

Concerning the End Part Two

by Richard E. Bieber

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a life that bears the marks of God, showing mercy and doing something for the lives around us that are hurting, in order to be faithful to God and avoid the final judgment.

Scripture: Isaiah 58:10, Matthew 25:1-31, 1 Corinthians 3:12

Topics: "Faithful Obedience", "Eternal Life"

Description

Richard E. Bieber delivers a sermon based on the parables in Matthew 25, emphasizing the importance of faithful obedience to God's commands and grace. The sermon tells the story of a man who was adopted by the King but neglected his obligations, leading to his eventual downfall. It highlights the significance of endurance, bearing fruit for the Kingdom, and showing mercy to those in need as essential aspects of a believer's life. The parables stress that eternal life belongs to those who faithfully follow God's instructions and live lives marked by His mercy and compassion.

Transcript

Read Matthew 25

In a far-away country, there lived a man who went to work every day, rented a modest house, took care of his family, and was in every way so ordinary he was hardly noticed, until one day the boss came to him with his paycheck, told him to go punch out and never come back.

- The shop steward wouldn't even talk to the man.
- The grievance committee refused to hear his complaint.

The man started looking for a new job, and wherever he went, as soon as he passed in the application with his name and address, a strange look came over people's faces - their heads shook.

"Am I losing my mind, or is there indeed a conspiracy against me?"

Deep within, this man knew exactly what was happening.

Long ago, the man had changed his name to conceal the fact that he was the son of a hated national traitor. Somehow the word leaked out and now he was feeling the rage of people who had been in concentration camps and suffered indescribable miseries at his father's hands.

Soon his money was gone. He managed somehow to scrape up enough to feed his family and buy them a few clothes, but there never seemed to be any left to pay the rent. He got a month behind ... two months ... three. Eviction notices began to come.

Every day when the man came home from his attempts to find work, he expected to see his furniture out on the street, and his wife and children standing there weeping.

But somehow, each evening, the house was still in tact, there was food on the table, and a family meal.

The rent notices kept coming. By now there was at least a dozen on the table, along with warnings that he and his family will be evicted unless this obligation is promptly met.

One evening there was a knock on the door. Who should it be but the King of that land. "I have heard of your plight", said the King, "and I can see that all the hatred the citizens of my country bear against your dead father is being unleashed on you. So, I have come to adopt you as my son. Henceforth, you will bear my name. Tomorrow you will begin working in the offices of the Royal Industries.

But, there is one thing that I will expect of you. You will pay all your debts before I come to visit you again. You will have sufficient income and enough time.

But, if you fail to pay these debts, now that you are able, I will disown you as a son, and you will be evicted, not only from this house, but from this country."

How grateful the man was! He wept with thanksgiving long after the King left. The next day he began his new job. Everything was so much better than any job he had ever had, especially the pay.

Soon, the man was buying cars, furniture, beautiful clothes for his wife and family. There were trips into the country on week ends wonderful meals. But, for some strange reason, the man kept neglecting his rent.

He made no attempt to catch up on what was behind, or even meet the current payments.

"After all", he said to himself, "I got by this long and no one ever threw us out. Why should I strain myself now that I'm the King's son?"

Months went by. The man and his family were enjoying the new heredity the King had given them.

- People didn't turn away their faces any more.
- Shop clerks treated them with respect.
- Engineers and secretaries at the offices of the Royal Industries were forever smiling.

Still, he allowed his rent payments to slip. Warnings of eviction kept coming and were promptly torn to shreds and dropped in the waste basket.

One evening as the man drove home from work, he turned the corner and saw his furniture piled on the sidewalk. He jumped from his beautiful car in a rage, bounded the front steps ready to hit someone, and was met by the King.

"I gave you a new heredity. I gave you every chance.

I warned you in a thousand ways. You would not listen.

Now there is nothing more that I can do for you. Your time of grace is up. You will be deported this evening to another world and you will never see this kingdom again."

Each of the three parables in Matthew 25 revolves around a moment of reckoning for people who had been given a break by God, who had received grace but who were negligent in their obedience to that grace in some area which they considered unimportant.

"Rent payments! Why should I worry about rent payments when I've been adopted by the King?"

But the King had explicitly commanded that those obligations be met.

The point our Lord makes so clearly in the three parables of Matthew 25 is that eternal life belongs to those recipients of grace who are faithful to God in the things God says are important.

We may consider it unimportant to take oil in our vessels with our lamps, or to make gains for God's Kingdom with what God has given us, or to show simple mercy to people in need. But if we become slovenly in these areas, we will one day lose every breath of divine grace we have ever known.

The virgins in the first parable were all believers.

- All ten had been called to the Marriage of the Lamb.
- All ten had lamps of faith.
- All ten, praise God, were Adventists. They were looking eagerly for the coming of the Bridegroom.
- They had learned the lessons of Matthew 24.
- They knew Jesus was coming soon.

Where did they get all this knowledge? From God!

- God had shown it to them.
- God had given them a glorious hope of the Kingdom.

