

Condemnation, False Peace, and the Call of Christ

by Richard E. Bieber

The sermon emphasizes the importance of breaking free from Condemnation and False Peace to follow Jesus and experience the Banquet of love.

Scripture: Romans 8:1

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Christian Obedience"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches about the two lying spirits that follow believers - Condemnation and False Peace - seeking to rob them of experiencing God's love daily. Condemnation attacks with feelings of unworthiness and failure, while False Peace lulls believers into complacency and self-sufficiency. Jesus, in His love, offers freedom from condemnation and calls believers to radical obedience and surrender, warning against being entangled in worldly cares and false peace, urging them to follow Him wholeheartedly to partake in the banquet of God's love.

Transcript

"For God sent His Son into the world not to condemn the world but that the world might be saved through Him." John 3:17 There are two lying spirits that follow in the shadows behind every child of God who makes his way through this world. If we could see them, these spirits would appear as different from each other as day from night. But they have the same master and they work for the same goal. Both of these lying spirits seek to rob God's children of that daily constant experience of God's love that they are meant to have.

Without the consciousness that God's love is right there and without the joy it brings, - we have no strength, - we can't live the life, - we stumble, - we suffer defeat after defeat, or else we live up there on Cloud 9 completely out-of-touch with reality - useless to God and man. The name of the first of these lying spirits is Condemnation. The name of the second is False Peace. These two spirits work together as two hands on the same body. They watch the believer's mind 24 hours a day.

The minute the victim becomes slightly dejected Condemnation winks at his partner and moves up beside the dejected soul. "How's it going friend?" "Bogue man, bogue! Don't know why I can't walk this road like other believers can." "Did it ever occur to you", says Condemnation "that perhaps you're just not the type to get into all this spiritual stuff? Some people, you know, just don't have the temperament or the will

power." "Man, you must be reading my mind! I was just wondering about that!

Maybe I've been trying to live a life I could never live in a million years." "Maybe." says Condemnation, "Tell me about your past." "You would bring that up! To tell you the truth, from the day I was born right down to this minute, it's been nothing but failures and mistakes." "Failures and mistakes, eh? Do you want do know why?" "Why?", says the victim. Now Condemnation, takes off the kid gloves and moves in for the kill. "Because you're no good; you've never been any good; and you never will be.

You're a mess and you always will be!" "You're right, man, you're right. Hit the nail on the head. Why should I deny it. I'm no good and I might as well give up." With this the condemned soul turns aside from the road of Faith and returns to his old bondage. But who condemned him? He was condemned, not by the truth, not by the light of the living God, but by a lying spirit. When you feel condemned you can be sure that this condemnation is not coming from God. It is coming from a lying spirit.

And if you will but call on the name of the Son of God and cover yourself with the blood, Condemnation will evaporate. He'll run back into the shadows from hence he came. "Woman, where are your accusers? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, Lord." "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more." There is, therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. At other times as Condemnation and False Peace trail in the shadows behind the saints they see the mind of the believer starting to lift and float free from the ground of reality.

The believer is elated. Things have been going rather well. So False Peace gives his partner a punch on the arm and dances up alongside the elated saint. "Well, I see you've learned the secret of Christian success." "Really?", says the victim. "I didn't know I was doing that well. But I must admit that things have been mellow." "And why shouldn't they be?", says False Peace. "Doesn't St. John say he wants you to prosper and be in health? I'm glad you're not like so many of those gloom and doom believers." "But I suppose", answers the victim, "that one day there will be persecution too." "Careful, careful!

You'll ruin everything if you start thinking those negative thoughts. Think positive!", says False Peace. "Man, you're a pleasant companion to have on this road. I feel so relaxed when you're around I use to be a bit uncomfortable about my ease and success when I look at those saints over there pouring their hearts out and spending themselves. You've been a real comfort. Will you stay with me?" "Of course", answers False Peace as he winks to his companion back in the shadows.

"For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing; not knowing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind and naked. Therefore I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, (by paying the price of obedience) that you may be rich. And white garments to clothe you and to keep the shame of your nakedness from being seen, and salve to anoint your eyes that you may see." When Jesus visited the people of Israel with the gospel of the kingdom almost every soul he met was either living in a state of condemnation or in a state of false peace.

Jesus was able to help those people who were suffering from condemnation. He opened their blind eye's. He healed their broken hearts. He forgave their sin --- took away their guilt. "The kingdom of God is here and it's a banquet of love. Come, the Door is open." Everywhere Jesus went they brought the sick and laid them at His feet. People with tormented spirits pressed toward Him in the crowds; because they knew; - this man would not condemn them, - this man wasn't going to push them aside, - this man would give them life.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind. To set at liberty those who are oppressed." Everywhere Jesus went those condemned people came away singing and Praising God. They never saw such wonderful things as Jesus was revealing to them. But with the victims of false peace it was a different story. They were so sure they had the love of God, so certain that they were already in possession of all the blessings, that when Jesus came inviting them to draw near to Him and really taste God's love they turned their backs.

