

From Fear of Death

by Richard E. Bieber

The sermon explores the liberation from the fear of death through faith in Jesus Christ, who offers eternal life and victory over sin.

Scripture: John 8:51, John 10:27, Hebrews 2:14, 1 John 5:12

Topics: "Fear Of Death", "Power Of Sin"

Description

Richard E. Bieber delivers a powerful sermon on the impact of sin and the fear of death in our lives, drawing parallels to a vivid scenario where the Accuser condemns us to death. He emphasizes how Jesus, by partaking in flesh and blood, destroyed the power of death and the devil, offering deliverance from lifelong bondage to fear. Through the imagery of Adam and Eve's fall from grace, he illustrates the shift from life without fear to living under the shadow of death, highlighting the universal fear of mortality that plagues humanity.

Transcript

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage. Hebrews 2:14-15

Imagine that one brisk winter morning when you walk out the door you are met at the sidewalk by four well-dressed men who take you by the arm, open the door of this sleek Cadillac, and firmly guide you into the back seat. The car speeds through the city and out onto the open road. After what seems like several hours, the driver turns up a wooded lane and stops in front of a magnificent stone building.

You are ushered into a room and given a seat at the end of a long table as the four guards seat themselves on either side.

"He's coming now" one of the guards whispers to you.

"Who?"

"Why the Accuser, of course."

A man dressed in judges robes enters and settles himself at the head of the table. A book is brought in and opened and all the major sins of your life are read aloud in the presence of these four men.

- Secret sins.
- Sins - no one ever knew.
- Sin after sin is carefully described.

Your life, which up to then, seemed certainly more decent and respectable than the lives of many people suddenly looks hideous - your past spread out before you like that, crowded with all these misdeeds you'd forgotten now looks more like the past of a murderer.

Finally, the Accuser looks up from the book and fixes his eyes on you. You can see they are not kind eyes, they are not holy, they are hard, cruel, evil eyes.

"You know the penalty", he says. "Death. I sentence you to death. You will be returned to your home. When you arrive you will find that the clock hasn't moved one second from the time it was when you met the guards. You will pick up precisely where you left off. Only remember this, my Executioner has been ordered to take your life at the appointed time."

"When will that be?", you cry in despair. "How much time do I have?"

"Ah" answers the Accuser. "This is not for you to know."

- It may be this afternoon.
- It may be next week.
- Perhaps not for 70 years.

You will not see the Executioner, but he will follow you at all times. You will never be out of his sight. He will stand in the shadows and await the appointed moment, then he will step forth and do his work."

Soon you find yourself standing alone on the sidewalk in front of your door. The time is exactly what it was when you met the strange quartet. A friend comes down the street and bids you good morning. You smile and return the greeting but you are in a daze.

Was it a dream?

Did you have some hallucination?

Or, did it really happen?

Everything is the same as ever except that now you have the unshakable feeling that you are being followed by someone.

In a few weeks you've become accustomed to this presence lurking behind you. You no longer turn around and try to see him - no longer afraid to open doors or go into dark rooms or walk down deserted streets.

You begin to laugh again and enjoy life almost as you did before, except that deep within is the knowledge that you are living under the sentence of death. You know that some day, somewhere, the Executioner will step out of the shadows and strike.

When Adam and Eve lived in the Garden, they ate of the Tree of Life. They were alive in a way that the natural man today cannot experience. There was no shadow hanging over them. In the evening when the sun went down, they could sleep in perfect peace because tomorrow would be another glorious day. They had nothing to look forward to but new joy,

new pleasure,

new love,

new glory, in the garden of their heavenly Father.

But, the day they ate of that forbidden tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, everything changed.

Suddenly they saw that they were naked and had to cover themselves.

They were guilty and had to run and hide.

They were cut off from God outside the Garden among the rocks and thorns of this insecure world that we know so well.

But, worst of all, they were living under the sentence of death.

"In the day that you eat the fruit thereof, you shall surely die."

The Serpent who had been the Tempter now becomes the Accuser. "You've done it! Now you're in my power, and you're going to die! Soon you're going to die."

Sure they could till the soil,

and herd their flocks,

and raise their children,

and build a shelter to protect them from the cold winds.

There were

pleasures in eating,

and drinking, and loving,

and overcoming obstacles.

But death reigned over them. They could no longer eat of the fruit of the Tree of Life. The bright hope of another glorious tomorrow was marred by the ugly knowledge that tomorrow they might not even arrive.

When you and I were born into this world, we were born the children of Adam. Before we know what it is to speak a word or make a decision, we already know what it is to be afraid. And what are we afraid of?

Why is a child frightened by a loud noise? Or a sudden unfamiliar jar?

Why does a child panic when he comes into the house and calls for his mother and there is no answer?

The fear behind all fears is the fear of that moment when the Executioner will materialize before us and strike the blow - the fear of death.

The aged woman who cries from her sickbed, "O why doesn't God let me die?" may think she wants to die. But her whole being, tired and worn and sick as it is, is struggling for life. Still running from the Executioner.

