

Be Still and Know That I Am God

by Richard E. Bieber

The sermon emphasizes the necessity of being still before God to find true effectiveness and peace in our lives and ministries.

Scripture: Philippians 3:7

Topics: "Spiritual Discipline", "Inner Quietness"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches on the importance of being still before God, drawing from examples of Jesus and Paul. He emphasizes the need to quiet our hearts and minds, seeking solitude and inner quietness before the Father to allow God's life to flow through us. By focusing on knowing Christ deeply and abiding in Him, we can bear fruit and experience true effectiveness in our lives. The sermon highlights the significance of daily discipline, instant repentance, facing problems with stillness, and reflecting on victories in silence before God.

Transcript

Be still and know that I am God.

I will be exalted among the heathen;

I will be exalted in the Earth. Psalm 46:10

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any of us are frustrated by a feeling that we just aren't accomplishing anything significant with our lives. We sense that something important is waiting to be done by us, that God has something really worthwhile for us to accomplish. But what is it? The days keep slipping by, and life remains as trivial as ever. We're busy, but with what? Our minds are racing all the time; even when we're trying to sleep we can't seem to quiet them down --- but to what end?

"Lord, I'm getting older. I know you've got something for me bigger than what I've done up to now, but when is it going to start? Where is the harvest you have for me to reap? Where is the significant job you have for me to do?"

Our frustration is aggravated by the message of the gospel of modern evangelicalism, which holds up before us as examples, the people who take their five talents and turn them into ten: big churches, big

missionary movements, big names. We look at them, and then we look at what we've done, and we feel useless.

To bring some clarity into this confusion, the one to whom we turn has to be Jesus. And when we look at Jesus, what do we see? We see 30 years spent in obscurity, then three and a half years of a low-key ministry. And even at Jesus' peak of popularity (and remember, that didn't last), even when the crowds were with him, there was no pressure, there was no haste, there was no frenzy, no rush.

With Jesus there were long periods of solitude, a deep inner quietness, before the Father. And it was out of this inner quietness before the Father, that life flowed from Heaven into this world. Jesus accomplished more in five minutes than the most famous evangelist could accomplish in a lifetime, because Jesus knew how to hold still before his Father. He knew how to be silent. He was poised, settled, centered, at rest in that inner Sabbath before the Father. And from that inner silence before the Father, came life. It rushed in from another world, and moved out of him, often so matter-of-factly that nobody even realized what was happening. He feeds 5,000 with five loaves and two fish, and it looks so natural, nobody realizes what's really going on. He puts his fingers on the eyes of a blind man, and when those eyes open they can see. And the source of all this is something beyond the visible.

Consider the apostle Paul. We all agree that Paul was the most fruitful of all the apostles. Paul was busy, he was moving around, he was working hard, he suffered much. But keep in mind that, from the moment Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus, the frenzy in his life was gone, that rush and haste was taken away. Notice how he began his life with God: three days of total darkness. He was blind; no food, no drink. His heart was becoming centered in God. Once Paul was centered in God, the Spirit came into him, and his life with God began. Somebody says, "Well, that's all very well, but you know that Paul was an organizer, he got things done, he was an expediter, he made things happen." Lots of people have been organizers, and expediters, and have made things happen, but not with the results of Paul. What we have to look for is the source of this effectiveness. What was the source?

But whatever gain I had, I count it as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord. For his sake, I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, that I may gain Christ and be found in him. Not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith, that I may know him in the power of his resurrection, in the fellowship of his sufferings, and become like him in his death, that if possible, I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Philippians 3:7

With Paul, it was not, "How much fruit am I bearing? How many churches have I started? Let me see: we got Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi. How many members do we have?" There was none of that! With Paul the question was, "Do I know Jesus? I've been following him for 30 years, but do I know him today? Not yesterday, not last week --- do I know him now, in the power of his resurrection, and in the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming like him in his death? If I know him this way, I will bear fruit. There's no way I can bear fruit if I'm not abiding in the vine."

Yes, we need action, lots of it. We need to get out there and pull down the strongholds of Satan. We have to walk the streets of our city and set the captives free. But before any of this can happen, we first have to learn to shut down the engines of our flesh, and become still. We have to learn to be silent in the presence of the living God.

When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. Revelations 8:1

Picture it: the final seal on the scroll that contains what is about to happen, as the world reaches the end of its era. The Lamb breaks the seal, and suddenly all the "Hallelujahs!", and all the "Praise God's", and all the "Holy, Holy, Holy" --- ends. No more singing! No more praises! Every angel and every saint, is on their face before that blazing light that comes from the throne.

And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord it is well that we are here. If you wish, I will make here three booths; one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, lo, a bright cloud overshadowed them and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased. Listen to him." When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were filled with awe. Matthew 17

Suddenly, nobody's talking anymore, not even Peter. These men are on their faces before the One whose face shines like the sun, whose raiment is white as the light. They are still.

Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the heathens, [by this man, Jeshua]. I will be exalted in the Earth [by your Messiah].

But the Lord is in his holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before him. Habakkuk 2:20

So stop trying to do something big for God. There will be fruit; mountains will move; chains will break; a harvest will come rolling in, when we learn to stop our mouths and our frenzied hearts, and worship in silence, the one whose face shines like the sun, and whose raiment is white as the light.