The only helpful, loving thing Jesus could do for these victims of false peace was to bring them under conviction (not condemnation, conviction). - To prick their conscience. - To awaken their spirits to the true danger they were in, One day Jesus was invited to dinner at the house of an influential Pharisee. This dinner at the Pharisee's house was, according to Luke, Jesus last major effort toward the Pharisees. After this He turned to the streets and lanes of the city - to the poor and the maimed and the halt and the blind.

Jesus ended his discourse in the Pharisee's house with the parable about the man who gave a great banquet and the people who made excuses. Jesus does not simply tell these Pharisees and lawyers "God loves you." Jesus says to them rather; "God loves you so much that He has prepared a kingdom for you and invited you into it. But if you don't answer His invitation - if you cling to your false peace - you'll never taste of that Kingdom." Jesus wasn't trying to shake them up just for the sake of shaking them up.

Jesus was telling these smug, proper, letter-perfect, loveless men the awful danger of their situation. "God is calling you now to come into His Kingdom. And you are so blinded by false peace that you go your own way as if it were nothing? If you don't turn around and answer the call that I'm giving you right now, you will never enter the Kingdom of God." Jesus was not condemning these men. Jesus was not saying to them, "You people are hopeless!" He was saying, "The day of your salvation is now.

The time to do what you know God is calling you to do is now." If these men refuse to yield to this convicting that Jesus brings to bear upon them in his love, they condemn themselves. The Spirit of Jesus is now making what may well be His final pass through official Christendom, calling those people who long ago received their invitation to God's banquet of love to "Come for all things are now ready." Telling them that the time has now come for them to put every other attachment aside and come to the banquet.

After this final swing through Christendom we will see Jesus less and less in the official churches and more and more in the streets and lanes of the city among the poor and the maimed and the halt and the blind, the forgotten, the neglected, the despisedpeople the churches haven't been paying any attention to. He'll be out in the highways and hedges of the planet while Christendom with all its Christian trappings will be delivered over to the spirit of the Anti-Christ.

And the thing Jesus comes up against in these Christian people today is exactly what he came up against in the house of that Pharisee so long ago - False Peace. "Who says we have to come to the Banquet right this minute? Who says we have to give up our own very worthy activities and do things your way? Look, man, I love God just as much as you do. Just because I'm busy at the moment with my field and my beautiful wife and my five yoke of oxen doesn't mean I don't love God!" The message of the Spirit of Jesus to every one of us today whose mind is enveloped in false peace, or in whose soul are regions where the vapor of false peace still lingers is a warning.

Behind the warning is unspeakable love; - love that drove Him to the Cross to lay down His life for us, - love that wants every one of us and every soul on earth to be a guest at that banquet. The message is; "Come for all things are now ready." "The time for good intentions is past. Now it's time for action, radical obedience, absolute surrender to Jesus." "Don't get tangled up in the cares and riches and pleasures of this life. Come to something better. Don't play spiritual games.

Get on the road of discipleship, which is the only road which leads to the Banquet Hall." When the Pharisees sat there and looked at Jesus as if he were some kind of nut, Jesus - the Incarnate Son of God - left and went out and gathered the lost sheep of the House of Israel, and who knows how many lost Gentiles, into a kingdom those Pharisees will never see. Now it's our turn to answer His call ... to break out of our False Peace and follow Jesus all the way - on His terms - letting go of everything that tries to hold us back.

If you have already left all to follow Jesus, hearing this call will only strengthen you and encourage you to keep going, to tighten the loose cords and to straighten the things in your life that are crooked. If you are not on that discipleship road - if you are still trying to serve both God and mammon - still doing your own thing even though it seems to be a very spiritual thing, you know exactly what Jesus is saying to you right now: "Break loose from that other stuff and come with me."

He says it to you in love. Because what Jesus has for you not only on the Last Day, but right now is so much better than the thing you're into. The feast begins immediately. - As soon as you let go of everything else and take hold of him. - As soon as you begin truly to follow Jesus. The time to act is not tomorrow or next week when your headache's gone, but now. Send that lying spirit of False Peace back to his buddy over there in the shadows and join yourself to Jesus as He leaves the dinner table of the Pharisees and goes out into the streets and the lanes of the city, on to the highways and hedges of the country. Follow Him to the Banquet hall of the living God. Indeed, the Banquet begins as soon as you start to follow. "Come, for all things are now ready"

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