

We Need To Reproof, Rebuke, and Exhort

DAY:

Monday

TITLE:

The Sword That Cuts Both Ways

KEY VERSE:

2 Timothy 4:2 -- "Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching."

REFLECTION:

On Wednesday I talked about how the Word of God is like a two-edged sword -- one edge mercy, the other judgment. We need both. I think about little Bo from our neighborhood, just running straight into the street without a care in the world. Someone who loves him has to step in and correct him. That correction is not cruelty -- it is love in action. The same is true in our spiritual lives. When the Word rebukes something in us, it is not God being harsh with us. It is God being a good Father. We live in a culture that wants all encouragement and no correction, all comfort and no challenge. But a faith built only on encouragement is fragile. Let the whole Word work in you today -- the tender mercy and the firm truth together.

PRAYER:

Lord, make me someone who welcomes your correction as much as your comfort. Help me trust that when your Word challenges me, it is because you love me and want me to grow. I receive all of it today.

DAILY ACTION:

Read one passage of Scripture today that you know challenges you personally, and sit with it for five full minutes without rushing past it.

DAY:

Tuesday

TITLE:

Itching Ears and the Courage to Listen

KEY VERSE:

2 Timothy 4:3-4 -- "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; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables."

REFLECTION:

Paul wrote these words to Timothy, and they are describing our world today with a precision that honestly startles me. People are not looking for truth anymore -- they are looking for a teacher who will agree with them. I have sat with young people this very week and felt the weight of how thoroughly the culture has shaped their thinking without them even realizing it. Itching ears do not always know they are itching. That is what makes this so serious. The fable feels good. The truth sometimes stings before it heals. I want to ask you honestly today -- are there areas in your life where you have been gravitating toward voices that simply

tell you what you want to hear? The antidote is not fear. It is a deeper hunger for what is real.

PRAYER:

Father, give me ears that love truth more than comfort. Where I have been drifting toward voices that only confirm what I already want to believe, redirect me back to your Word. I want what is real.

DAILY ACTION:

Identify one media source, podcast, or voice you have been leaning on heavily and ask yourself honestly whether it consistently points you toward Scripture or away from it.

DAY:

Wednesday

TITLE:

Contending for What Is Real

KEY VERSE:

Jude 3 -- "Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you, exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."

REFLECTION:

Jude did not write this letter because things were going well. He wrote it because the faith was under pressure and people were letting go of it without even realizing what they were losing. I feel that same urgency when I talk to our young people in the universities around Atlanta. The pressure to release your grip on biblical truth is constant and it does not always come loudly. Sometimes it comes quietly, dressed up as kindness, tolerance, or open-mindedness. Contending for the faith does not mean being angry or rude. It means holding on. It means not drifting. It means knowing what you believe and why you believe it, so that when the current pulls at you, you have something solid to hold to. We are not fighting for an opinion. We are holding to a truth that has never changed and never will.

PRAYER:

God, I want to be someone who holds on. Give me the strength to contend for my faith not out of stubbornness but out of genuine love for you and for the truth you have given us. Keep my grip firm.

DAILY ACTION:

Write down in your own words three things you personally believe about Jesus Christ and why you believe them -- not from memory of a creed, but from your own heart and experience with Scripture.

DAY:

Thursday

TITLE:

The Word That Cannot Be Overruled

KEY VERSE:

2 Peter 1:16 -- "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and

the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty."

REFLECTION:

Peter is making an extraordinary statement here. He is saying, I was there. I saw the transfiguration with my own eyes. I heard the voice of God from heaven. I stood on that holy mountain with Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. And then he goes on to say something that stopped me when I read it -- even that experience, as glorious as it was, does not outrank the written Word of God. That hit me hard. We live in a generation that elevates personal experience above everything else. But Peter, who had one of the most stunning spiritual experiences in all of human history, points us back to Scripture as the highest standard. Your feelings are real. Your experiences matter. But nothing you feel, see, or encounter can ever override what God has already said in this book.

PRAYER:

Lord, I thank you for every experience I have had with you. But I anchor myself today in your Word, not in my feelings. Let Scripture be the highest voice in my life, above everything else I hear or feel.

DAILY ACTION:

The next time today you feel a strong emotion or have a strong opinion about a situation, pause and ask yourself one question before you act on it: What does Scripture actually say about this?

DAY:

Friday

TITLE:

People of the Book

KEY VERSE:

Ephesians 5:5 -- "For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God."

REFLECTION:

Paul did not soften this verse. He did not ease into it carefully or apologize for it. He just said it plainly, because the Word of God does not negotiate with culture. I think about John Huss, who in the 1400s was told he would be burned alive if he did not back down from his stand on Scripture. He said burn me. That kind of conviction is not born from stubbornness -- it is born from a deep, settled relationship with the Word of God. We need that today. Not anger. Not arrogance. But a quiet, unshakeable commitment that says this book is true and I am building my life on it. I want us to be a people who get the Word so deep in us that when the world pushes, there is simply nothing left to move. In Jesus name, that is who we are becoming.

PRAYER:

Father, make me a person of your Word. Get it so deep into me that it shapes how I think, how I speak, and how I live every single day. I want to be immovable in you.

DAILY ACTION:

Commit to reading one chapter of Scripture every day next week and tell one person -- a friend, family member, or someone in your congregation -- that you are doing it so they can hold you to it.