

In His Steps

by Richard E. Bieber

The sermon emphasizes the importance of following Jesus' example and trusting in God's justice, even in the face of suffering and injustice.

Scripture: Matthew 5:39, Luke 23:34, John 10:11, Hebrews 13:20, 1 Peter 2:21, 1 Peter 2:24, 1 John 1:8

Topics: "Following Jesus", "Suffering Ministry"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches about the transformative power of following in Jesus' steps, emphasizing the need to turn away from sin, deceit, and threats, and instead trust in God's just judgment. He highlights how Jesus' suffering on the cross was not only for our salvation but also to set an example for us to imitate. By partaking in communion, believers are united with Christ's sacrificial death and empowered to minister life to others through their own suffering, ultimately leading lost souls back to the Shepherd of their souls.

Transcript

God alone knows the kind of shape we are in as we read these words. - The pressures on our minds. - The resentments that have been eating at us. - The guilt. - The vanity that clings to us all. Yet as followers of Jesus we draw near to him to; - worship him, - listen for some word from him, - gather at his table, eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, so that we can get up and go forth and live like Jesus. Extreme as it may sound to say it; our purpose in joining our hearts together in his name is so that we can be renewed in his likeness ... so that we can think his thoughts, speak his words, do his deeds, walk in his steps.

Jesus died on that cross and rose from the dead for no other reason. Jesus comes to us, as we read these words, for no other reason but to make it possible for us to walk in his steps. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps. He committed no sin; no guile was found on his lips. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he trusted to him who judges justly.

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls. 1 Peter 2 When we look at Jesus hanging on the cross we have to see this event in two ways. First, it is something which was done for us. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you.... By his death on the cross, - Jesus overcame the power of sin for us, so that sin can no longer hold us as its slaves. - He overcame the power of death for us so that death can no longer hold us as its victims. - He overcame the power of Satan for us so that Satan can no longer keep us

hostages in his kingdom.

But the crucifixion of Jesus has a second meaning which can never be separated from the first. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.... He died for us in order that we should follow in his steps. The proof to heaven and earth that any man or woman has been saved by the blood of the Lamb is that that person is walking in the steps of the Lamb. How ludicrous it would be if, after I have received salvation through the cross of Jesus and while I'm praising God for my salvation, the whole world can observe that I am not making the slightest effort to follow in the steps of the One who saved me.

A stranger comes up to me and says, "Friend, I can hear from your mouth that you claim to be one of the saved. I hear you praising God for your salvation. Yet, honestly, I can't see any distinction between your life and anyone out there in the world who makes no claims about salvation. You're praising Jesus for his death on the cross but you don't seem to be following in his steps." At this point I bang my fist on the table and say, "Who do you think you are, judging me? You know nothing about the things of God!

I'm saved by grace and not by works. I'm not working my way to heaven, I'm a man of faith!" The stranger walks away shaking his head and I mumble to myself that I'm not trying for any heavenly rewards, I'm just glad to be saved...as I hurry on my way stepping on heads and stopping my ears against the cries of those who call to me for help. Amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me, I once was lost but now am found. Was blind, but now I see. So what do I do now that I've been found?

What do I do with my vision now that my eyes have been opened? - I follow in his steps. 1. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. He committed no sin..... Step one.... he committed no sin. And now the same Lord who died for my sin calls me to turn away from sin. Jesus gives us power to turn away from the sins that still corrupt us - our fears, - our angers, - our vanities, - we can turn away from these things.

We can bring them to the communion table, eat his body, drink his blood, and get up and walk away leaving those sins behind. If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all un-righteousness. I John 1 - He committed no sin. -- He calls us to turn away from our sins. 2. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

He committed no sin; no guile was found on his lips.... - He never twisted the truth, - He never deceived. And now Jesus calls us to get the deceit out of our mouths and speak the truth. The whole world runs on deceit and exaggeration and flattery and con games ... and we've been part of it all. To follow in Jesus' steps is to lay aside the deceitful tongue and start speaking the truth. "Lord, help us to speak the truth in love." "Lord, help us to cast all deceit out of our hearts."

When the Holy Spirit came on Pentecost they spoke with new tongues. Not just new languages of earth, but the language of heaven which is the new language of truth. 3. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. He committed no sin, no guile was found on his lips. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return.... The scribes and Pharisees reviled Jesus. The Roman soldiers taunted him. He held his peace.

He could have burned them to a crisp with flaming words of judgmenthe said nothing. And we're to follow in his steps. As servants of Jesus we will be reviled, slandered, belittled, ridiculed. Our response is to be the silence of God. - Not a negative silence. - Not a bitter silence. - But a silence that comes from heaven and spreads peace. We do not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. 4. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

He committed no sin; no guile was found on his lips. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten..... Jesus could have looked down from the cross and said to that ugly mob, "You're going to pay for this!" and it would have been done. That mob would have fallen under a judgment which would have lasted forever. But instead he took the judgment. Instead of threatening them Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

And in this too Jesus calls us to follow in his steps... even when we suffer unjustly. We've done right and now we're suffering for it. But we still don't threaten. How do we keep our sanity when this unfair thing goes on and on and on? It's easy enough to talk about in church, but what about on the job? what do you do when you have a boss who never gives you a break, or a husband or wife who's never satisfied? 5. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

When he suffered, he did not threaten, but he trusted to him who judges justly. Jesus trusted the whole thing to his Father. If we're going to survive the unfair things that are put on us without becoming nervous wrecks or embittered spirits, we're going to have to trust the unfair things that are done to us to him who judges justly. "Lord God, by your grace, I'm not going to threaten revenge, nor am I going to hold in my heart this ugly thing they did to me. I turn it over to you and I trust you." 6.

For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps ... He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. By his death, Jesus ministers life to us. And now by death working in us we minister life to others. What does it mean to eat this bread and drink this wine? It means that we join ourselves to Jesus on the cross.

As we eat his body and drink his blood he lifts us up into himself and makes us part of the miracle of his atoning death. So now you're suffering ... death is working in you in some way....and you pray, "Lord, may this thing that I'm going through for you, this pain, this loneliness, this hurt, this misunderstanding, abound to your glory in the life of the person I'm lifting up before your throne. Cause my pains to be life for my enemy, my child, my neighbor, my husband, my wife" and it will. 7.

For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls. And you didn't return to the Shepherd on your own, you were brought back. Jesus restored us from our straying and now he anoints us to bring back other wandering sheep from their straying. There are people out there who will be brought back to the Shepherd and Guardian of their souls through us. - In some cases it will take only a phone call or a letter. - In some cases it will take endless visits and tireless prayers. - Sometimes it will take a word of encouragement. - Sometimes an honest exhortation.

To follow in his steps is to go out there and bring them back to the Father's house, as he brought us back. When we approach the Lord's Table to commune we are coming to the cross. By eating the bread and drinking the wine we are remembering with thanksgiving what Jesus did for us. We are also remembering that Jesus is calling us to follow in his steps. And we are receiving in this food the strength to follow in his steps. We can rise from our knees and go on our way and walk through the coming days, as Jesus walked, to a degree we never dreamed possible. And as we walk in those blessed steps we will take on his likeness until we are wrapped in the flame of his mercy and holiness forever.

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