

WE PERSUADE MEN

2 Cor. 5:10-11

INTRODUCTION

A number of times, and in different ways, the word persuade is used in the Bible.

First, what does the word mean.

It means to win to a purpose or a course by reasoning, or by an appeal to passion or self-interest. It means also to induce to believe willingly, to lead to accept a fact of doctrine as a matter of faith.

Important matters that relate to the soul - we think of persuade meaning to win people. To make decisions to win the soul - as to the past, present, and the future.

That will stand a test of a swift accident bringing sudden death. The test of disease that closes the shutters of all of life's windows. The test of prosperity which causes man to forsake God. And the test of that hour when everyone of us shall give account of himself to God. Rom. 14:12.

When for every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account in the day of judgement. Matt. 12:36. At such time when we stand before God, to whom the darkness and the light will be brought out.

Note first of all the Old Testament.

God's question, the Lord said, he shall persuade Ahab that he may go up and fall. And one said on this manner and another said on that manner.

And there came forth a spirit and stood before the Lord and said I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him where with. And he said, I will go forth and I will be a lying spirit and be a mouth of all of his prophets. And he said, thou shalt persuade him and prevail also. Go forth and do so. 1 Kings 22:20-22.

And Ahab who sold himself to work evil in the sight of the Lord, used persuasion on King Jehoshaphat. 2 Chron. 17:5. 2 Chron. 18:2.

Solomon spoke of persuasion, "by long forbearing is a prince persuaded and a soft tongue breaketh the bone". Prov. 25:15.

Note the New Testament uses persuasion.

Pilates wife used persuasion - "Hath thou nothing to do with this just man, for I have suffered many things this day because of him. Matt. 17:19.

By stronger than her quiet persuasion, there was the multitude - "But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas and destroy Jesus." Matt. 27:20.

Abraham used the word talking across the great Gulf, fixed to the rich man who died and was buried and who in Hell lifted up his eyes being in torment. Luke 16:22-23.

He wanted a missionary to go to his Father's house to persuade his brethren to believe, less they go to the place of torment.

The chief priest persuaded men to talk to those soldiers who guarded the tomb. Matt. 28:12. And when they were assembled with the elders and took counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers saying, say ye - his disciples came by night and stole him away while we slept. And if this comes to the governors ears we will persuade him and secure you.

Paul used this word in Acts 13:42. When the Jews were gone out of the synagogue the Gentiles sought - who speaking to them persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

This word is also used of Paul's enemies. They persuaded the people. And having stoned Paul. Drew him out of the city, supposing he was dead.

Paul's persuasion is listed in Acts 18:4 where he reasoned in the synagogue to persuade the Jews and the Greeks, to believe in Jesus.

In the book of Acts 26:27 - King Agrippa, when asked if he believed the prophets, said unto Paul - almost thou persuadeth me to be a Christian.

In Romans, Paul wrote about Abraham not being weak in faith but being fully persuaded. That what God has promised, he would perform.

Romans, Paul wrote, I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, or principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, or any other creature shall be able to separate us.

On other times Paul wrote about being persuaded in his own mind. Persuaded by the Lord Jesus Christ. He wrote to Timothy saying that he was persuaded. That what he believed, that Jesus was able to commit, and to keep.

Now our text begins with another word that we need to look at. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.

II - Second, let us look at this out of date truth. It is often unmentioned - the terror of the Lord, the wrath of God.

If a man looks lightly upon his disease and calls small pox a rash, cancer just a mere irritation. He will not hasten to the physician. If a man thinks of a cyclone just a little light wind, he will not run to the storm shelter. If he swallows poison and thinks it is just peppermint, he will have no concern.

Is there anything in God or about God to be afraid of. Jeremiah Taylor preached, as he spoke of the time when judgement would rise in triumph. And mercy would be the accuser of the wicked. We are commanded to remember because they are written for our example, that God destroyed at once five cities of the plains. And Sodom and her sister suffered vengeance by fire. Fearful was it when God destroyed at one time 23,000 for fornication. I Cor. 10:8. The angel destroyed in one night 185 Assyrians. 2 Kings 19:35.

