

Build Thou the Walls of Jerusalem

by Richard E. Bieber

To build the walls of Jerusalem, we must present the sacrifice of a broken spirit to God, admitting the truth about ourselves and looking at His mercy through His Son.

Scripture: Psalm 51:17, Matthew 5:3, Luke 17:10, Romans 3:23, Romans 12:4, 1 Corinthians 12:12, Ephesians 4:15, Ephesians 4:29, Colossians 2:19

Topics: "Body Ministry", "Unity In Spirit"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches on the importance of believers functioning in harmony and unity as a body ministry under the direction of God, emphasizing the need for a broken spirit as the sacrifice that God requires to build a unified and loving community. He contrasts the false way of the cult, which promotes uniformity and self-made structures, with the true way of the Spirit, where God forms believers into a living, working body. A broken spirit involves humility, mercy, acknowledging God's righteousness, and being slow to speak while listening much, ultimately leading to a deep reliance on God's mercy and a transformation of the heart.

Transcript

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit:

A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion:

Build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Psalm 51

Most believers are in agreement that the redemptive work which is to be accomplished on the earth at this hour is not going to be done by Christian celebrities, dynamic individuals, one-man shows. It will be accomplished by what is commonly called a body ministry, brothers and sisters who fit in with each other, just as the organs of our bodies fit in and work in harmony. In a gathering of saints who are truly growing up together under the headship of Christ and are truly submitting to each other in the fear of God, serving each other, bound together in cords of love, each esteeming the other better than himself or herself, there you will have the miraculous. And the miraculous from their midst will spill out and touch and bless the world around them.

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and up-builds itself in love.

Ephesians 4:15-16

If the city where we live is to hear a gospel that is confirmed with signs following,

If people are to see God's kingdom, undistorted,

What is needed is not some well-known evangelist drawing in the crowds.

What is needed are believers who function in harmony,

Believers who fit in with each other under the direction of God,

Disciples who are growing up into the nature of their head, who is Jesus himself.

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We all long to see our fellowships become strong,

Christ-like,

freely-functioning,

self-giving,

love-driven,

merciful,

forgiving,

God-glorifying,

ever worshipping manifestations of the Body of Christ. We know that that's what we need to be. But the question is: How do we get there? How do we become the church that the Spirit describes through the writings of Paul in 12 Romans, or 1 Corinthians 12, or Ephesians 4 and 5? And this question is being asked everywhere on earth at this hour because believers who have any sense of God know that apart from that kind of body ministry we're not going to be able to do the job; we are salt without savor.

Two roads open before us as we seek to arrive at a valid body ministry. One of these roads is false. It is the way of the cult. We form in our minds what we think a body ministry ought to be and then, while using all the proper spiritual jargon and all the proper forms of prayer, we create something out of our own flesh.

There are some extremely successful samples of this emerging across the country. But beneath the surface is another modern cult. Beware when the mark of a community of believers is not unity but uniformity.

-same language style,

- same facial expressions,
- same hand motions,
- same worship,
- same vocabulary.

If you don't fit the pattern you will be left out. If you don't conform, you're ignored. The group develops a personality of its own. If you're not of that type you don't get in or you don't stay in. And watch what happens to this community as the years go on. Watch how it relates to the community around it--the people in real need. See what it does for the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind, if it does anything beyond use them for its own ends.

The other road toward a body ministry is what we could call the way of the Spirit, which begins with the acknowledgment that we can no more make ourselves fit together and function harmoniously than we can make our stomach, heart, and liver become a body. This is something which must be done by God. All through scripture we hear this:

On this rock will I build my church.

Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.

Build thou the walls of Jerusalem....

Holding fast to the Head, says Paul in Colossians 2, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.

It is presumptuous for us to think that we could take a group as diverse as we are and form it into something harmonious. Only the God who brought us together is able to form us into a living, working body. He will do that if we will let Him. And to let God form us into such a body there is only one thing that we can offer to God. The one thing that we have to bring to God if He's going to form us into a living, functioning, unified body, is a broken spirit.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit,

a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion;

build thou the walls of Jerusalem....

God will build us together,

make us one,

show us what we need to know,

if we will give to Him the sacrifice of a broken spirit.

If you will give to God the sacrifice of a broken spirit,

- God will fit you in exactly where He wants you.
- He will give you exactly the gift you need.
- He will teach you what you need to know.

On the other hand, if you refuse to give to God a broken spirit, then though you distribute all you have to feed the poor, and though you give your body to be burned, it profits you nothing and it profits the Body nothing.

A broken spirit--the same thing our Lord talks about when He opens the Sermon on the Mount--

Blessed are the poor in spirit...

When God has that in His hand He can build the walls of Jerusalem.

What does it mean to be poor in spirit? Consider first what it doesn't mean.

I. A broken spirit is not a depressed spirit.

Many of us are depressed but we're anything but poor in spirit. In fact, if we were poor in spirit we wouldn't be depressed. Depression, except for physical causes, is the sign of a hurt,

disappointed,

angry,

self-pitying ego. And if you take that depressed spirit and start scraping off the first five layers, you will find underneath a raging volcano of anger. And until that anger is drained off into the Cross the depression will be there. "I don't want to live any more - Can't face another day... I'm not up to making any decisions ...I don't want to talk to people... Life is so hard." And it will go on like this until my spirit is broken.

