

Down to Reality

by Richard E. Bieber

The sermon calls believers to abandon their egos and embrace humility to function as one Body in Christ.

Scripture: Matthew 11:28, Luke 22:19, Romans 12:3, Ephesians 4:30

Topics: "Humility", "Unity"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches about the importance of humility and unity among believers, highlighting the disciples' struggle with ego and self-idolatry even in the presence of Jesus. He emphasizes the need to let go of our self-images and egos to truly follow Christ and function as a unified Body. Bieber urges listeners to repent of their self-centeredness and embrace meekness, as exemplified by Jesus, in order to find rest and peace in Him.

Transcript

As Jesus approached his baptism of fire, a problem emerged among the disciples, a problem which had always been there, but now it came out into the open, threatening to destroy their unity. This problem burst upon them just as Jesus was instituting his Feast of Unity. And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And likewise the cup after supper, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

But behold the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. For the Son of man goes as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!" And they began to question one another, which of them it was that would do this. A dispute also arose among them, which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. Luke 22:19-24 This feast is their foretaste of heaven ... a feast of unity ... and here they go again arguing about which of them is the greatest! The Master's very first lesson to them was: "Blessed are the poor in spirit..." and now after three-and-a-half years they're still ruled by their egos.

And today we are moving into a time which for the Body of Christ on earth may be compared to our Lord's final journey to the cross: a time of danger but also of great opportunity. If there is anything that will block the power of God in our individual and corporate life ... and prevent us from rising to the call of this hour ... it is this ego thing, this self-idolatry. For by the grace given to me I bid every one among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith which God has assigned him.

For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them... Romans 12:3-6a ..."not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith which God has assigned him..." When our view of ourselves is out of proportion, we simply cannot function as a body... even if we sell all we have and give it away and make covenants with each other and form a commune.

To fit in and function as part of the Body of Christ our view of who we are has to be realistic. And, if it is realistic, how can it be anything but meek and lowly of heart? How can I draw near to Jesus, get under his yoke, labor at his side, unless I am willing to be taught by him to be meek and lowly of heart? At the airport as I was waiting to get on the one plane that flies into that city per week, I asked some of the other travelers, "How come a city that size has only one plane a week?", and was told that they have very little contact with the outside world...

"Besides, people in that city can't board a plane." "Are they afraid?" "No, they just wouldn't fit." When we landed and walked through the rain to the small terminal building the reason was apparent. Every citizen, I mean every citizen, carried a pole at least seven feet high bearing an image of themselves at the top. You could easily pick out the Christians among them. Their images of themselves on their seven foot poles had distinctively pious looks. Some were in the posture of prayer... some had their hands outstretched and their heads back in a pose of praise.

Everyone took a great interest in his own and everybody else's image. They washed them, dressed them, cared for them as if they were alive. If you wanted to hurt someone all you had to do was say something nasty about his image, or you might even give his image a shove with your image. Image repair shops, where you got your image a face-lift or a new pose, did a thriving business. And funeral homes provided the largest coffins you ever saw. No one would think of being buried without their image at their side ... pole and all.

After dinner one evening I was walking past a church where a prayer meeting had just begun, so I went in. At first it looked like a presidential nominating convention where, instead of posters and placards, were these images. The singing was great... the prayers were beautiful. When they got happy they'd start pounding on the floor with their image poles. The brother in charge of the meeting stood there holding his image pole with one hand and his Bible in the other and brought forth a gripping message on humility.

The image on his pole, which of course looked just like him, was in a kneeling position with its eyes shut and its hands folded. People whispered that Brother George had the most exquisite image in town. Brother George finished his talk and people were starting to pray when suddenly a blinding light filled the platform. In the center of the light first appeared a face, then the figure of a living man. Across his shoulders was a strange looking wooden yoke which arched beyond him to his right.

"Who will get under this yoke with me?", cried the man in light. For a minute or two everyone was petrified. Then a young woman moved out into the aisle and said, "I will." Taking her image on its pole she walked toward the platform. "What's that thing you're bringing with you?" asked the man. "Why that's my image," answered the woman. "Since my childhood I have never been without it." "Drop it," said the man under the yoke, "and come by yourself." The woman started weeping for she knew who it was who was calling her.

