

First Hand Vision

by Richard E. Bieber

The sermon calls believers to seek a personal, first-hand vision of Jesus to strengthen their faith and function effectively as His church.

Scripture: Psalm 46:10, Isaiah 6:1, Jeremiah 31:33, Matthew 16:13, Matthew 18:20, John 5:39, John 11:25, Revelation 1:12

Topics: "Personal Vision", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches on the importance of having a personal vision and revelation of Jesus Christ in building and functioning as His church. Emphasizing the need for each believer to abide in Jesus as the Vine and to serve others selflessly, he highlights the significance of discerning the presence of Jesus in the midst of the church. Through passages like Matthew 16:13-18 and Revelation 1:12-13a, he underscores the necessity of seeking a direct, personal relationship with Jesus for spiritual growth and understanding.

Transcript

Now when Jesus came into the district of
Caesarea Phillippi, he asked his disciples,
"Who do men say that the Son of man is?"
And they said, "Some say John the Baptist,
others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or
one of the prophets." He said to them, "But
who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter
replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the
living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed
are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood

has not revealed this to you, but my Father
who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are
Peter, and on this rock I will build my church,
and the powers of death shall not prevail
against it." Matthew 16:13-18

....on this rock will I build my church....

In Christian teaching there is a growing emphasis these
days on the church

- what it means to be the church,
- how we function as Christ's Body on earth,
- where the authority is and who is supposed
to exercise it.

Our Lord himself gave us two basic teachings about how
to function as his church.

1. "I am the vine, you are the branches."
2. "He who would be greatest among you, let
him be the servant of all."

If we live in these two realities, he will build the
church and it will take just the form he wants it to.

Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking
to me, and on turning I saw seven golden
lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands
one like a son of man...." Revelation 1:12-13a

The seven lampstands were the churches, and in the midst
of the churches, burning and flaming with divine life,
was Jesus. As long as they perceived his presence ... as
long as they listened to his voice ... his life became

their life.

"For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Matthew 18:20

He is in the midst of us,

- as the Vine sustaining the branches,

- as the lowliest of all,

- teaching us how to be servants,

how to give instead of take.

But to function as part of him we have to see him in our midst. How can the branches abide in the Vine unless they discern the Vine?

"Who do men say that the Son of man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

"Forget the opinions of others. Who am I to you?

What kind of church would we have if one special branch told all the other branches what to believe and they believed it? Or, if seven elite branches told the other branches how to function and they did? The branches would then be abiding in other branches. But Jesus says each branch is to abide in the Vine.

"Who do You say that I am?"

We may be encouraged,
helped,

corrected,
or confirmed by brothers and sisters in the
Body ... and we need to have leadership in the Body ...
but no one in the Body can have our vision for us. Our
vision of Jesus has to be our own.

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord
sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and
his train filled the temple. Above him stood the
seraphim; each had six wings: with two he covered
his face, and with two he covered his feet, and
with two he flew. And one called to another and
said:

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory."

And the foundations of the thresholds shook at
the voice of him who called, and the house was
filled with smoke. And I said: "Woe is me! For
I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I
dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips;
for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts"

Then flew one of the seraphim to me, having in
his hand a burning coal which he had taken with
tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth,
and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips;
your guilt is taken away, and your sin forgiven."

And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom
shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I

said, "Here am I! Send me." Isaiah 6:1-8

Ah, but Isaiah was special. There was only one Isaiah who had this vision!

The God who revealed himself to Isaiah in this way sent his Son into this world to suffer and die so that each of us can have such vision.

Isaiah saw..... because God revealed.

You and I see because God reveals.

At that time Jesus declared, I thank thee,
Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou
has hidden these things from the wise and
understanding and revealed them to babes; yea,
Father, for such was thy gracious will. All
things have been delivered to me by my Father;
and no one knows the Son except the Father,
and no one knows the Father except the Son and
any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

Matthew 11:25-27

To whom does the Son choose to reveal the Father? And to
whom does the Father choose to reveal the mysteries of
the kingdom? to babes!

to the poor in spirit,

to the broken and the contrite.

"He who has my commandments and keeps them,
he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will
be loved by my Father; and I will love him
and manifest myself to him"

John 11:25-27

The tendency today is to go for second hand vision...

to be inspired by this man's vision or that woman's vision.

