

The Wrong Kind of Deterrence

Kerry Duke

Anti-death penalty groups argue that capital punishment does not prevent further crimes. They are wrong. The Bible says the death penalty is a strong deterrent (Deut. 13:6-11; Ecc. 8:11; Rom. 13:4).

If anyone thinks fear of reprisal doesn't work, then let him consider the effect of fear in a different context: the fear of being punished for doing good. Fear of punishment, whether physical or verbal, keeps a lot of people from doing what is right!

Hollywood and the news media belittle and criticize any group that claims to believe in Christ and the Bible. But movie makers and newscasters will not dare mock the religion of Islam. Why is there a double standard? Intimidation works! Network executives don't want to incur the wrath of Muslims. Politicians are reluctant to tell the truth about this dangerous religion because they are paralyzed by the fear of Muslim retaliations.

But Muslim terrorism is not the only or even the worst form of reverse deterrence we're facing. People are dissuaded from saying and doing the right thing because they fear being humiliated and criticized. They are deterred from speaking the truth for fear of being fined or sued. The Supreme Court has ruled that same-sex marriages are legal. The President is now telling state schools to allow students to use any restroom they choose. If states don't comply, they are being warned that they could lose federal funding or face a lawsuit. These high-handed tactics remind us of just how much freedom we have lost.

The Jewish leaders told the apostles not to teach the gospel anymore (Acts 5:28). Peter replied, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). This was the same Peter who said we should obey our rulers (1 Pet. 2:13-14). But when man's law tries to nullify the law of God, we must go with the will of God.

These intimidation tactics are even in the church. It occurs when members threaten to leave a congregation if the preacher doesn't lighten up his preaching. They try to put pressure on elders to keep them from withdrawing fellowship like the Bible teaches. They warn, "You're going to divide this church" or "A lot of people are upset and are thinking about leaving." They are spiritual terrorists who do their best to spread fear and compromise in the church.

Sadly, many give in to spiritual terrorism. King Saul said, "I have sinned...because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice" (1 Sam. 15:24). Pilate knew Jesus was innocent, but he allowed the Jews to intimidate him into sentencing Jesus to die (John 19:8-16). The Jewish leaders were spiritual terrorists. They bullied and intimidated anyone they could. Though the common people had opinions about Christ, the Bible says at the temple "no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews" (John 7:13).

There is a right and a wrong kind of fear in the Bible. It is good to be afraid of disobeying the Lord (Matt. 10:28). It is wrong to fear man and compromise the truth. John said the "fearful" will have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone (Rev. 21 :8). If you fear God as you should, you will not give in to the demands of spiritual terrorists in the world, in the church, or even in your own family.

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church of Christ at Alisal

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Lily

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. (John 1:1-5)

MEETING UPON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

Bible Classes..... 9:00 A.M.
Assemblies..... 10:00 A.M. & 5:00 P.M.

<http://churchofchristalisal.com/>

WEDNESDAY

Bible Class, Singing, & Prayer..... 6:30 P.M.

Welcome

Good Morning Brothers and Sisters!

This Week's Sermon's

A.M. - Morality Issues -1

P.M. - Morality Issues - 2

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HEARING BUT NOT BELIEVING

Raymond Elliott



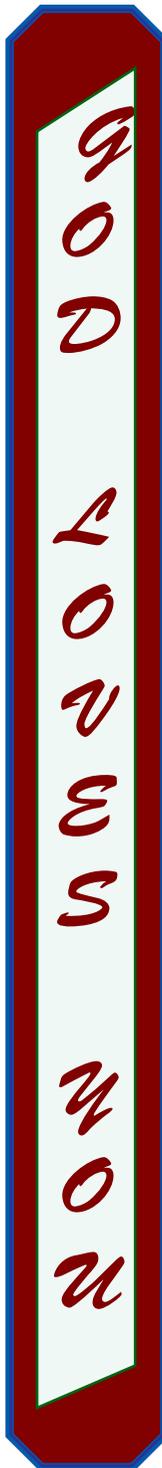
*Barbara's
Alaskan Rose*

One of the frustrations experienced by preachers is when he knows that the gospel has been taught, yet there have been no responses by the hearers to obedience. This may occur when sinners refuse to obey the gospel of Christ and/or when members of the church fail to comply with the teaching of Christ to mature in the faith. There can also be puzzlement in the teacher's heart when one family obeys and another family rejects the same teaching while being instructed privately in their homes. The same gospel is being taught but is bringing different responses. It is easy to become discouraged, blaming oneself for the failure to convert all the people being taught the way of salvation.

We must understand and come to realize that all who hear will not believe and obey the gospel. The hearer has a responsibility in the process of conversion. This principle is clearly taught in the parable of the soils presented by the Lord and recorded in Matthew 13:1-23. In the usage of the words of Isaiah, Jesus mentioned that there were those who would hear but not understand. The apostle Paul referred to this prophecy of Isaiah on various occasions in his work when the Jews would not respond to the teaching of this inspired man (Acts 28:25-29; Romans 10:16-21).

While it is true that faith is produced by the hearing of the word of God (Romans 10:17), there are times when the gospel is heard but obedience to Christ is not the end result. Why? The answer can be found in the example of so many Israelites who failed to enter the promised land. The writer of the book of Hebrews informs us that the glad tidings had been preached to the children of Israel "But the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith by those who heard it." (Hebrews 4:1-3). Earlier we learned that the reason why some did not enter into that rest was because of unbelief (disobedience) (Hebrews 3:18, 19). Had they not heard? Yes, but the word of God had not been united or mixed with faith on the part of the hearers. And without faith a person cannot please God (Hebrews 11:6).

The hearer of the gospel indeed has a great responsibility. If the heart is not receptive,



there cannot be any faith. As food eaten cannot benefit the body if it is not digested, neither can the gospel of Christ save the individual unless it is united with faith. We are exhorted to "receive with meekness the implanted word which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21). It is only then that the desired results will occur.

The first stanza of the of the hymn, usually used for an 'invitational song', "O Why Not Tonight?", makes this plea: "O do not let the word depart, And close thine eyes against the light; Poor sinner, harden not thy heart, Be saved, O tonight."

Stand Out From the Crowd, Even at School

Matt Clifton

Christian parents do their best to keep their children on the Lord's path. It's a fairly challenging task when the kids are at home, but even more so when they are away at school, subjected daily to the influence of the world.

We live in a society that claims to inspire individuality, but all the while actually encouraging them to "go with the crowd." Jesus told us that those who are seeking the sinful path will be in the majority (Matt. 7:13-14). This crowd will, in fact, ridicule Christian youth for not following them in that lifestyle (1 Peter 4:4).

As we see our young ones off to school for another year, let's remember to steer them toward an individuality that focuses on the morality of the Bible, not on the desires of the world. Let us teach our kids to stand out from the crowd. Let them dare to do and speak what is right, to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to put God first in all things. This is the kind of individuality the Lord wants from us all!

Announcements

1. Brother Paul will be giving the invitation this Wednesday evening.
2. Wednesday evening class, "Romans - chapter 4/5 #2". Be prepared - bring your notebook!

~ On the Prayer list ~

The Lord's church in America - for souls to be added.

Norma, Rose - for peace of mind, healing, and better health.

Kerry - for a positive and productive training while in Maryland.

Have a blessed week!