But, with such a gift comes a requirement. God expects them to endure with this knowledge, to keep right on shining no matter how long or how dark the night gets.

Yet, half these virgins substituted extreme Adventism for solid obedient endurance. They didn't bother to take oil in their vessels with their lamps, because they just knew that Jesus would be coming back "within five years."

The night dragged on ... still no bridegroom. They took a little nap ... still no bridegroom. When the cry was raised, "Behold, the Bridegroom is coming", they looked at their lamps and saw them flickering out. What they had been looking forward to as a day of joy became a day of reckoning, because they underestimated the importance of endurance. Endurance is not a minor thing - it is central. We have to keep going in season and out-of-season.

When we begin to set dates, or to borrow against ten years from now figuring Jesus will surely be back by then, it's a sign that we are trifling with the Master's command to endure. He didn't tell us when He's coming. He only told us to keep our relationship with Him alive, clear, strong, bright, every day until He comes.

In the parable of the talents, the master going away on a journey gives each of his servants money. The servants are expected to do something with this money.

For a long time these men are perfectly free. Nobody harangues them.

Nobody punishes the man who digs a hole and buries his master's money.

But there comes a time of reckoning. "What did you do with the money I gave you?" And the servant who got nothing done with it is cast out.

Many of us still seem to think that if we go to fellowship, and say our prayers, and abstain from adultery, we're in good shape.

"But what did you do with the grace that I gave you?

Did you wrap yourself up in a spiritual cocoon?

Did you retreat into a tower of self-righteousness?

Did you build a kingdom of your own?

or, did you go out there and gain for My Kingdom?"

We like to quote Paul's words in I Corinthians 3:

"If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved."

This refers to people who at least worked, people who at least built on the foundation which is Jesus Christ.

But to the people who did not work, who built nothing on the foundation, who have nothing to show for a lifetime supposedly lived under God's grace, Jesus warns only of the outer darkness.

Maybe you don't consider it important to bear fruit for the Kingdom, but God does.

- If coming to Bible studies isn't sharpening you for fruitful work,
- if gathering with brothers and sisters to worship God on Sundays isn't causing your daily life to be more fruitful and effective in the knowledge of Jesus Christ,
- if some genuine service to the living God is not resulting from all this,

then, my Friend, you're wasting your time to come together with other believers. Stay home and watch "Cathedral of Next Week".

The final parable of Matthew 25:

By the time the Son of Man has arrived in glory and is seated on His throne, the nations, down to the last individual, will have been given the gospel.

All nations will have clearly been offered the mercy of God in Jesus Christ.

And the question will be:

Not - "Did they join a church?"

"Did they get saved and baptized?"

"Did they get filled with the Holy Ghost?"

but - "Did they live lives that bear the marks of God?"

"Did they show mercy?"

"Come O blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundations of the world.
For I was hungry and you gave me food,

I was thirsty and you gave me drink,

I was a stranger and you welcomed me,

I was naked and you clothed me, Sick and you visited me,

I was in prison and you came to me.

Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for, I was hungry
and you gave me no food,

I was thirsty and you gave me no drink,

I was a stranger and you did not welcome me,

Naked and you did not clothe me,

Sick and in prison and you did not visit me.

Inasmuch as you did it or didn't do it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it or didn't do it to me."

May it be that we are part of the army being raised by God right now to take the gospel out to the nations. But that doesn't get us off the hook. Did the grace of God have its way with you in terms of simple mercy to people in need? Not just Christians in need, or Jews in need. Anybody in need!

There isn't a person in need anywhere on this planet that Jesus doesn't call His brother. To be a brother of the Son of God, you have to be born of God. But to be a brother of the Son of Man, you only have to be a human.

If Jesus cares about the sick and the afflicted, and the poor and the oppressed,

- How come His followers are so blind to all this?
- How come you have to be middle class to get into the "Jesus Movement"?
- How come we're so cautious about getting near the ugly side of town?

We're going to have to answer for this. And when we try to say, "But Lord, I didn't realize it was that important", He will answer, "Of course you did".

"I didn't realize it was important to have blacks in our church,
Chicanos in our church, Indians in our church".

"Whose church?"

Don't think that just because you have the gospel, and because you have tasted the powers of the world to come, that you are set for eternity.

Jesus tells us in Matthew 25 that many who have received grace will be cast into the outer darkness, because they were not faithful to that grace. They were satisfied with what they were doing, but God was not.

Is God satisfied with what we're doing? Or, is there some area which we have been treating as unimportant, which is very important to Him?

Do we have oil in our vessels with our lamps?

Are we gaining for the Kingdom - getting something done, not for ourselves but for God's Kingdom?

And, above all, are we doing something for the lives all around us that are hurting, or are we walking past them with our eyes shut?

When the Spirit tells us that Jesus is coming soon, this is both a message of great hope and a warning.

God help us to receive the warning as well as the hope, and to do something about it.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/richard-e-bieber/concerning-the-end-part-two/>

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