- Something we read in a book.

- Something we hear in a sermon.

Certainly there is a place for John sharing with us his vision of Jesus on the Isle of Patmos ... Paul briefly describing visions and revelations of the Lord. But the whole thrust of the gospel is that each person who receives Jesus, receives vision ... power to become a son or a daughter of God.

Each believer is to know directly for himself or herself just as surely as each branch abides in the Vine.

"But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sins no more."

Jeremiah 31:33-34

- We cannot live without vision.

- Nor can we live by someone else's vision.

In order to abide in the Vine,

- You have to see the Lord;

- You have to hear the Shepherd.

- You have to draw near and get under the yoke.

But what if I don't have any vision of the Lord at all?

Perhaps I once did, or thought I did ... but right now

I'm dry as a bone.

"I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and

earth, that thou hast hidden these things

from the wise and understanding and revealed

them to babes;..."

We can become the babes to whom the Father reveals his

kingdom and his Son ... we can have vision.

Consider:

1. To have vision we need to take time to be still.

"Be still and know that I am God...."

Psalm 46:10

What wonderful things start to happen in our lives and

in our corporate life when we take that literally.

Before Isaiah could do one redemptive thing, or speak

one prophetic word, he first had to hold still. It was

when Isaiah was holding still in the temple that he saw

the Lord and heard his call.

And if we're ever going to be able to walk with the

Shepherd through the valley of the shadow of death,

fearing no evil, we first have to get to know the Shepherd

... as he makes us lie down in green pastures,

leads us beside the still waters,
restores our soul..... in stillness.

Find time to hold still before the Lord with a clear
mind each day.

"Come to me all you who labor and are heavy
laden and I will give you rest."

Matthew 11:28

....hold still, let me refresh you.

Notice how the Lord's Prayer begins,

"Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed
be thy name...."

In other words, be still and worship before you proceed
any farther. If we are ever to have a living and abiding
vision of Jesus, we are going to have to learn the
importance of taking off our shoes,
shutting our mouths,
bowing our heads before him in stillness.

2. Our vision of Jesus will increase when we learn to
follow the scriptures to him.

You search the scriptures, because you think
that in them you have eternal life; and it is
they that bear witness to me... John 5:39

The scriptures are not the end. The scriptures are the
means to the end..... the end is Jesus!

Both the old testament and the new reveal Jesus. As we
read these scriptures looking for Jesus, the Spirit of
Jesus himself opens the scriptures to us and we begin to

see what no Bible dictionary or commentary or devotional booklet could ever show.

- We begin to see the glory of
God in the face of his Son.

3. Our vision of Jesus will increase further as we learn
to practice his presence throughout the day.

"I will not leave you desolate. I will come to you."

"Lo, I am with you always....."

So, we remind ourselves that he is with us,

- as we walk down the street,

- as we work the line,

- as we type,

- as we drive,

- as we pump gas,

- as we deal with customers,

clients,

patients,

- as we change diapers and scrub floors.

The Lord is with us and in us.

- Everything we touch, he touches.

- Everything we see..... he sees.

- In our hearing..... he hears.

- In our speaking, he speaks.

4. Finally, our vision of the Lord will increase as we
follow him out to the suffering world.

And we don't have to travel miles to do that. The
suffering world is at our door...standing at our side.

Jesus' broken body and his shed blood has an affinity
for wounded hearts,
broken hearts,
the hungry,
the homeless,
the hated and rejected.

How can we eat his body and drink his blood and not
share that affinity?

We begin to experience Jesus' blazing comfort and his
unspeakable power as, in his name, we walk among the
world's wounded and bind up their wounds, and feed them,
and listen to what they have to say.

He said, to them, "But who do you say that I
am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the
Christ, the Son of the living God." And
Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon
Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed
this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock
I will build my church, and the powers of death
shall not prevail against it."

Matthew 16:15-18

.....flesh and blood has not revealed this to you,
but my Father who is in heaven.

A second-hand vision produces a second-hand confession.

A first hand vision produces the confession on which
Jesus Christ builds his church.

May God grant us such vision that we may open our mouths
and confess with boldness the things which we have seen
and heard from the Lord himself.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/richard-e-bieber/first-hand-vision/>

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