

By His Mercy

by Richard E. Bieber

The sermon emphasizes the importance of radical faith, the dangers of judging others, and the need to cultivate the mind of Christ.

Scripture: Matthew 7:1, Luke 6:37, John 5:16, Romans 2:1, Philippians 2:5

Topics: "Radical Faith", "Mercy And Judgment"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches on the importance of radical faith and commitment to Jesus Christ, emphasizing that lukewarm Christianity is insufficient. He warns that even in radical discipleship, Satan will bring bigger challenges and temptations. Bieber highlights the shift in tactics by the Evil One to condemn and create division among believers, urging the congregation to refrain from judging others and instead focus on intercession and mercy, following the example of Jesus.

Transcript

Read: Luke 6:37

There is no question that the call at this hour is for radical faith in Jesus Christ. Radical commitment. Lukewarm Christianity just won't make it. But don't think when we've answered this call to radical faith, when we start catching on to what it means to forsake all and follow Him, that now we've got it made.

Don't ever think that radical discipleship puts us beyond the range of Satan's guns. It doesn't - he just brings out bigger guns. We'll be tempted to say to ourselves,

"Man! Now we're rolling...

- we have life!

- we have power!

- we've got the apostolic faith!

- we're on the real Jerusalem Road!"

We look down in the ditch and see all those lukewarm Christians fast asleep and every once-in-a-while we toss a bomb down there just to wake them up (those hypocrites!). But we don't go too far before we run into trouble right up here on the "Jerusalem Highway".

Our little band of supersaints begins to experience tensions and conflicts we never knew about when we were lukewarm, or when we were asleep with the rest of the world. As we trudge on, our joy seems to diminish and we start feeling tired. Everything becomes an effort.

What has happened is that the Evil One who used to rock our cradle to keep us asleep has changed his tactics. Now that we're awake and intent on following Jesus all the way, Satan has switched from being our babysitter to being our slave driver. Instead of whispering,

"Go back to sleep, go back to sleep", he starts cracking the whip.

"You're not doing enough!

You're not doing enough!"

Now if Satan lifted up Jesus before our eyes and kept reminding us of the truth that is in Jesus and said, "You're not doing enough!", he would be helping us.

He's too clever to urge us on in the footsteps of Jesus. Satan substitutes, in Jesus' place, a Christian ideology and says, "Live up to that, you punk!". Next thing you know...

- we're trying to live up to a set of rules,
- we're worshipping a system of Christian ideas,
- we're measuring ourselves and everybody else against certain standards we think must be adhered to.

But the real, living, glorious Jesus, who died on that cross and rose from the dead, is nowhere in sight.

The joy, and praise, and thanksgiving that ruled our hearts when we first experienced the forgiveness of our sins through the blood of Jesus is gone, in its place is condemnation. The only relief we get from this condemnation is to look around at other people and get up-tight with them and judge them. Every time we see a brother with a speck in his eye we go after that speck.

"Hold still, brother! That speck has to come out."

In the secrecy of our hearts we're slaves of condemnation. And in our daily life we're speck hunters. We call it "discernment". We think of ourselves as watchmen looking out for the purity of the faith ... guarding the body against infection. But all we are is speck hunters, using other people's business as an escape from the condemnation that's eating at our own souls.

And every time we dig at that speck in our brother's eye, we increase condemnation in ourselves ... and put our brother under condemnation too. Pretty soon the whole fellowship becomes;

nervous,

tense,

defensive,

jumpy.

If there is any lesson of Jesus that needs to be learned by the saints who have found the road of radical faith, it's judge not. I say we need to learn it, not teach it - learn it! Each one of us stands convicted - no exceptions.

We've been in the habit of saying to the other person,

"Wait a minute! Wait a minute! Judge not! Remember judge not!"...

while we go right on judging. To come back into the liberty that is meant to be the portion of the saints of God who are walking that Jerusalem Road... to have peace in our hearts and unity with each other, each of us has to start with himself and learn the lesson: judge not.

