

Energized for Mission - The Heart of the Matter, Part 2

Hebrews 4:11-13; Acts 2:36-41; John 16:6-13

I'm no fan of bad news...unless it _____ my life. I'm also no fan of being pierced by needles or scalpels, but sometimes it's for my own good: dental work, blood tests, heart repairs, disc replacements, and more...

Recap: The Holy Spirit is at the heart of Christ's _____, the Word of God is at the heart of the Holy Spirit, the Word Made Flesh, _____, is at the heart of the Word, and a love for _____ is at the heart of Jesus. Well, at the heart of that love is a truth that sets sinners free...but before it can do that, the truth _____.

Before 3,000 came to faith and a beautiful new community began, Peter gave them bad news: they were responsible for the _____ of God's Son. Then in Acts 2:37 it says, "...they were cut to the heart..." That phrase means they were _____ at the center of their thought, will, emotion, and moral decisions. Before they could believe the Gospel ("Good News") they had to come to grips with the reality of their need.

If you have a cancerous tumor that is slowly killing you, something sharp has to pierce you in order to live. If your heart has stopped it may need a violent, painful _____ so you can live. Well, in order for the cancer of _____ to be stopped in its tracks, or the heart deadened by sin to beat with life, the Word of God must pierce it with conviction so it can receive God's grace in Christ Jesus.

This is why it is so hard to share the _____ in our modern culture. Nobody wants to feel _____ about anything. Guilt and shame are public enemies #1 and 2. We've been sold a _____ about self-esteem that if we feel bad about or make others feel bad we have committed the gravest error in history. Now we have people that think they are more qualified than they really are, and _____ that can't be addressed for fear of offending them. Which leads to problems in institutions and society that feel _____ because no one is ever wrong about anything...unless they say someone else is...

This is why you may feel as if your very presence as a Christian _____ others. Don't take it personally! Don't _____ in kind. Recognize it as the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. Ask him to help you respond in a way that can lead them to Christ. If you're a jerk...?

This is also why it's tough to be a pastor...and why it's best to _____ the sanctifying wisdom of the Holy Spirit. "*If you always tell the truth you don't have to keep track of everything you say.*" It protects our _____. Because how can the Holy Spirit work through us to convict others if we seem unwilling to be convicted ourselves?

Now, this does NOT mean that we are meant to walk around in a perpetual state of _____. If ALL you do is feel terrible, that is the _____ work. Peter's audience asks, "*What shall we do?*" His response? "*Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit...*" Conviction is meant to draw you to the comfort of _____.

Not everyone will respond well to the piercing of the Sword of the Spirit. That's OK! Because when we try to protect people from it so they will come toward Jesus or the Church, if they do, it's not the _____ Jesus, nor his _____ Church. The evidence is all around us in the current state of "church" in America and the West.

How is the Holy Spirit convicting you through the Word?

How is he calling you back to Jesus?

How is he leading you to think differently about your witness in this world?