

The Bruised Reed by Richard Sibbes: Discussion Questions

Preferred version of the book:

Richard Sibbes, *The Bruised Reed* (Puritan Paperbacks), Banner of Truth, January 28, 2021, 160 Pages.

Introductory Questions:

Who was Richard Sibbes? When did he live? What denomination was he and what was the historical context?

What is a Puritan?

Chapter 1:

What is Sibbe's thesis verse for the book and where does the title for the book come from?

Who do those verses point to?

What are the two things these verses tell us about Christ and his office according to Sibbes?

How does the Trinity work together for our salvation? (2)

What does it mean for a believer or person to be a "bruised reed"? (3-4)

Chapter 2:

What is the bruised reed?

What are the good effects of "bruising" for the unbeliever and believer?

What does it mean for God to "bruise" us?

Why would God bruise us and why should we bruise ourselves? (12)

What is the danger of pressing the bruising too hard and for too long? (13)

Chapter 3:

What is a smoking flax? (17, 19)

How does Sibbes describe the sanctification process from babe to maturity? What can we learn from it and how can we be encouraged? (17-18)

Chapter 4:

What were some biblical examples of Jesus being patient with people?

How is God patient with us who are smoking flax?

How should we handle and minister to weak Christians according to Sibbes? (28)

Chapter 5:

According to Sibbes, how should we treat young believers or new believers? (29)

Sibbes says, "We must neither bind where God looseth, nor loose where God bindeth, nor open where God shutteth, nor shut where God openeth; the right use of the keys is always successful" (Page 31, paragraph 4). What does it mean to bind and looseth where God has neither bound or loosened? What is a modern example of this?

Why should we not "pry into the weaknesses of others" (Page 36, paragraph 2)?

Why should we "labor to see what they have for eternity"?

Chapter 6:

How is Moses compared to Christ? (40-41)

What is the covenant of works and the covenant of Grace? (40-41)

How does Sibbes describe natural man without Christ? (45)

How does Sibbes direct our desires? What is the difference between seeing God as the one who fixes the emergency versus the one loved for His excellency? (47)

Chapter 7:

According to Sibbes, how do our thoughts contribute to our sin? (51)

Page 51, paragraph 1. Sibbes responds to some ministers claiming that "ill thoughts arise from nature" and "what is natural is excusable." How does he handle this notion and what are some modern examples? (Some argue that same sex attraction is ok as long as one don't act on it. Would Jesus say the same thing? Cf. Mat. 5:27-28.

Sibbes talks about the process of sanctification and how we feel that we are getting worse or more sinful. Why might that not be the case according to Sibbes? (53)

Why should we minister and do good works despite the fact that we are sinful (or weak or not skilled)? (54-55)

Chapter 8:

Sibbes asks if we should perform Christian service (our duty) when our hearts are altogether averse to them. Which of his answers stood out to you? (59-60)

Sibbes encourages us through trials and suffering. What stuck out to you and encouraged you the most? (60-61)

Often our weakness prevents us from serving or acting. How does Sibbes encourage us in our weakness? (64-65)

Chapter 10:

Page 84, paragraph 1. What are Sibbes' opinions of the traditions of the Catholic Church and how do they play into the fact that he was a Protestant and a Puritan?

Chapter 11:

Sibbes speaks about the inner judgment of Christ on the Christian. What does he mean by that? (88-89)

According to Sibbes, how does the Spirit make us more holy? (88)

Page 91, paragraph 4, #4. How does Christ rule us?

Page 97. Is man morally neutral according to Sibbes before being converted? What is the devil's role in our sin before coming to faith?

Chapter 14:

Sibbes lays out some diagnostic questions for judging things. What are they and which one/s stuck out to you? (113-113)