

Indifference, Urgency, Insurgency

by Richard E. Bieber

The sermon challenges believers to confront their indifference towards God and embrace a life of urgency for His kingdom.

Scripture: Daniel 2:31, Luke 14:16, John 18:33, Hebrews 12:12, Revelation 3:14

Topics: "Repentance", "Gods Kingdom"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches about the confrontation between Pilate and Jesus, highlighting the contrast between indifference to God and urgency for God's kingdom. He emphasizes the importance of being urgent for God's purposes, like Daniel in Babylon, and how urgency conquers indifference. The sermon delves into the significance of repentance, opening the door to God's urgency, and walking in His path to conquer the 'Image of Indifference' in a world that is anti-God.

Transcript

Pilate entered the praetorium again and called Jesus, and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?" Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me; what have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but my kingdom is not from the world." Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Every one who is of the truth hears my voice." Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" John 18:33-38

Here we have a strange confrontation between two men. The man who appears to have all the power ... the power of life and death ... is utterly indifferent to God, the things of God, the purposes of God.... "Who cares? Such things bore me. What is truth?"

The man who appears to be at the mercy of this Roman governor is urgent about God, the things of God, the purposes of God. Nothing else on earth matters to him. "I've come to do my Father's will. I've come to bear witness to the truth."

In time, the urgent man, for all his apparent weakness, conquers the indifferent man, for all his power. Pilate has long since fallen from his heights. Jesus lives with a name above every name. And so it is that the man or woman who holds this world's power and wealth is strongly tempted to be indifferent about

God, the things of God, the purposes of God. And in time, this person is always superseded by the weak one who is urgent about God's kingdom.

Daniel lived in Babylon. Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, were indifferent about God. Daniel was urgent about God. This urgency for God made Daniel an insurgent, a rebel, a revolutionary ... not in any earthly sense, but in the one sense that matters. Daniel knew that God's kingdom will be shining on earth when Babylon is buried in the desert sand.

One night Nebuchadnezzar had a dream which troubled him. He called his wise men and magicians together and demanded,

"Tell me my dream and its interpretation."

"Please, your majesty, you tell us your dream and we'll explain it."

"No, tell me the dream and the interpretation or you shall be torn limb from limb and your houses laid in ruins!"

Daniel and his friends are about to be killed with all the other wise men of the kingdom.

"Get me an appointment with the king", says Daniel. "I'll tell him his dream and the interpretation."

A day is set. Daniel tells his brothers in the faith to start praying. On the appointed day Daniel is brought in before the king to interpret the dream.

"You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening. The head of this image was of fine gold, its breast and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it smote the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces; then, the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth." Daniel 2:31-35

This image with Nebuchadnezzar as the head of gold and all the mighty kings to follow him, is the image of the anti-Christ ... the Image of Indifference to the holiness of God. Indifference, which at its heart, is blasphemy... arrogance ... that tries to exalt itself above God by being indifferent to him. The stone that starts out small and smashes the image and grows until it fills the earth is the Kingdom of God ... the insurgent kingdom ... which is already present in Babylon in the person of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

Now the impact point, when the stone strikes the image, is the death and resurrection of Jesus. This was the beginning of the end for the Image of Indifference. But, at the moment, the image is still large in this world we deal with it every day. We have to deal with the Image of Indifference as surely as Daniel did.

To follow Jesus ... to be committed to the Kingdom of God ... is to live in a world which is utterly indifferent to God, his purposes, his kingdom, and yet to remain urgent as Daniel remained urgent before Nebuchadnezzar, as Jesus remained urgent before Pilate.

- When we remain urgent...

- we conquer the image.
- When we sink into indifference....
- we are conquered by the image....

and are absorbed by it. We become part of it.

But he said to him, "A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many; and at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for all is now ready.' But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.'" Luke 14:16-20

These people were invited to the banquet of God.

- They were believers.
- They knew their Bibles.
- They went to church frequently.
- They did good deeds.
- But there was one thing they lacked: urgency.

They were doctrinally sound Christians, but they were indifferent. Their hearts belonged not to God, but to Babylon ... to the Image of Indifference.

And so they were thrust aside by the householder who is urgent and who demands urgency.

