

Guiltless

by Richard E. Bieber

In 'Guiltless', Richard E. Bieber emphasizes the necessity of continuous movement in faith and listening to Jesus to maintain guiltlessness before God.

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Christian Obedience"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches about the journey of believers towards the City of God, emphasizing the dangers of false security and the tactics of Satan to hinder their progress through guilt and illusions. He highlights the importance of continuous repentance, faith, and obedience in staying guiltless before God, using examples from Peter's experiences with Jesus. The sermon stresses the need to listen to Jesus, respond to His words, and keep moving in faith to reach the ultimate destination of being guiltless before God.

Transcript

Read: I Corinthians 1:4-9

Matthew 16:13-23

Scripture says that Abraham, all his life, lived in tents, kept moving, never settled down, because he looked forward to a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

We are Abraham's descendants in the Spirit, and we do the same. God has given us a vision of the city He has prepared for us. We spend our lives moving toward it through this world of shadows. And all along the way God sustains us with a thousand delicious foretastes of the good things that wait for us when we pass through its gates.

But, until we reach those gates, Satan, the god of this world, is busy trying to frighten us, or enchant us off the narrow road. Trying to keep us from reaching glory. And the way Satan does it is by working on our guilt. He either overwhelms us with our guilt and tells us we're hopeless, we might as well quit, "You're never going to make it, so why don't you just give up now?", or he enchants us.

- Makes us think that guilt is no longer a danger.
- Makes us to think that we've already arrived at the City of God.

The problem for most of us is the latter. We keep falling into a state of false security. Even though the City of God is still far off, gleaming in God's changeless light, we sometimes think we're already there.

Something happens to our minds that causes us to see these jagged, desolate rocks as if they were walls of shining pearl, and these dead trees covered with vultures as if they were golden stairs filled with angel choirs. Satan wraps himself in the best light he can manufacture and says, "I am the Christ".

When we awaken from this illusion, we discover that what seemed to be the City of God is, in fact, a wilderness. And the highway to the City is nowhere in sight.

So Jesus warns us,

"If anyone says to you, 'Lo, here is the Christ' or 'There he is', do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders so as to lead astray, if possible, the very elect".

So Paul warns Timothy about Hymenaeus and Philetus who have swerved from the truth by holding that the resurrection is past already, urges the Thessalonians "not to be quickly shaken in mind or excited either by spirit or by word or by letter purporting to be from us to the effect that the day of the Lord has come".

But it doesn't have to be some flashy false prophet or some far-out doctrine. Perhaps it's just that comfortable feeling of security that creeps up on you after you've won a victory or after you've experienced a revelation from God.

Satan says,

"Look what God revealed to you!

Look at the power God just poured out on you. Now you're on the inside track!"

In Matthew 16 Peter makes the fantastic proclamation under the anointing of the Spirit,

"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God".

And Jesus, filled with joy that the revelation has finally come to one of His disciples,

says, "Blessed are you Simon, son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed

this to you but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are the Rock. And on this Rock will I build my church and the gates of death shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of heaven and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven".

How those words must have echoed in Peter's mind as he lay down to sleep that night. Then the Evil One slips in and begins whispering all the things Peter's flesh wants to hear.

"You've arrived, Peter. You've made it!

You have the keys of the Kingdom. What could ever go wrong again?"

The very next recorded words that Jesus speaks to Peter come like a slap in the face to wake him up. Jesus has begun telling His disciples that He's going to have to go to Jerusalem to suffer and die and be raised from death.

"Don't talk like that, Master. You're not going to die!", says Peter the Keeper of the Keys..

Now listen to what Jesus says to Peter the Rock, Peter with the keys,

"Get behind me, Satan!

You are a hindrance to me.

For you are not on the side of God but of men".

Jesus didn't change His mind about Peter. Jesus loved Peter as much as ever. But Peter has to be made to know that he's still a pilgrim,

still on his way to the City of God,

still vulnerable to the onslaughts of Satan.

In order to preserve Peter guiltless before God and victorious over the Evil One, Jesus has to continuously correct Peter - continuously call him to repentance and faith and obedience a call that never stops as long as he's in this body.

Paul opens his letter to the Corinthians with thanksgiving to God for the grace that has come to these Corinthians.

- How they lack no spiritual gift.

- How Jesus will sustain them to the end, guiltless in the day of the Lord.

Beautiful words! Then Paul turns around and spends the rest of the letter lambasting them for their fleshly ways and for sin after sin. Was Paul contradicting himself? No.