The young man who, in a fit of despair, puts a gun to his head and blows his brains out is not running away from life. He's beside himself like a man marooned on a single rock in the middle of an endless ocean. Death has surrounded him - the unseen Executioner has deprived him of all hope. And so, he gives up to death.

People don't realize what a grip their own coming death has on them. How the body, mind, and spirit shudder every time they are reminded that it's coming.

Some folks think they are being realistic about death because they set up their own funeral,

or they make a will,

or they make provision for their survivors.

Just because you tell me how to conduct your funeral, or I tell you how to conduct mine, doesn't mean we are being realistic about our death.

Death is not simply an event - something that happens when your heart stops and the fires of this body turn cold.

Death is a condition, a state, a region that you enter when your body falls away and you step forth into a world with shadow but no substance.

A world where music is replaced by the sound of weeping.

A world where time is filled, not with work, but with endless waiting.

A world where the memory plays and replays and replays your past.

In our Lord's parable when the rich man entered Hades, the region of the dead, he did not sleep,

- he was very much awake,

- he could see,

- he could feel,

- he could think,

- he could speak, and it was not pleasant.

"I beseech thee father Abraham, send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue for I am tormented in this flame!"

Some years ago I was in a group of seven men on a weekend retreat. It was Saturday night. We had just got up from our knees after being drenched in the power of the Holy Spirit with a force that none of us had ever known before. We were sitting in front of the fire in silence when finally one man got up, walked over and leaned against the fireplace and said, "The biggest thing for me is that I know now - I know that I'm never going to die."

What a strange thing for him to say! But I noticed that from that day that man, in his own quiet way, had power he didn't have before, and still does. He's like a rock. He's filled with the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead so he knows he's never going to die. He'll go on for a few more years. Some day they'll have a funeral for him and lay his body in the ground. But this man will live forever, and so will you, and so will I, if the power that lives in that man lives in us.

"If a man keeps my saying, he shall never see death.

My sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish. Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." John 10:27-29

It's true that Jesus came to preach good news to the poor

- and heal the broken hearted,
- and release the captives,
- and open the eyes of the blind.

But the chief reason for his coming - the chief reason for Jesus' presence here today - is to raise the dead.

"The hour is coming and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they that hear shall live."

You don't have to live under the curse of the Accuser. You don't have to live in dread of the Executioner.

- You can have life that no man and no devil can take from you.
- And when you have this life, you'll live like you never lived before.

There are people who, in the name of Christianity, are so busy trying to make the world good. They're in there like old St. George the dragon slayer, trying to make all the bad politicians, and bad legislators, and bad policemen, or bad educators start behaving like good boys, so all the rest of us can be good too.

Nobody's going to be good as long as he's living under the dread of death! What's the use?

Listen Friend, first find eternal life for yourself and then start giving eternal life to your brother.

- Deliver him from this dread of death.
- Show him where that Tree of Life is and let him eat from it.

Then he will be able to live like a son of God - only then.

Where is that Tree of Life? It's up there on Calvary. It's that Cross. It's fruit is the broken body and the shed blood of the Son of God.

"If any one eats of this fruit, he lives forever."

"At the Cross, at the Cross, where I first saw the light,

And the burden of my heart rolled away."

What was that burden? Up there on the Cross, He is dying your death. He's destroying your Accuser.

"That through death, he might destroy him that hath the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Hebrews 2:14-15

Once you begin to eat of the Tree of Life and Satan comes to you and says, "Hey, you're going to die!", don't argue with him. Just point him to the Cross and he'll shrivel up before your eyes.

Of course we have to learn how to live all over again. To live like a free man, a free woman. And the way you learn is by hearing and keeping Jesus' words.

"If a man keeps my saying, he shall never see death." John 8:51

I know there is such a thing as a baptism of the Holy Spirit. I know there is such a thing as being filled with the Holy Ghost. But the power of the Holy Spirit operates in our lives day-by-day, hour-by-hour, not through some glorious experience we once had, but through simple obedience to the words of Christ right where we are.

"The words that I speak to you, they are Spirit and they are life" - keep them!

When Jesus says, "Love your enemies", and I obey because Jesus says so - for His sake, out of love for Him - His power surges through me and blesses my enemy as well as myself.

When Jesus says, "Preach the gospel", and even though I'm afraid, timid, self-conscious and tongue-tied, I do it because He tells me..... to please Him, the gospel rolls out of my mouth - a stream of living water.

Today, when you finish reading these words, you will go forth, either as a victim of the unseen Executioner living in dread of death, or you will go as a son/daughter of God - born of the Spirit, filled with the power of an endless life. Which of these you are is up to you.

The door to Everlasting Life is open and you may enter even now if you want to. The door is none other than the outstretched arms of this Man who raises the dead by dying for them, purges them with His own blood, and quickens them with His living word: Jesus.

He that hath the Son hath life, and He that hath not the Son hath not life.

I John 5:12

Do you have this Son?

Are you walking with Him?

Come friend, flee the Executioner who has followed you down the empty years and filled your life with dread, and draw near to Him, whom to know is life eternal,

whom to serve is unspeakable joy.

Come to Jesus now and walk with Him forever.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/richard-e-bieber/from-fear-of-death/>

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