So the servant came and reported this to his master. Then the householder in anger said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame.' And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room. And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled! For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.'" Luke 14:21-24

Urgency conquers indifference ... the banquet hall is filled ... the Kingdom of God prevails. It always will.

What we need to figure out is where we fit in this picture ... where we fit in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Are we, by the way we live, part of the world-wide system of indifference to the living God, or are we part of the stone that conquers the image with its zeal for God?

- You can be religious,
- and still be part of the Image of Indifference.
- You can be a churchman,
- and still be part of the image.

- You can be respected and admired,

and still be part of the image.

You are part of the image when the only real urgency in your life is urgency about yourself, your plans, your projects, your ideas it's all you. But when it comes to the will and purpose of God, beneath the veneer of piety, you're indifferent. God keeps telling you, "Listen to me." You're not listening and you just keep going your own religious way, as they did in the church at Laodicea.

"And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: 'The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation. I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth. For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing; not knowing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. Therefore I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, that you may be rich, and white garments to clothe you and to keep the shame of your nakedness from being seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and chasten; so be zealous and repent.'" Revelation 3:14-19

.....be zealous and repent. Get some urgency,

get some fire,

get some life ... real life from God!

We have to learn the basic fact of living here in Babylon: either we conquer that Image of Indifference, or the image conquers us.

To conquer the Image of Indifference, to be part of that stone cut out without hands that smashes the image, we need to do three things:

1. We need to constantly repent of our indifference to God and the things of God.
2. We need to open the door to the urgent one.
3. We need to walk in his path instead of our own.

1. We need to constantly repent of our indifference to God and the things of God.

When David said in Psalm 51, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight," we think of his sin with Bathsheba. David's sin with Bathsheba was the outcome.

But the sin

the evil,

the blinding arrogance, that caused him to stumble into bed with Bathsheba and arrange her husband's murder, was this subtle, seeping indifference to God ... this preoccupation with his own glory that dried up all worship, all awe, all fear of God. David's sin ... your sin and my sin, the sin that destroys us is indifference to God, which is the root of all blasphemy.

"Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be white as snow. O God, I repent of my indifference to you ... my arrogance, my blasphemy ... wash it away that I may worship you with a clean heart, a broken and a contrite heart."

Let's face it, we're all inclined to be indifferent.

We live in Babylon, a world that's indifferent, a world that's anti-God. So there's a need for continuous repentance, continuous turning ... daily, hourly, even when we wake up in the middle of the night, until our spirits are bent toward God instead of the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

2. We need to open the door to the urgent one so that he can enter in and give us his urgency, his zeal for God.

"Those whom I love, I reprove and chasten; so be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me." Revelation 3:19-20

"I'm not far off in the heavens. I'm not buried in the sea. I'm closer to you than your own breath. I'm knocking on the door of your heart right now. Hear my voice. Open the door and I will come in and sup with you and set your heart on fire for God ... I will make you urgent.

Don't be afraid to give up the control of your life to me ... you've only made a mess of it yourÅself.. Don't wait another hour. Open up and let me in Behold, I stand at the door and knock."

3. We need to walk in his path instead of our own.

"He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake",but he can only lead if we follow, if we walk where he leads.

Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. Strive for peace with all men, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fail to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" spring up and cause trouble, and by it the many become defiled.... Hebrews 12:12-15

....a clear description of a path that we are to walk.

"I'm giving you my zeal, use it! Don't be walking around like a sulking child with those drooping hands, those weak knees, those wandering feet. Straighten your path. Strive for peace with all men. Stop sowing those seeds of division. Strive for holiness without which no one will even see the Lord ... holiness of the inmost heart, a heart urgent for God. Watch for that root of bitterness that will destroy you and others with you ... watch for that root of bitterness, get rid of it! Put your feet on the path that Jesus has marked with his own bleeding feet and start walking today the walk of faith, the walk of love for brothers and sisters, a practical, definite, daily walk of obedience in his steps."

"You saw, O King, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening. The head of this image was of fine gold, its breast and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it smote the image on its feet of iron and clay, and

broke them in pieces; then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floor; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth."

The difference between life and death for your soul and mine, your church and mine, and for every member in it is whether we are ruled by the Image of Indifference or the stone of urgency for God.

We make that choice now and every day of our lives.

"Those whom I love I reprove and chasten so be zealous and repent.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me."

....all you have to do, right now, is open the door.

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