

Changing the Way You Think:

“The One Who Has an Ear, Let Him Hear What the Spirit Says to the Churches”

2 Timothy 4:1-2

I solemnly urge you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who will someday judge the living and the dead when he comes to set up his Kingdom: Preach the word of God. Be prepared, **whether the time is favorable or not. Patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage** your people **with good teaching.**

- *“Whether the time is favorable or not...”*

Correction & Rebuke

Correction: An action, process, or change that rectifies an error; a change that rights a wrong.

Rebuke: Expressing sharp disapproval or criticism of someone because of their behavior or actions

Genesis 4:2-7

When they grew up, Abel became a shepherd, while Cain cultivated the ground. ³ When it was time for the harvest, Cain presented some of his crops as a gift to the Lord. ⁴ Abel also brought a gift—the best portions of the firstborn lambs from his flock. The Lord accepted Abel and his gift, ⁵ but he did not accept Cain and his gift. This made Cain very angry, and he looked dejected. ⁶ “Why are you so angry?” the Lord asked Cain. “Why do you look so dejected? ⁷ You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master.”

- One of the things we have tried to teach our children is what we call **“owning”** their mistakes, and **“accepting”** the consequences.
- - That is more important to us than if they had not made the mistake.
 - Responsibility, Honesty, Character-building, Humility, and Wisdom are fostered in this process.
- But when Self is allowed to sulk, and one is allowed to manipulate and shift the blame by refusing the training (“discipline”) -- the maturing process is lost, and only a game of “playing the victim” ensues.
- This distorts and eventually eliminates the concepts of **Sin, Morality, and Right & Wrong**, and replaces them as primary, the individual’s feelings and desires.
 - This has become a rampant pattern, unrestrained, unchecked, and strongly encouraged and cultivated in our society on every level.
 - World leaders model it, Workplace, Family and Parenting, & the News & Social Media

The Church has been shamed into getting away from the ideas of **Correction, Rebuke, and Discipline**...and that has contributed to her weakness in health, influence, and in producing mature believers.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is inspired by God and beneficial **for teaching, for rebuke, for correction, for training in righteousness;** ¹⁷ so that the man *or woman* of God may be **fully capable, equipped for every good work.**

- Some perceive even patient and gentle corrections and rebukes as “negative”
- “Not helpful” or “It doesn’t work”

Not Comfortable or Enjoyable – But it is Essential

Hebrews 12:5-13 “My child, don’t make light of the Lord’s discipline, and don’t give up when he corrects you. ⁶For the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child.” ⁷As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children...Our our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God’s discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness. ¹¹**No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it’s painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.** ¹²**So take a new grip with your tired hands and strengthen your weak knees.** ¹³**Mark out a straight path for your feet so that those who are weak and lame will not fall but become strong.**

Ephesus (2:2,4): “I know your deeds, and your labor and your perseverance...**But I have this against you, that you have left your first love...**”

Pergamum (2:13, 14) I know where you dwell...and you hold firmly to my name...**But I have a few things against you because some of you hold to (false) teaching...**”

Thyatira (2:19, 20) “I know your deeds, and your love and faith, and service and perseverance...**But I have this against you, that you tolerate...sexual immorality.**”

Laodecia (3:15-16) “**I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot...because you are lukewarm, I will vomit you out of my mouth...**”

“The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

(2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22)

**There are Truths We Must Reclaim, Sins Of Which We Must Repent and Change,
Idols We Must Give Up, and Stands We Must Take.**

Do We Have Ears to Hear What the Spirit is Saying to the Churches?

2 Timothy 4:3-5 ³For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. ⁴They will reject the truth and chase after myths. ⁵But you should keep a clear mind in every situation. Don’t be afraid of suffering for the Lord. Work at telling others the Good News, and fully carry out the ministry God has given you.

In this year of 2021 we must seek the Lord on His Word to Church of the Chimes:

- Examine the Genuineness of Our Love for Christ
- Consider Cultural Values and Morals of this World and How They May Have Blinded Us from Truth
- Search Our Hearts and See if We Have Made a Place for Sin & Self to Thrive
- Take Inventory of Our Commitment to Following Jesus, Carrying Our Cross Behind Him