A thing of terror when the first born of all the families of Egypt. Exo. 12:29-30. For the sin of David in numbering the people. Because of which 70,000 died. 2 Sam. 24:15. It was a fearful thing when God sent 10 tribes into captivity and in total. It was a fearful thing when God destroyed all the world - and only 8 persons escaped.

How many forget these words - it is a fearful thing, to fall into the hands of the living God. Hebrews 10:31.

Grand interview - School teacher - 9
my answer depends on how you want it to be taught -
I can teach it either way -

In the 1870's there was a man by the name of Parker who preached and he said there was nothing in God to fear. And that note has influenced perhaps thousands of people. Nothing in God to fear. No eternal punishment. And so, we have a father of all mankind developed.

There can be no sonship apart from spiritual rebirth. There is something in God to fear. Something that the Christless man may well fear. And that is God's hatred of iniquity. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.

Dr. Hutchins, of Chicago said, the Atomic Bomb may be the good news of damnation. It might cause us to create a new society. Not a 1000 or 500 years from now, but now.

For the time has come that the judgement must begin at the house of God. It must begin with us - what shall the end of them, are they not the Gospel of God. The righteous scarce to be saved - where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear. I Peter 4:17-18.

Dr. Wilbur Smith wrote, ours might have been an age to a large extent, one without fear. Modern medicine has practically eliminated the dread of pain. And sudden death, by disease. We have found improvements in our cultivation of farmland that eliminates the fear of famine. In Democracy we have eliminated the dread of the dictator. In social insurance, we have eliminated the fear of insecurity of old age.

To our generation, Paul sketches - there is no fear of God before their eyes, the ungodly. Many deny that there is any virtue in fear. That is to say, that, fear cannot help a man. But Oliver Goldsmith wrote, fear guides men to God more so than gratitude. For every one man who becomes virtuous

from love - are ten thousand who are good because of their fear of punishment.
The dread of terror.

Dr. Meyer interviewed 400 Christian workers. And many testified because of some message or influence on the terror of the Lord, the fear of consequences of refusing the Lord's grace - that brought them to the Saviour.

D. M. Patton quoting Dean Inge - "There never was a time when the fear of God played so small a part in men's and women's real religion as it does now." We are not afraid of God's judgements - men have cast off the restraints that the terror of the Lord imposed.

Dr. Timothy Dwight, President of Yale, few, very few, are ever awakened or convinced by the encouragements and promises of the Gospel. But almost all by the denouncement of the law. There is a criminal failure to preach the wrath and the judgement of the New Testament.

The Scripture, by faith, being warned of God of things not seen as yet. Noah prepared a Ark - to the saving of his house. By which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. Hebrews 11:7.

Acts 9:31 - we read that the churches were walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven. Against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

Jonah, knowing the terror of the Lord, preached. His (one sentence sermon) over and over.

Jonah was fearless as he preached this one sentence. In the saloons, the dance halls, the gambling joints, the banks, the stores, the theatres, the shops, the markets, the streets, the parks. In the daylight when the sun was shining. In the dark when the moon was shining. And the whole city was moved by the terror of the Lord and repented. The preaching of Jonah shifted the scene of riotous living, to repentent tears. 480,000 people turned toward God, Jonah 4:5-8.

Remember too, that the Lord that midnight hour in the Philippi jail caused the jailer to ask what he should do to be saved. That earthquake moved the foundations, the doors opened, and the prisoner was set loose. That was the terror of the Lord.

The wrath of God is a phrase that should chill the blood of an individual.

Bob Shuler wrote the wicked shall be cast into Hell. The fact of law in God's eternal presence stands up and looms large. I know that the breaking of the law of God drove man from the garden first. Second, baptized the earth with the horror of the flood. Third, turned Israel back from Canaan. Fourth, drenched the world in the blood of millions twice within my short lifetime.