This is my beloved son. Listen to him.

Forget about Moses, forget about Elijah, forget about everybody else. Look at him.

Be still and know that I am God.

I will be exalted among the heathens.

I will be exalted in the Earth.

I will be exalted in the city where you live, through him.

It comes down to some things that we know already, but we have to remind ourselves of again.

We need,

first of all, to become still before God in daily discipline.

Now when the sun was setting, all of those who had ones that were sick with various diseases, brought them to him, and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them. And demons also came out of many, saying, "You are the son of God." But he rebuked them, and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ. When it was day, he departed and went into a lonely place. Luke 4:40

When it was day, he departed and went into a lonely place; he got alone with the Father. Why did he do that? Because he knew, that this was essential for his work. Notice how Jesus, God the Son in human

flesh, starts his day. He doesn't jog five miles, he doesn't do a hundred push-ups, he doesn't get into his "snap, crackle, pop" he gets quiet before the Father.

Now if Jesus, God the Son, found this necessary, how in the world are we going to maintain any vision of God, any sense of God's kingdom, any knowledge of his reality, without it? You ask what's happened to your faith. Where did your vision go? It was driven out by all that busyness, all the distraction. Of course our minds are going to be confused, and our hearts are going to be full of conflict, until we see that this discipline is absolutely essential for us.

Someone says, "Oh yeah, but I tried that, fifteen or twenty times in my lifetime tried to get a disciplined daily prayer time alone with God. I'd go for about two weeks --- once I made it almost six months --- and then it would peter out again." I don't care if you tried a thousand times, there is no way we can survive with any sense of the Kingdom without this discipline. This is not a luxury; this is essential --- for everybody! Not just for St. Francis of Assisi, for every one of us!

Maybe one time you thought you could go without sleep - so you made it for seven days. Then you collapsed. Physically, you couldn't survive. Of course we can still survive physically without prayer, but spiritually we can't. We fall on our faces.

So start again - take time alone with God. Go into a room, shut the door, some simple scripture, a few verses of Luke or a psalm, and then listen before you do any praying. Be quiet before God.

We need to become still before God, with instant repentance.

And after an interval of about an hour, still another insisted saying, "Certainly this man also was with him for he is a Galilean." Peter said, "Man, I don't know what you're saying." And immediately while he was still speaking, the cock crowed and the Lord turned and looked at Peter, and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the cock crows today you will deny me three times." And he went out, and wept bitterly. Luke 22:59

Peter could have shrugged off the whole thing and said, "Why shouldn't I deny him? He let me down. He told me he was the Messiah. He built up my expectations. I threw my whole life into this thing, and what happened? When they started coming for him, he turned himself over to them like a little lamb."

The instant Peter comes to his senses, with the crowing of the cock and that look from Jesus, he repents. He goes out and weeps before God, and in that weeping finds his center again, becomes still, and in that stillness comes his peace. Once the Lord has touched our hearts, and shown us something that needs to change, the longer we try to defend ourselves, and justify what we're doing the more turmoil we create. The instant we repent, and become still, we have peace.

We have to learn to become still before God in the face of problems that face us, that cause us to be afraid, fill us with anxiety, depress us, make us angry. Our temptation is either to turn around and run away or to take things into our own hands and solve things "our way." What we need to do, is become still before God.

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go yonder and pray. And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch with me. And going a little farther, he fell on his face and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass

from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Matthew 26:36

We can't begin to imagine the pressure, the weight, that was bearing down on the heart of the Son of God at that point; the weight of all human sin pressing down on his heart. Jesus doesn't try and carry it himself. He has Peter, James and John to help out. But they cannot handle it. Then he brings it to the Father. "Father, if there is some way, take this thing away from me. Nevertheless, not what I will." And the Father answers him.

Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among heathen [through you]. I will be exalted in the Earth [through your obedience].

And the Master comes to rest, gets up from his knees, marches to the cross, and wins the victory. We need to do the same.

Finally, we need to become still before God in the wake of our greatest victories and successes.

Jesus fed 5000 with five loaves and two fish, and when he had finished....

He made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up into the hills by himself to pray.

Matthew 14:22

It was a great victory. People were impressed. He had fed a multitude with just a handful of food. They want to make him a king. The logical response (which tempts us all) is to keep the momentum going, build up a mailing list, get their names, put them on the books. Jesus sends them away, and goes up into the hills to pray. Because for Jesus --- and for us --- the most critical moments of our lives are those moments of victory and success.

The most dangerous moments for our spiritual lives are those periods immediately after success, because this is the time when we're inclined to be deluded by our own pride, to be caught up in our vanity. It is essential, after the success, to do exactly what Jesus did - get apart and become still before the Father. Wait there until we get our balance again. We will begin to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil just like Adam and Eve, if we don't do that.

All of us want to bear more fruit. We want to be more effective, but effectiveness does not lie where we so often think it does. It does not lie in front of the public eye. It lies behind the veil.

Be still and know that I am God.

I will be exalted among the heathen.

I will be exalted in the Earth.

I will vindicate my name and I will fulfill my purpose through you, when you learn to be still before me.

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