

First-Born Among Many Brethren

by Richard E. Bieber

God works for good in all things, transforming us into the image of his Son, so we can manifest his light to the world.

Scripture: Matthew 28:18, Romans 8:28, Romans 12:1, 1 Peter 2:9, Revelation 7:9

Topics: "Spiritual Transformation", "Eternal Glory"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches on how God works for good in all things for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose, transforming believers to be conformed to the image of His Son through struggles, battles, tragedies, and chaos, ultimately producing a new race of men and women reflecting Jesus. This transformation leads to a future where those conformed to the image of the Lamb will serve God in eternal glory, free from hunger, thirst, and sorrow. The sermon emphasizes that believers, as part of this new race, are called to submit their bodies, minds, daily lives, life together, and ministry to Jesus' lordship, manifesting God's light to the world.

Transcript

We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Romans 8:28-30

When we think of all things working for good we often

picture a journey where nothing goes wrong ... a vacation
to Hawaii where everything is perfect ... we drive down
the avenue and every traffic light turns green. But
when God works for good in all things, the "all things"
are all things, not just the pleasant things that happen...
all things, even the struggle,
the battle,
the tragedy,
the chaos,
the pain.....
all things somehow producing a miracle.

And the miracle:

"...for those whom he foreknew he also pre-
destined to be conformed to the image of his
Son, in order that he might be the first-born
among many brethren."

The miracle produced by the "all things" here is a new
race made up of men and women whose lives have been trans-
formed into an unmistakable likeness to Jesus.....
transformed through the "all things," by the fire licking
at their lives.

Where is this new race to be found? In heaven? One day
in heaven no doubt.

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude
which no man could number, from every nation,
from all tribes and peoples and tongues; standing
before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in

white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb!" And all the angels stood round the throne and round the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God for ever and ever! Amen."

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these clothed in white robes, and whence have they come?" I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night within his temple; and he who sits upon the throne will shelter them with his presence. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living waters and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." Revelation 7:9-17

There is coming a day when those people whose lives
have been conformed to the image of the Lamb will serve
God day and night in the temple of- his body...they will

- hunger no more,
- thirst no more,
- weep no more.....

and never again know anything but blazing life.

But is this the first place we see them? ... in heaven?

when the battle is ended? No, these brethren of the
Son of God, these men and women who bear his likeness,
have been walking this earth for twenty centuries. And,

- every place where they walk,
- every place where they gather,
- ever place where they live and work,

is a doorway to the very glory of God.

We're not talking about churchianity, we're talking about
the men and women who take on the likeness of the Son of
God through the "all things" God sends their way.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood,
a holy nation, God's own people, that you may
declare the wonderful deeds of him who called
you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Once you were no people but now you are God's
people, once you had not received mercy but
now you have received mercy. I Peter 2:9-10

All this relates to the changes that are hopefully going on
in our lives right now. Perhaps we're asking, "Where are

you leading us Lord? What are you bringing forth?"

And the answer is:

"I am bringing forth believers who are so conformed to the image of my Son that no one with eyes to see can miss it.

I am raising people who bear the marks of the new race of the brethren of the Lamb."

This is something God is doing.

For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

....he foreknew,

he predestined,

he called,

he justified,

he glorified through the, "all things"...through the flame, the trial, the confusion.

Does this mean it's automatic? Not quite.

In all things God works for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

All things become redemptive when we.....

1. Love God.....and

2. We love God so much that we answer his call.

As history moves toward its final crisis there is a stirring and shaking and a sifting in the Body of Christ all over the earth as the Lord God raises up a people for the final sweep. And these people who are being raised up for the final sweep are not hot shots, but men and women who are conformed to the image of his Son...who reflect in their living and speaking and working the glory of the first-born of this new race ... because they love God...because they love God so much that they're answering his call.

We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren.

Predestined ... what does this mean? Does this mean we're , so predestined that we just sit back and let God zap us into the image of his Son? No ... those whom he foreknew he predestined ... meaning that God knew a million years ago who would respond to his call and who wouldn't.

"You are the salt of the earth...."