"I'm sorry, Lord, but I can't ...I just can't. You're asking too much," and returned to her pew with her image clutched tightly in her hands. "Come, you who want to serve me. Come get under my yoke!" said the man in light. At last a little old man stepped out into the aisle, threw down his image, walked up to the platform and took his place under the yoke beside the Master. "I never thought I could do it, Lord. I'm free for the first time in my life." Then a middle aged woman threw down her image and did the same ... followed by a ten year old boy.

In all, about seven people in the whole congregation came up and took their place under the yoke. "Come," said the Master as he led them down the aisle and out the door. No one ever, saw them again. As time passed, many, many people in that congregation wished they had thrown down their images and got under the yoke. For by the grace given to me I bid every one among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith which God has assigned him.

Romans 12:3 "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly of heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30 Each of us has two problems: 1. What do I do about my image on the pole? Can I live without it? 2. How do I handle that brother or sister's image that makes me sick every time I look at it? First, what do I do about my image.... - my ego, - my reputation, - my claim to be somebody?

I've been carrying it around all my life and now, once again, Jesus tells me to get rid of it. "Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." - What is our labor? - What causes us to be so heavy laden? Is it not this image we drag around with us day and night? When Jesus calls us to repent he is calling us, above all else, to repent of this image. The thing is sin. It's an idol, it's the source our worst problems. When Jesus says, "Deny yourself," he is simply calling us to freedom from this image we love and pamper and worry about and dote on.

The one lesson Jesus hammers home more than any other is, "Throw down your image and come and get under my yoke." Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. He who exalts himself will be humbled and he who humbles himself will be exalted. A dispute also arose among them, which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. And he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors.

But not so with you; rather let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. For which is the greater, one who sits at table, or one who serves? Is it not the one who sits at table? But I am among you as one who serves." Luke 22:24-27 Consider how much of our thought-life and of our very strength is consumed fighting to maintain this big doll on the stick. What relief comes to us when we finally dump it and get rid of the useless weight we've been dragging with us through life.

"I know who you are," says Jesus, "and I love you... so why keep wasting your life trying to impress eyes of flesh?" "How can you believe who receive honor one of another and seek not the honor which comes from God alone?" This is not an optional thing. This is the one door to the kingdom of heaven. This is the only way we can possibly know and stay in relationship with Jesus. And, this is the only way we will be able to function as part of the Body instead of forever trying to make the Body of Christ function as part of us ... as if we were the Head instead of Jesus.

May God help us right now to throw down our image and get under the yoke with him who is meek and lowly in heart. Then we will find rest, and the Body will function in peace. Second, what do I do about my brother or sister's image which makes me sick every time I look at it? Our first inclination is to want to tell them, "Brother, why don't you get rid of that ridiculous image of yourself you carry around on that pole?" "Sister, let me help you get that splinter out of your eye.

You can't be seeing very well or you wouldn't act the way you do!" If I think I have insight into that person's weakness, or if their vanity is so blatant I can hardly stand to look at it, the most helpful thing I can do for that person, and for myself is, - put away my malice, - clothe my mind in the kindness and forgiveness of Jesus Christ, ...and start praying. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.....

Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.... Ephesians 4:30-32 & 6:18 Supplication for all the saints includes prayer for those things in their attitude and behavior which seem to me to be wrong ... pray for them ... keeping alert with all perseverance. For by the grace given to me I bid every one among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith which God has assigned him.

For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them.... Romans 12:3-6a If we are going to function as a Body now, and in the coming days of trial, each of us using the gifts we have, and all of us fitting in with each other, it hinges on whether we are willing to come down to reality concerning ourselves.... ...not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, but to think with sober judgment according to the measure of faith God has assigned us. May God help us all to let go of our image on the pole, and get under the yoke with Jesus afresh beginning now.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/richard-e-bieber/down-to-reality/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net