Some things to keep in mind:

1. Whenever you get the feeling that certain brothers and sisters have been judging you and you're up-tight about it, think for a minute - what have you been doing? Why, you've been judging a few people yourself!

And the measure you give will be the measure you get.

If you judge, you will be judged.

If you want those people off your back don't go over and preach to them "judge not", preach it to yourself. Get off those backs you've been on. You stop judging. And soon in a mysterious way, the pressure of judgment on your life will lift.

2. When there's something in the other person you can't stand, it's a sure sign of unfinished business in that area of your life.

You can't stand people who want to dominate.

Do you have a secret desire to dominate?

You despise other people's laziness.

Have you really taken care of that lazy streak nobody knows about but your wife?

You can spot a hypocrite a mile away.

Probably because you're on the same wave length.

Therefore you are without excuse O man, whoever you are, when you judge another; for in passing judgment upon him you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same things. Romans 2:1

3. God accepted you as you are. How can you not accept your brother as he is? Not one of us was a prize package for the Lord when He took us into His Kingdom... and not one of us is a prize package now.

He took that mess which was us and washed us in the blood of His Son, and clothed us in a new robe, and filled us with a new spirit. But, take that blood and that robe and that spirit away from us - and what are we? The same mess we always were.

Jesus didn't say to us,

"I'll let you come to me when you get rid of those bad habits".

He said,

"Come the way you are. Come to me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Come with your problems. Come with that burden of guilt. And I will put within you the power to be sons of God".

Now if that's how Jesus treated us, how can we be any less gracious with brothers and sisters?

4. If God shows you a flaw in your brother's life, that revelation is a call to intercession...

- not to be Mr. Fixit,

- or Mrs. Gossip,

but to get down on your face before God like Moses pleading for Israel to lift that person up before the Throne.

If anyone sees his brother committing what is not a mortal sin, he will ask, and God will give him life for those whose sin is not mortal. I John 5:16

"Did you hear about Bill? Pray for him, he's going through changes." Then we spend an hour taking him apart and three minutes praying for him. It's best not to discuss the person at all - just pray.

5. If God took the log out of you, He can sure take the splinter out of your brother. When we believe that, and remember that, we see fantastic blessings come showering down upon the whole Body.

When the Philippian jailer cried out to Paul and Silas, "What must I do to be saved?", they didn't say, "It's going to be hard, because your life is a mess". They never forgot what Jesus had done for them. So it was easy for them to expect miracles for others.

"Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. You and your household."

And it was done.

Finally, to be delivered from a judging critical spirit, cultivate the mind of Christ.

Have this mind among yourselves which you have in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant. Philippians 2:5-7a

All through His ministry,

- He despised nobody,

- He rejected nobody,

- He never broke the bruised reed, never quenched the smoking flax, never drove one soul to despair,

- He held out hope to anyone who sought it.

Now, risen from the dead and exalted to the brightest Heaven, Jesus has not changed. His mind is the same.

And we can have His mind as we move around in this world.

- We can see people the way He sees them.
- We can think of them the way He thinks of them.
- We can treat them the way He treats them.
- Speak as He speaks.

Can you imagine Jesus saying the things that we say about each other?

Can you imagine Jesus looking at people with those eyes of disgust we use so often?

God help us, before we leave this place today,

- to exchange the attitudes we have toward each other and toward others for the mind of His Son,
- to make that exchange again tomorrow when we get up, and every day until the mind of Christ becomes our real mind, and this mind of flesh and its critical spirit has ceased to exist.

Every day we live, we live by God's mercy. We're here now by God's mercy. If we would begin from this day to show to our brother one millionth the mercy God has shown us, we would never judge our brother again as long as we live.

The work that lies before us is far too important for us to let ourselves get bogged down in measuring one another's holiness or integrity.

- God will show us what to do about the false prophets as they come, and give us authority over demons as they appear.
- God will show us when to exhort and rebuke.

Meanwhile, let's repent of our own sins, pray for our brother's sins, and get on with the work God has given us to do.

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