

Eternity Now - Part One

by Richard E. Bieber

The sermon emphasizes the importance of expecting, receiving, and walking in the light of the glory of God, which is available to all through Jesus Christ.

Topics: "Heart Transformation", "Inner Illumination"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches on the transformative power of the light of God in our lives, emphasizing that true salvation goes beyond mere intellectual belief to a heart transformation that leads to a new way of living. The light of God reveals Jesus in a new way, igniting a desire to seek His presence continually and behold His glory. This inner illumination enables us to trust Jesus with our lives and empowers us to repent and turn away from sin as we see it in the light of His glory.

Transcript

L I G H T

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?.....

One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after;

that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,

to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.

Psalm 27:1-4 KJV

The Lord is my light and my salvation.....

Salvation is much more than believing certain doctrines... believing certain things about Jesus. Jesus died on the cross for my sin. I believe that or, at least, I believe that I believe that. He rose from the dead in order to give me life; and I may believe that or think that I believe it. With my mind I believe the doctrine of the cross, the doctrine of the resurrection, yet my life remains unchanged.

Why?

Because the power of Jesus' death on that cross and the power that raised him from the dead first has to touch my heart. And before it touches my heart ... before it slays my sin and before it raises me up into a new life, that same power that raised Jesus from the dead has to come into my heart with light, so that I can see the cross and see the resurrection. I see Jesus in a new way. And seeing Jesus in this new way, I now begin to come to life. Before I believed certain things about Jesus, but Jesus himself was still like a vapor.... he was like a mist. Now I see him and seeing him I begin to live.

The Lord is my light he's the one who opens my eyes and makes it possible for me to see.

One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after;

that I may dwell in the house of the Lord, all the days of my life,

to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.

When I behold the Lord, when I see glory, that's when I begin to live.

When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee,

thy face, Lord, will I seek. Psalm 27:8

And when I begin to see the face of God, the glory of God in the face of Jesus, that's when I become conscious and truly experience the life and power and the salvation he bought for me through his death and resurrection.

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the likeness of God. For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants, for Jesus' sake. For it is God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

II Corinthians 4:3-6

Salvation for us begins with inner illumination. The same God who at the beginning said, "Let there be light and there was light," now says to our inmost hearts, "Let there be light," and there stands Jesus! Suddenly we begin to know, by an inner illumining of the Spirit of God, that this is indeed the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. By this inner vision we now have the power to trust him.... we begin to trust him with our life, our future, our everything. And in the light of the glory that begins to stream down into our hearts from him, our achievements, our possessions, and all the other things which we held on to as a source of security before, become as nothing. All that matters is Jesus.

Also, that light that streams from his face begins to shine now on sin inside me. Now I begin to see my sins in all their death-dealing, death-infecting power and horror and ugliness.

Now I begin to repent.

Before the light came on, I believed certain things about Jesus, but these beliefs about Jesus never seemed to have any serious influence on my daily behavior. I also knew that certain things were wrong I knew that it was wrong to lie,

to slander,

to hold a grudge,

to lust,

to be covetous,

to hate,

but I went right on doing these things. Now the light comes on, and by the power of that tremendous light that burns inside my heart, I see glory I also see hell. By the power of that glory, sin begins to appear for what it really is... as sin. Satan begins to show up for what he is ... as Satan.

And the light that uncovers and reveals sin also slays sin. For instance, when Peter fell down at Jesus' knees crying, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" Peter was beginning to see glory shine forth from the face of Jesus. In the light of that glory Peter saw himself as absolutely unclean. The light that showed him this glory in Jesus, and also showed him his sinfulness, was the light that also began to slay the sin. Notice that Jesus didn't say, "Now you've got to get your life straightened out Peter then maybe I can use you." Jesus says to Peter, "Don't be afraid, from now on you're going to be catching men." In other words, "I'll take care of your sins." Not that he ignores the sin, but he alone is the one who can slay sin.

For it is God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

This "light," which is our life and our salvation, is available to all of us. We can have it, and not just in rare moments of vision, but we can have it all the time.

The Lord is my light and my salvation....

not only when I'm up on the Mount of Transfiguration, but also when I'm down in the demon possessed valley. The Lord is my light and my salvation every day through this life right on through the door of death into the next life this light which shows me the reality of Jesus and the reality of my own sin and has the power to slay that sin in the Lamb's blood this light can be ours afresh now, and can remain ours every day, for ever. All we have to do is expect it, receive it and, walk in it.

1. We have to expect it.

One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after;

that I may dwell in the house of the Lord, all the days of my life,

to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.

Many of us have long since given up really expecting light. Perhaps we had a time of vision somewhere in the past, but it seems so long ago, or it was so brief, or it seems so unreal to us now, or so far away, that we've given up really expecting anything like that any more. And it's this resignation to the darkness that keeps us trapped in the dark.

The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world....

John 1:9

- that enlightens everybody. This light is for everybody.

In him was life, and the life was the light of men..... John 1:4

- all people.

I am the light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life....

- but we have to expect it, and believe that he's going to give it to us.

