and humility in the face of theirs

G. The Critical Issue

1. The core sin that fuels all other sins is pride
2. No where will pride become more obvious than in our reaction to criticism
3. But every one of us will be criticized
4. The person who is never criticized is not breathing
5. A successful person is one who can lay a firm foundation with the bricks that others throw at him
6. Don't react against correction with hostility and anger
7. Instead, humbly receive it as an opportunity to grow

III. CONCLUSION

A. *The Family*

1. The NT presents a picture of the church as a loving and devoted family
2. Jesus said that the greatest witness to the world of the genuineness and reality of our faith in Him is the love we have for one another
3. We have to recognize that the premium our culture places on individualism and its demand for privacy actually work at cross-purposes to following Jesus
4. When individualism isolates me from you, and you from me, we have lost one of the most powerful dynamics of the Christian faith
5. And yet, there is a deep hunger in the human heart for intimacy with others
 - a. there is a longing to know and be known
 - b. though we play games of hide and seek
 - c. and maintain our walls of privacy
 - d. we all really long to love and be loved, just as we are, warts and all
6. God intends for the church to be a new community –
 - a. where people lay aside the games and the masks
 - b. and are real with each other
 - c. where the devotion and dedication to each other finds expression in the ability to go to one another and confront each other without the fear of retaliation or violence
 - d. where our love for one another is not based on performance, but on the reality of God's unchanging love

B. *Imagine, If You Can*

1. Imagine, if you can, a church, where people loved each other like that
2. Imagine a church where people were honest and completely real with each other
3. Picture a group of people, who gathered throughout the week
 - a. either all together, or in homes
 - b. and when they met, they took time to really listen to one another's concerns
 - c. a place where people who were experiencing great blessing were being encouraged by others to keep trusting in the Lord
 - d. a place where people who were going through seep waters were being comforted and helped
4. Picture this scene:
 - a. a man walks up to another after Sunday morning service and says, "Can we talk for a couple minutes?"
 - b. and the other man says, "Sure!"
 - c. so they sit down, and the first man says, "You know, I haven't seen you for a few weeks and I've been praying for you. It's great to see you today because the Lord has laid it on my heart to talk to you. I know the reason you've been gone lately is because you've been working overtime, trying to earn some extra money so you can get a ski boat. I'm concerned because while I'm sure a ski boat would be a lot of fun, missing out on fellowship can seriously harm your walk. I know cause

I've been there. I love you – and I don't want to see you hurt.”

- d. then the second man says, “Thanks brother. I need to hear that. My priorities have been messed up and I appreciate you taking the risk to confront me. Will you pray with me that God will help me stay focused and not get side tracked again?”
5. What do you suppose would be the reaction of an unbeliever that witnessed this exchange?
6. I'll tell you what it would be – they would be shaken tot he very core of their being!
7. May God give us the grace, the courage, and the humility to be a church like that!