

The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin | Adoniram Judson

Reading : Acts 2 : 14 - 47 -- Peter's Sermon

Setting

After Jesus' resurrection and subsequent appearance to His disciples, and Jesus' Great Commission to his disciples along with the promise of the Holy Spirit, the disciples await the coming of the Holy Spirit on the occasion of the Pentecost in Jerusalem, where many Jews and Judaism converts gather from around the world to celebrate Pentecost.

On Pentecost day itself, the first symbolic descent of the Holy Spirit in tongues of fire begins all of a sudden, and the nearby crowd are astounded. They see and hear of the disciples' oddly energetic behavior. The most baffling phenomenon is that whatever the disciples of Jesus are saying is heard by the crowd in each of their native tongue. This weird phenomenon leads some onlookers to remark that the disciples are drunk. On this remark Peter stands up and preaches a magnificent sermon of repentance that leads to the immediate repentance of 3000 people.

Reading

A dramatic reading of Acts 2: 14-47 can be done, placing emphasis (such as loud voice or rebuking tone) on parts that condemn the audience (mainly Jews) for their sin of being complicit in the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ, who, just a couple of months before was the hottest public sensation in Jerusalem. Peter's sermon firmly places guilt on the Jewish crowd, for supporting the crucifixion of Jesus directly or indirectly. Recall how the Jewish authorities handed Jesus over to Pilates and the crowd chose Barabbas over Jesus for release, leaving Jesus for dead and on the cruel way to the cross and the grave. "Crucify him!"

Highlights :

Acts 2: 23 "this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, **you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men**"

Acts 2:36 "Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, **this Jesus whom you crucified.**"

Such dramatic reading allows us to understand and visualize the convicting power of Peter's sermon, and illustrates how the Holy Spirit might use a sermon to convict the audience of sin. The children in the audience are encouraged to imagine that they are 1st century Jews in Jerusalem celebrating Pentecost.

Cognitive

Genuine conversion consists of :

1. Faith (Turn towards God)
2. Repentance (Turn away from sin)

- When a person undergoes conversion, he goes through 4 stages : he realizes of his sin and error, he is sorrowful for his sin, he regrets his sin, and finally and most importantly, he leaves his sin behind.

- This last stage must happen in 2 forms, one is faith towards God, and the other, repentance, a turning away from sin.

The Holy Spirit is always working throughout the conversion process, and most importantly in convicting us of our sin, and the development of a longing towards God and away from sin. The Holy Spirit is the accomplisher of all this work.

Affective

Knowing what our sin is is different from being convicted of our sin.

One is only head knowledge and has no power to change our hearts, while the other has the power to change our hearts. One has no saving power, one leads us to salvation.

Response

Although it is good to pray and confess daily before God of the sins we have committed, we should also pray that the Holy Spirit convict us of our sins. Without His work, there would be no conviction and no genuine repentance. A Christian is a Christian not because he *has* repented before, but is someone who leads a **repentant life**, that is, to realize that we are not fully free from sin in this life, and that therefore we are never perfect and that we need to keep repenting of our sins.

We should also pray that the Holy Spirit sensitizes us to the sins which escape our attention. This is part of being convicted of our sins.

We should praise God and give thanks to Him for the convicting work that He is always doing in our lives and other people's lives, so that many more people including our household are saved.

In light of such prayer it is apt to pray and reflect on mission work as well as it concerns the lives of many others.

Missionary Highlight: Adoniram Judson, born 1788

Adoniram Judson and his first wife Ann Judson, Americans,

- > married because of the same zeal for overseas missions
- > Judson was inspired to do mission work in Asia by Claudius Buchanan's sermon "The Star in the East."
- > Judson established the first foreign missions board in America.

The Mission to Burma (Myanmar) 1813

- > 3 years of difficult sea journey... in which their first child died.
- > When they arrived in 1813, started learning Burmese. Judson and wife became Baptist. 3 more years of learning burmese. he was able to convert MOUNG NAU, the first convert. MOUNG NAU converted his 2 friends. Judson and wife gave their first Baptist Lord's supper / Eucharist to Burmese people.
- > Their second child died. They had to learn to rely on God more and more.
- > Just after 6 years of ministry in burma, they built the first Baptist church in burma, with 10 members.
- > They relocated to the capital city of the Burmese Kingdom, Ava. Judson was caught on suspicion that he was a British spy, and was put into a death camp (there was war between the British and the Burmese Kingdom.)
- > He was tortured every day for almost two years, but his wife was persistent, brave, bringing food to her husband every day. She had to bribe the guards to feed him. She was herself sick and starving during this period, while feeding her toddler
- > The war ended and he was released
- > They started moving up the mountains of Burma ... to minister to the Karen (keh'yen) people, a mountain tribe in Burma.
- > But soon after, Ann died to disease, and their daughter too died. Judson lost everything in his life.
- > He suffered from depression and isolated himself in the jungle, a jungle full of tigers, for 40 days surviving on a small amount of rice rations. He dug his own grave many times thinking to end his life. But in this jungle, he asked some of the greatest existential questions about life to God, including the reason he lives, whether he was in God's will ... et cetera.
- > But he came out of the jungle and depression, and he came out stronger with a resolve. God protected him from all the dangers of the jungle and from the destructive powers of depression .
- > He converted a Karen slave named Ko Tha Byu. This person was important because he became a powerful evangelist that converted hundreds of Karen people, his own people.
- > Judson also started work translating the Bible. Within 10 years, he finished translating the whole Bible into Burmese. This translation is one of Judson's most important works, which is held as an example for mission work today.
- > He married another time. Soon by 1837 there were 1200 believers in burma.

God had used Judson all the way through his sufferings to reach the lost in Burma, one of the first countries in Southeast Asia to be visited by Protestant missionaries. At this time China was

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not even evangelized at large scale yet ! Protestant missionaries would come to China starting 1840's, and Hudson Taylor in 1866.

God continues to work around the world today, calling missionaries and workers of the gospel, and it could be any of us.

soli deo gloria

Readings on Adoniram Judson, early American Baptist Missionary to Burma (Myanmar) and the Karen tribe :

- <https://bethanygu.edu/blog/stories/adoniram-and-ann-judson/> (Primary)
- <http://www.bu.edu/missiology/missionary-biography/i-k/judson-adoniram-1788-1850/>
- <https://www.imb.org/2018/03/27/missionaries-you-should-know-adoniram-judson/>