The heresay of this age is lifting the Love of God out of its setting. Out of its proper relation of its justice and wrath of God. God has become an eternal slave to masses today. They use God like a sponge to absorb their human rebellion. Their liberal mindedness and their broad mindedness has made God cover them like a blanket. The vileness of the human heart, and this without any demand of repentance. Or without any remorse in their hearts. Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men. As a mother begs her son to turn from evil.

We must persuade men to recognize this truth.

Beecher said that the greatest thing that you can persuade men to do, is to bring another man to Jesus Christ as Saviour. What are we doing to persuade men who are already condemned. John 3:18.

Now the third thing, by what truths shall we persuade men. What truth shall we use.

First, the truth that man needs salvation. God says we are dead in trespasses and in sin. They which are the children of the flesh are not the children of God. In this, the children of God are manifest and the children of the Devil. I John 3:10. For the wages of sin is death. But the gift of God is eternal life.

Wherefore, as by one man, sin entered into the world. And so death passed upon all man - all have sinned. What the law could not do is that it was weak in the flesh, God sent his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and also condemned sin in the flesh.

Men are born with a sinful nature. David said I was shaped in iniquity, and in sin, did my mother conceive me. Who can bring clean out of an unclean one. We need to persuade men to believe. We are sinners doomed and damned and all righteousness of all humanity are as filthy rags.

We are to persuade men that they can be saved - not by character, not by joining a church, but Paul sets forth - by grace are ye saved through faith.

And that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works - lest any man should boast. Eph. 8:9.

The hymn writer says - could my tears forever flow, could my zeal no longer know, all for sin could not atone, God must save - and God alone. Other refuge have I none, hangs my helpless soul on thee.

2 Second, we need to persuade men about the brief life. Man, born of woman, is but a few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower and is cut down. Also as a shadow and continues not. Job 14:1-2.

As for man his days are as grass, as a flower of the field. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone. And the place thereof shall knoweth no more.

Isaiah wrote, the voice said cry, and I said what shall I cry. All grass, all flesh is as grass. And all the goodness thereof is as a flower of the field. We shall soon be cut down like the grass. Thou carries them away as like a flood - the psalmist says.

From the many times we walk the well beaten path to the grave - we realize that life on earth is like the swinging of a clock pendulum - it is like a snowflake hitting the water. The moment is seen and then it is gone forever. It is like a spark or a footprint on the seashore. A shadow of a bird passing over. Life, at it's longest, is so little distance between the cradle and the coffin. So little distance between the sun up and the sun down. We need to persuade men to accept Christ.

3 Third, concerning Christ's return. And as it is appointed unto men - once to die and after this, the judgement. Christ was once offered to bear the sins of man and unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. Hebrews 9:27-28.

Men today must die once - not twice, three, or four times. If Jesus is coming to earth.

David said there is but a step between me and death. I Sam. 20:3.

Life can be cut off. A ship leaves the harbor and never reaches another. A train pulls out of a station and ends up a mass of wreckage. A plane leaves the airport but it never reaches its destination. Diseases come upon us. Eyes fail, limbs fail. The truth that David spoke is so true. Jesus said, be ye therefore ready for in such an hour as you think not, the son of man cometh.

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. Unto which the Heavens will pass away with a great noise. And the elements shall melt with heat. The earth therefore and the works therein shall be burned up. Seeing then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons had ye ought to be. In all holy conversation and godliness. Looking for and hasting unto the coming of God. Wherein the Heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt. 2 Peter 3:10-12.

We must persuade men to come out of their sinful failure and loss - and gain Christ's cross.

4 Fourth, the doctrine of Hell. Hell is not the nightmare of some brain.

We would not believe as Russell puts it - that Heaven and Hell are the same place. Dr. Watkinson was a wise man. Although the New Testament is renounced, sin and Satan, Devils, judgement, and Hell remains potential in the human conscience. To take away Hell from the belief of the people, is to reject the physician and leave the plague.