When thou saidst, Seek ye my face my heart said unto thee,

thy face, Lord, will I seek.

So now I make up my mind I'm going to expect it.... I'm going to seek, and I'm going to expect. I'm going to knock and I'm going to expect that door to open and the light to come forth.

When we commune with him in the bread and drink the wine of his blood, let's do it expecting, expecting that while we eat, the inner light, which is a gift from God, will begin to burn afresh. And when we open our Bible, let's expect light to come on. (When we find the Bible boring, it's because we come to it with no expectancy.) When we pray, God help us to expect that we're going to be communicating, that the light will begin to shine. And when we come together to worship God, to expect an illumining of the Spirit within each of our hearts, enabling us to see the Lamb.

2. We also have to receive the light, when it begins to shine.

The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not. He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

John 1:9-13

.....to all who received him. The light is shining, but there is a need for us to receive it, to open up and let it come in. How else can we describe worship but an opening up, a surrendering? The light begins to shine; and we lift up our hearts and open them so that the Lord may fill them with his Spirit.

Mary is sitting in the living room at Jesus' feet....

Martha is out in the kitchen getting dinner together.

Martha is upset. Martha is hurt. Martha is angry.

"Lord, doesn't it bother you that my sister has left me here to serve alone?"

Jesus answers,

"Martha, Martha, you're troubled about many things. One thing is needful..(to receive the light).. Mary has chosen that good part, it's not going to be taken from her."

Thomas missed out on seeing Jesus on Easter Day and found it very hard to believe that the disciples really did see him. Eight days later they're together and Jesus appears again.

"Thomas, put your fingers in my hand, thrust your hand into my side. Be not faithless, but believing."

Thomas falls down before Jesus and worships him and says,

"My Lord, and my God!"

....and as Thomas worships,

he receives light.

Jesus doesn't say,

"Get out of here Thomas! You don't have enough faith!"

Jesus welcomes him and he fills him with light. And we too, for all our frailties, will receive light as we seek it in worship.

We need to receive the light that shines from the face of the Lord and we also need to receive the same light that begins to shine on our sins. Let's say over the last ten years I've developed a little habit of sarcasm. It's not really that bad. "Something to break the monotony." A little sarcastic remark now and then. Now comes the light and the light shines on this sarcasm in me and suddenly I see that it's not just a little remark once-in-a-while to break the monotony, but that this is devastating people, hurting them, demoralizing them, discouraging them, and filling my own heart with darkness. Seeing this, I receive the light by repenting.

Maybe it's been our habit to look out the window and day dream. We wish we were in Hawaii, or in New Zealand, and we begin to dream. Why do I have to be stuck here in this place? And we think of our day dreams as a fun escape, innocent, just five minutes a day. Then the light comes on and we begin to see that it's not five minutes a day, it's gobs of time spent opening our spirits to the Father of Lies. These daydreams are not innocent, they're sin. To receive the light is to repent, "God, I see it now, forgive me" ...I confess it and I put it away.

Gossip it's never gossip when we do it. It's only when somebody else does it. I talk about people once-in-a-while, maybe a little too much then the light comes on and I begin to see what my tongue has been doing to other people and to myself and I receive the light by repenting and changing direction.

Or, we admit that we tend to be a "little bit critical." Then the light of the Spirit shines on us and we begin to see that we're not just a "little bit critical," we're obsessed with the spirit of criticism. Everything we see we have to pick at. Nothing's right. We have to tear it apart, analyze it, improve it -- nothing's any good, nobody's any good; "I can do it better." Finally, when we see this we begin to understand that this critical attitude is destroying us. We see it as sin. We receive the light and we repent.

I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear;

but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself,

and repent in dust and ashes. Job 42.5-6

Today if the Spirit of the Lord begins to put his finger on some specific area of sin in our life, may God help us to have the courage to open our heart and receive the light and repent.

3. Finally, we need to walk in the light. And to walk in the light is to walk in love.

I am writing you a new commandment, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in the darkness still. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and in it there is no cause for stumbling. But he who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes. I John 2:8-11

To walk in the light is to walk in love.

If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

I John 1:6-7

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

To walk in the light and the salvation of the Lord is to walk in love. And the place where we learn how to walk in love is in the Body. Why do you think the Lord brought us together with other believers? He brought us together to teach us to walk in love. The assembly is the Kingdom School of Compassion. It's not merely lectures, it's mostly laboratory, where we learn patience, forbearance, kindness, as other believers disappoint us, misunderstand us, aggravate us.

What is this bread we eat? It is the bread of self-giving love.

"My body given for you."

The wine is love poured out as blood...

"shed for your sins."

We rise from his table and turn toward each other, accept each other, forgive each other, encourage each other, share with each other, give to each other, help each other now we're walking in love. We're walking in the light.

Walking in the light with each other, we are able to go out into the world with life. (How can we possibly touch that world out there with the healing mercy of God unless it begins among us believers?) Now we are empowered to call people from darkness to light and the power of Satan to God and they will respond they will come toward the light which we hold out to them.

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

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