

Draw Near

by Richard E. Bieber

Drawing near to Jesus is the only godly thing we can do, and it enables us to see God, be quickened with His Spirit, and be given a new heart and a new mind.

Scripture: Psalm 145:18, Isaiah 55:6, Matthew 9:18, Matthew 11:28, John 4:14, John 6:35, Hebrews 10:22, James 4:7-8

Topics: "Drawing Near", "Spiritual Renewal"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches on the importance of continuously drawing near to Jesus and following Him wholeheartedly, emphasizing the need to forsake worldly distractions and fully embrace the glory of the Cross. He highlights how Jesus offers healing, forgiveness, and life from heaven to all who draw near to Him with faith and sincerity. Bieber warns against drifting away from Jesus after experiencing His presence, urging believers to seek a deeper, unbroken communion with the Son of God. He challenges listeners to forsake the ways of the world and fix their hearts on the glory of Jesus, knowing that drawing near to Him will spoil them for worldly desires and lead them on a path of divine fulfillment.

Transcript

Read: Matthew 9:18-26

Matthew 11:28-30

Anyone reading this who has come to know Jesus will testify to the fact that at some point in your life you became dissatisfied with looking at Jesus from a distance, and you began to draw near to Him.

- You began seeking out people who seemed to know Him.
- You opened that bible and started digging into it.
- You got down on your face and cried out to Heaven.
- You read every book you thought might help,

and suddenly, one day, there He was, speaking to you, bringing you to life.

Jesus never forces His way into people's hearts. He descends from the throne of the Godhead down to within range of your life, and offers to put Heaven into you. But to receive what Jesus wants to give you, you have to draw near to Him.

During the three-and-a-half years of His ministry, Jesus thoroughly covered the entire nation of Israel -- made Himself available to the least of the least of men. Every single Israelite was given some clear opportunity to receive healing, forgiveness, some heavenly help from Jesus.

There wasn't one fisherman,

or prostitute,

or con-man,

or merchant,

or queen,

or king,

or priest, in all Israel upon whom the Spirit of God did not stir, saying,

"Draw near to Jesus of Nazareth. He has the very thing your heart cries for.

He is the answer to the thirst within you."

But, it was up to them to draw near. And every one who did, received a taste of heaven.

"My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her and she will live", and Jesus went and took her by the hand, and raised her from the dead.

And a woman who had suffered from a hemorrhage for twelve years came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His garment, for she said to herself, "If I only touch His garment, I shall be made well".

Jesus turned and seeing her, He said, "Take heart, daughter, your faith has made you well". And instantly the woman was made well.

- Tax collectors and sinners drew near to Him.

- Lepers came as close as they were allowed by law.

- The blind called out to Jesus from their darkness,

and every one was answered with healing, forgiveness,

some kind of life from heaven.

But, as time went on, the vast majority of the people who drew near to Jesus to be healed, forgiven, or fed, drifted away. And as they drifted away, the atmosphere of Heaven that surrounded them so wonderfully when they were near the Son of God departed. They were back in the world, their blind eyes were still open, their leprous bodies were still clean, but that awareness of God was gone.

Jesus could walk right toward them in the temple and it was the same as if He were a million miles away.

They had drifted from Him like a man and woman in a marriage living in the same house, eating at the same table, can be light-years apart.

By the time of Jesus' arrest, it was no difficult thing for them to be stirred to shout, "Crucify Him!" They had already lost touch with Him.

And this is exactly what happens to many of us. We draw near to Jesus, taste Heaven, and then we drift away again.

- The glory of God is gone.

- Our vision of heaven is lost.

And we wonder whether those blessed days were ever real.

Some of us spend our lifetime doing nothing but drawing near to Jesus, and drifting away, drawing near and drifting away.

- When things get painful - we draw near.

- When the pain eases - we drift away,

until our spirits become numb, then we just drift. The desire to draw near becomes so faint, it's nothing more than a flicker of regret until even that is gone.

Only a handful of all the people Jesus touched got hold of what it was all about.

- They didn't draw near and drift,

draw near and drift.

- They drew nearer and nearer and nearer.

- These were the ones who forsook all to follow Him.

- These were the ones who saw Him alive from the dead.

A day came when Jesus wasn't just with them, He was in them. Still they kept drawing nearer,

boldly proclaiming His name, joyfully laying down their lives.

These were the New Israel.

These were the ones who formed His Body on earth, through whom Jesus did far greater works than He ever did in His own body of flesh and blood. And it is into their ranks that we are being called now in the closing hour of this age.

- Jesus is not calling us to draw near and drift.

- Jesus is calling us to draw near and follow,

to continuously draw near as He leads us on in the work He would have us accomplish on this earth before the End.

So the question we need to ask ourselves is,

Am I drawing near to Jesus Christ only to drift again?

or,

Am I drawing near to Jesus to go on with Him in the Father's will?

Am I forever rising and sinking? running hot and cold?

Or,

Am I going from strength to strength, lifted from one degree of glory

to another by the Spirit of the Lord?