2. A broken spirit is not a gullible spirit.

A lot of us are gullible, but we're not broken. We swallow every tall tale and every ridiculous exaggeration, we submit to every spiritual authority that throws out its chest, and think this means that we're child-like and humble. The Corinthians and the Galatians were gullible but they were not broken. If they had been broken they would not have been pushed around by the legalists who crept in.

3. A broken spirit is not a stagnant spirit.

Many of us think that because we're stagnant that must mean we're broken. We sit down at the bottom of our favorite little spiritual rut and mark time. We take great pride in the fact that we're not ambitious like those worldly people, and we're not aggressive like those go-getters over there. But neither are we broken. We haven't heard a new thing from God in two years. We read all kinds of books but the only things we take in are the things that fit in with our own opinions. Nor will we learn until we're broken.

Then, what is a broken spirit? What is this thing which God is looking for as He desires to use us and build us into the walls of Jerusalem - the living Body of Christ?

1. A broken spirit is a spirit which has crumbled down from the heights of pride to the lowly way of mercy.

Broken down from pride to humility to mercy.

Here's a man or a woman who for years was very sure of himself. He had the answers; he had insights to the scriptures; he could smell a hypocrite a mile away, and he was extremely impatient with all the slobs around him. Then one day, in His mercy, God brings that man down from those heights. The light comes on, and he begins to see himself as he really is. And it makes him sick. From that day he has a tender, merciful, patient attitude to all these bungling souls around him, because he knows he's having the same struggles. Now God can begin to use him.

- This is what happened to Moses.

- This is what happened to the apostle Paul.

- It happened to King David.

This is what happened to Jacob that night he wrestled with the angel. From that night on he was no longer the cock-sure schemer he was before. He limped through life, but now God could use him. O, may God show us how desperately we need to be broken. To come down from those heights of pride to the place where we realize that the one thing above all things we need is God's mercy. And the only thing we have to offer anybody else is that mercy.

2. A broken spirit is a spirit that has come to the place where it realizes that only God is right.

As long as I'm trying to still convince myself that I may possibly be right, as over against my brother over here who's probably wrong, I'm not broken. I'm not broken until I give up this hobby of trying to prove my rightness as over against other people's wrongness. Only God is right. The only one who is right is the God who empties Himself of His glory, lays down His life on the cross for our sins.

Let God be true but every man a liar.

Finally, a broken spirit is a spirit that listens much and talks little.

And when it talks it points to the God who, by the way, also listens much and talks little.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am meek and lowly of heart

and you shall find rest for your souls.

"I'm broken. I listen to my Father. I listen to the cries of those around me. And I speak only when my Father gives me something to say."

Now there are some of us, of course, who never say very much with our mouths but in their hearts were never quiet. Anger, rage, a critical attitude. Rarely expressed through the lips, but it's there. And for us to speak little and listen much, the raging heart has to become quiet too.

Does it take some kind of tragedy to bring us to the place of brokenness? There are those who have gone through tragedy after tragedy and they're still not broken. Yet every one of us can present to God, beginning this hour the sacrifice of a broken spirit, if we will do two things:

1. If we willing in to admit the truth about ourselves.

This may take the rest of our lives. Are we willing to begin to admit the truth about ourselves? The truth that there is no worthiness in us before God. Secretly, in our hearts we take pride in the fact that we have some integrity. We're not like those hypocrites. We're one of the few Christians left that God can see something in that's worthy of His favor. Lies. How can the merciful God manifest His mercy to us if we think we're already "together", in need of nothing?

"When you have done everything that has been commanded of you, say, 'We are unworthy servants and we have only done what is our duty.'"

Our need, right now, is mercy and nothing else. We deserve nothing. We merit nothing. The only thing we are able to receive from God is His mercy. What a difference this makes in our attitude toward each other and toward all men and above all toward God.

The second thing we need to do if we want to present to God the sacrifice of a broken spirit is get our eyes on that mercy.

Look at the mercy of God that is being showered down upon you this day. Again this may be something that takes the rest of our lives to fulfill. But we can begin today by looking at that cross.

How was it that you found your way back out of the darkness that you penetrated so deeply? What was it that brought you back but mercy? What was it that brought us through all these trials that we've been through but mercy? What do you see when you look at that cross and the Lamb of God laying down His life? How can we look at that and not be broken?

The men and women and young people whose lives are filled with the vitality of the Holy Spirit and who are bearing fruit, and who are learning to function in harmony with each other, are those people who inwardly in their hearts have become broken.

- They have come down from the high places of pride to the low paths of mercy.
- They are no longer trying to prove that they are right because they know that only God is right.
- And they listen.

May God help us to begin today to admit the truth about ourselves and to begin today to look at the mercy He shows us through His Son,

- that we may present to Him the sacrifice of a broken spirit,
- that He might take that sacrifice into His hand and build it into the walls of the New Jerusalem.

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