Paul was blasting their illusion that they had already arrived.

Paul was calling them out of a state of false guiltlessness into a state of true guiltlessness before God.... so that they can be sustained to the end guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If we're going to be guiltless when we finally get to the City of God, we have to be guiltless all along the way.

A strange thing about this highway toward the City is that the only ones who are guiltless are those who are moving. Those who are standing still have been frozen by guilt - they are turning to stone and will never move another inch toward glory unless they are quickly aroused and set to moving.

No disciple of Jesus Christ has ever remained guiltless by sitting there with his hands folded, being good, or by standing endlessly in an attitude of petrified praise.

We are kept guiltless in the sight of God not by our sinlessness (who of us is sinless?).

Jesus is our guiltlessness before God.

- If we are in Jesus, and Jesus is in us, then God sees the righteousness of His Son when He looks at us and declares us guiltless.

And, how do we abide in Jesus? By sitting in a chair meditating about Him?

We abide in Jesus and have Jesus abiding in us by responding to the word that He constantly speaks to us.

Jesus sustains us,

- by constantly correcting us,

constantly calling us to repentance, constantly calling us to trust Him, constantly calling us to obey.

Jesus sustains us by keeping us moving.

"It is the Spirit that quickens, the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak

to you, they are Spirit and they are life."

And, as long as we respond to those words and move in them, our guilt is taken care of - God's Spirit keeps pouring into us.

But we have to listen when He speaks. A few verses after Jesus rebuked Peter in Matthew 16, we see Peter climbing up the mountain of Transfiguration with his Lord. Again Peter gets carried away with another brilliant idea from his flesh.

"Lord it's good for us to be here. If you wish, I will make three booths - one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

Again Peter has to be silenced. A bright cloud comes on them and the voice of the father speaks:

"This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him!"

And that's exactly what we need to do to be guiltless before God - listen to Jesus. Listen to Him, and He will straighten you out and get you back on the track and keep you moving every time.

1. Jesus will sustain you guiltless before God if you will listen when He calls you to repentance.

There's an area of your life that's not right and the Spirit of God is putting His finger on it and saying, "Turn, you're wrong child, I want you to come this way".

The minute it's clear, do what He says. Acknowledge before your Lord that He is right and that you have been wrong and go exactly the way He tells you to.

- It may be an attitude you have toward certain brothers and sisters.

- It may be some unfinished business you've let slide.

- It may be the way you've been taking a certain loved one for granted.

Jesus will take care of the guilt and the wrong and the sin if you will repent.

2. Jesus will sustain you guiltless before God if you will listen when He calls you to have faith.

He's calling you to walk through a stretch of road that looks utterly impossible.

"I'll never make it. I don't have the will-power. My flesh is too weak."

"Trust me," he answers, "Put yourself into my hands. I'll get you through."

We think of unbelief as an innocent little sin - hardly a sin at all, merely a weakness. But in God's sight unbelief is the root sin of all sins. Every other sin we've ever committed can be washed away in the Lamb's blood. But what can Jesus do for us if He comes to us and says, "My child, your sins are forgiven", and we won't believe Him?

Never mind whether you feel as though you have faith. Perhaps at this moment you feel as though you have no faith at all. Throw yourself, nevertheless, at the foot of His Cross and say,

"O Lord, here I am, unbelief and all. Take me!"

He will.

3. Jesus will sustain you guiltless before God if you will listen when He calls you to obey.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind...and your neighbor as yourself.

You couldn't obey that command before in a million years no matter how hard you tried.

But now the Son of God who ... overcame your sins on the Cross, broke the curse of death, smashed the chains of Satan, gives you the power to love.

When He says, "Love God" - you can.

When He says, "Love your neighbor" - you can. For His word is Spirit and it is life - do it.

One day, sooner than you may think, you will arrive at your journey's end. The gates of the City of God will open for you. The eyes of your resurrection body will see splendor these minds of flesh could never picture. They will see the unveiled glory of God,

there will be no shame,

you will be guiltless before Him.

Standing beside you will be the One who made you and kept you guiltless through all these years of warfare and pilgrimage: Jesus.

Ah, but to arrive at that day we have to let Jesus keep us guiltless now. We have to let Jesus be our life.

May God the Father open our eyes as He opened Peter's to the splendor of His Son. And, may our hearts be broken and humble enough to hear Him say,

"This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him, and He will sustain you guiltless to the end".

Listen no more to your own thoughts nor to the threats or enchantments of the Evil One, but to Jesus
- to Him alone.

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

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