Disbelief and unbelief do not alter facts.

Moody said, Jesus tells us of Hell with all of its horrors. And no one would accuse Jesus as drawing a picture to terrify people about something that did not exist.

Van Dyke when men rail at God's creatures as cruel - because they repeat the words of Jesus. They are accusing themselves.

Talmadge said, there is a Hell, I believe. If I had not been afraid of it - I do not think I would have started to Heaven.

Paul Stewart - the preaching that ignores this doctrine degrades the work of Christ. There is nothing more plainly revealed in the pages of history.

Fifth, urge men to make sure of Heaven. Heaven is a reality too. It is not an iron castle. Abraham went out not knowing whether he went. He looked for a city. Whose builder and maker was God. And now they desired a better country. That is, Heaven. Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called God. He hath prepared for them a city. Hebrews 11:16.

Jesus said, I go to prepare a place for you. To ask if Heaven is a real place - is not a very wise question. Moody said that Heaven was a solid place.

And when the resurrection comes, I will have resurrection feet, eyes, ears, and voice. I believe many can be persuaded to accept Christ who are listening to us in public and in private. If we speak to them about this place - which eye hath not seen or ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man.

7- Seventh, pray for them. This is another way we can persuade men. Think of the missionary Hyde, 1904-1910, they were six great years of soul saving. 100,000 souls were saved - he died after a few years of prayer. His heart being forced to the right side of his body. Realizing the earnestness of his praying - he urged public confession of sin.

Jonathan Edwards said, the out pouring of God's spirit never comes without an outpouring of the human spirit towards God.

A. C. Dixon said when we depend on prayer, we get what God can do.

Oswego, N. Y., in 1828 - out in the country 150 people confessed Christ. They joined a church. It was due because two elderly men who lived a mile apart walked to a wooded place - half way between their houses and prayed each day for a week.

James wrote the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

8- Eighth, by personal witnessing. Jesus said, come ye after me and I will make ye fishers of men. We read about Henry Ward Beecher, who was led to Christ by a man as black as midnight. But who was a genius in one thing - he knew God. He sought the salvation of other people.

In the last pages of an officer's diary it tells a story of an Army officer who had 30 days to live. He set out to find someone to show him the way to salvation. He visited four or five pulpits of different denominations. But this gave him no assistance to his soul. When there were only a few days left, and he was desperate, restless one night - he dressed and went down the street, into an old sexton's home. Who in the early morning, sat on the doorstep in Bible study. He had a Bible and it was worn and he clutched it in his hand. The Army officer reached out for it but the old man held it. Then he learned the purpose of the officer and he invited him to have a seat beside him. And in 10 minutes, he had shown him the way of salvation. He had brought him to points, where he could say with Paul, to die is gain. Commenting on this, a great preacher said, it would be better to be a sexton of a small church, and know how to point men to the lamb of God that taken away the sins of the world - than to be the most eloquent speaker in the world.

By living the Christ-like life - consecration is needed in soul. We have more to share today. We think of the statistics that prove to the world we have the best educated men in the world. But all of these things need consecration. God's power in this earth is highest in a dedicated human life.

Brainard, the missionary to the Indians said, do not think it enough to live at the rate of common Christians.

Judson said, let me beg you not to be content with common place religion.

Robert Spear wrote, after missionary work for 30 years, the greatest

missionary problem is just the failure of Christian people to live up to their profession.

A rabbi once wrote that Christians disgrace Christ by their poor living.

We need to sing "All Hail The Power of Jesus' Name" - not simply with our lips - but with life. For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of that great God, and our glorious Saviour - Jesus Christ. He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Titus 2:11.

We must all appear at the judgement seat of Christ and everyone must give an account according to what he hath done. Whether it be good or bad,, and knowing therefore the terror of the Lord - we persuade men.

This persuasion should be your persuasion this hour.