Several things to keep in mind:

1. Drawing near to Jesus is the only godly thing we can do.

We do not have, in ourselves, the power

- to discern who God is,

- or to do one God-pleasing thing,

- or to bring the slightest degree of healing to this sick world,

until we are quickened by the Son of God with divine life.

Come unto me all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 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. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink.

Draw near to me,

- and I will enable you to see God,

- I will quicken you with my Spirit,

- I will give you a new heart and a new mind and even a new body,

- I will make you into a Son of God.

The minute we go off trying to be healers apart from Jesus, we just make this sick world sicker.

When we go running off trying to spread spiritual truth, or love,

or the New Testament Church,

or The Revolution,

or whatever else fascinates us, apart from a living, burning, relationship with the Son of God, all we spread is death.

"Apart from me you can do nothing."

"Draw near to me and I will quicken you for the work I want to be doing through you.

2. Drawing near to Jesus never stops.

- You don't just draw near and stick there like a piece of mud on the wall.
- You don't just go through life drawing near and drifting like waves lapping against the shore.
- You follow Him all your days, ever more deeply into the Kingdom.
- You draw nearer and nearer as Jesus leads you on into the center of that blazing light which is God.

Paul, after years as an apostle, still considered the primary object of his life to draw closer to his Lord, I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ.

still thirsting for more of the Son of God.

Our churches are cluttered with people who drew near to Jesus once, and ever since they've been living in the afterglow -- following a memory. They have as much life in them as those leaves lying out there on the ground.

Our churches are cluttered with these yo-yo saints who have to be revived every six months.

- They get a little spiritual charge
- and then they drift.
- Then they get another shot
- then they coast.

Spiritual storage batteries - but storage batteries wear out.

When Jesus went up on that cross and died, He opened the way for us to draw near to Him without ceasing,

- whether you're walking down the street,
- or playing with your child,
- working hard on your job,
- lying down to sleep,

you can be continuously drawing near to the Son of God.

Everything that once stood in the way of coming into the presence of God the Son, has been removed by His shed blood. There is no guilt, there is no distance, that can keep you from Him if you want to draw near.

3. Drawing near to Jesus is a thing of the heart.

Lots of people were bumping and pressing and crowding against Jesus that day, but the touch on the fringe of His garment by a woman who wanted healing, was noticed by Jesus immediately.

Why? Because that woman's whole heart was in that touch. As her fingers brushed against the cloth, Jesus could hear a cry coming to His Spirit. That woman didn't realize it but if she had been a million miles away from Him and had cried out, "Jesus, heal me!", the very same thing would have happened. For the minute any heart anywhere draws near to Him, Jesus draws near to that heart.

"Call on my name, I will be there.

Gather in my name, I will be there. Open your heart to me, I will enter.

Take hold of my promise, I will come and fulfill it.

Start obeying my command, instantly I will be at your side, enabling you to do it."

You don't have to travel land and sea to find Jesus. Wherever you are at any given moment, reach out to Him with your heart and there He is.

The thief on the cross couldn't come down and walk over and take hold of Jesus' feet. Between gasps for breath that man had all he could do to rebuke his fellow-thief and call out to Jesus for mercy. But when he called, instantly the Spirit of God drew near to him and aided him in his journey into Paradise.

- If there is anybody reading these words who has never experienced the reality of Jesus,

- If there is anybody who longs to come into that continuous, unbroken communion with the Son of God you know you should have, take the padlocks off your heart that's been hurt so many times, you've got it locked, and grilled, and barred like a pawn shop on Skid Row on Sunday night.

Open it up and cry out to Jesus, and He'll come - He'll come.

4. Drawing near to Jesus spoils you for the world and the world for you.

When you take that yoke of Jesus upon you - say goodbye to worldly success, say goodbye to all the earthly glories that once thrilled your heart - you've turned your back on the old glories of this world and fixed your heart on the glory of the Cross of the Son of God.

"The Cross before me,

The world behind me, no turning back."

God forbid that I should glory, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,

by which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.

Never mind what preacher assures you that you can have God and mammon. Never mind how big his cathedral is, or how wonderfully he may claim the Lord has prospered him, you cannot draw near to Jesus Christ and the spirit of this world at the same time.

To draw near to Jesus is to draw away from the way of this world:

from the lust of the flesh,

the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.

To draw near to Jesus is to say to Satan,

"Keep your goodies.

Keep the reputation of being a "spiritual heavy" for your followers.

Keep that shining image and that big name among men for your antichrist.

I'm satisfied with Jesus. His Cross is my glory.

His Spirit is all I want."

And suddenly, the fancy illusion that Satan conjured up before your eyes will shrivel to nothing, as the path God wants you to walk opens up before you.

- There isn't a problem that won't be solved.
- There isn't a task facing us under God that won't be accomplished.
- There isn't an obstacle standing in our way that won't be removed.
- There isn't a need that won't be filled,

if we'll but answer the call of the Spirit on our hearts to draw near anew to the crucified and risen Son of God. Forget everything else and draw near to Jesus and He will draw near to you and guide you in the way that you should go.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/richard-e-bieber/draw-near/>

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