He predestined you to be the salt of the earth, but if you lose your taste you will be set aside.

"You are the light of the world...."

He predestined you to be the light of the world, but if you play it safe by keeping your light under a bushel

even the light that you have will be taken from you and given to someone who will put it on a stand.

Those whom he foreknew he predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.

Everything from God's side has been and is being done.

Jesus came and laid down his life,
and washed away our sins in his blood,
and broke the hold of evil on our minds,
and drove the curse of death from our hearts.

Jesus is pouring his Spirit on us afresh today. The words he speaks to us are spirit and life. Out of this is emerging,

- a new race,
- a royal priesthood,
- a holy nation ... God's own people,

for the purpose of manifesting God's light to the world.

If we are part of this new race,

- we are not brought into it as zombies,
- we are not robots,
- we are not brainwashed members of some cult;

we enter this race, receive this transformation with clear minds and free wills because we love God so much that we are answering his call.

We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed

to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren.

If we love God, if we are answering God's call, it shows up as we conform to the image of his Son in five specific ways.

1. If we love God, if we are answering God's call, we freely submit our bodies to Jesus' lordship.

I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Romans 12:1

When Peter left his fishing boat, Matthew his tax office this was a bodily, a physical response when Jesus refused to turn stones into bread, he was submitting his physical body to the purpose of his Father.

In one way or another Babylon and the king of Babylon have ruled us through our bodies. The first step in the miracle change is that we give Jesus our physical body....

"My body is no longer mine, but yours. I offer it today (and every day) as a living sacrifice."

Who does your body belong to? Who do you serve? Who ever or whatever rules your body is your God, true God or an idol.

2. If we love God and are answering God's call, we

freely submit our minds to Jesus' lordship.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:2

For many of us, Babylon became the keeper of our minds when we were children in school.

Babylon still tells us what to think,
what to buy,
what's really worth doing,
what's really worth having.

But now we become Jesus' disciples ... his pupils ... he is our teacher, our master. We give him our minds and he begins to open our minds to truth we have never seen.

"If you continue in my word (do it), then you are my disciples indeed, and you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

3. If we love God and are answering God's call, we freely submit our daily life to Jesus' lordship.

....eating,

....sleeping,

....working,

....recreation, resting,

....friendships, problems, our finances....

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say,

Rejoice. Let all men know your forbearance.

The Lord is at hand. Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:4-7

So, as we head for work,
as we answer the phone,
as we walk down the street, scrub floors, change diapers, wash toilets, Jesus, deep down inside, is Lord over it all. His presence is there...he's in charge... absolutely in charge. And when he is in charge, all things work together for good.

4. If we love God and are answering God's call, we submit to Jesus' lordship over our life together.

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 judgments 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 .Romans 12:3-5
....one body in Christ. He is the head. He is Lord: He calls the shots. He directs. Not my idea of what form the Body should take. Not your idea or anyone else's

idea. He is Lord of our life together and he will guide,
rule,
and prosper our work if we submit to his lordship over
us. And as Jesus rules our corporate life, all things
work together for good.

5. If we love God and are answering God's call, we
submit to Jesus' lordship over our ministry to the
world.

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority
in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father and of
the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them
to observe all that I have commanded you; and
lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20

"Some day, when my affairs are in order, and my
children are raised, I'm going to be a missionary."

.....0 yeah?

Jesus' command,

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,"

is not for someday, but for now. He is Lord over our
ministry to the world and he is calling for action now.

If he says, "Go make disciples," what choice do we have?

And as we go make disciples, starting right where we
are, all authority in heaven and on earth is at our
disposal.... Jesus himself is with us.

As the world moves toward its final crisis, the Lord is calling out and raising up a people who bear his likeness, are moved by his love, are aflame with his holiness, are anointed with his power.

Jesus is the first-born among many brethren: If we love him ... if we love him so much that we are answering his call...

we give him our bodies,

we give him our minds,

we give him our daily life,

we give him our life together,

then we go out and make disciples of all nations, and lo,

he is with us all the way to the End... and beyond... he is

with us.... making all things work together for good.

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