

Life

by Richard E. Bieber

The sermon emphasizes the urgency of following Jesus and proclaiming the kingdom of God while awakening from spiritual death and moving beyond material concerns.

Scripture: 1 Kings 17:17, Luke 9:59, Luke 10:10, Luke 12:13, Acts 13:44

Topics: "Kingdom Focus", "Spiritual Awakening"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches on the importance of not being consumed by the things of this world, such as material possessions or family disputes, but to focus on proclaiming the kingdom of God. Jesus' words in Luke 9:59-60 and Luke 12:13-21 emphasize the need to prioritize spiritual matters over earthly concerns, reminding us that our time on earth is temporary and we should be rich toward God. Through examples like Elijah reviving the widow's son and the resurrection of the church, the sermon highlights the call to awaken from spiritual death and pursue a life dedicated to God's kingdom.

Transcript

To another he said, "Follow me." But he said,

"Lord, let me first go and bury my father."

But he said to him, "Leave the dead to bury

their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim

the kingdom of God." Luke 9:59-60

What's Jesus saying here? Is he saying that we shouldn't

even bury our dead? Is he saying that we should ignore

the fact of death? Not at all. Sooner or later we are

all faced with the fact of death our loved ones die.

People reading these words have lost a child,

a wife,

a husband,
parents,
family through death,
and we know that our own stay here in this realm of flesh
and blood is temporary. Unless the King comes back soon,
we're all going to die.

Jesus isn't telling us to ignore the fact of death. In
fact, he wants us to keep it very much in mind.

One of the multitude said to him, "Teacher, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me." But he said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or divider over you?" And he said to them, "Take heed, and beware of all covetousness; for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' And he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns, and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they

be?' So is he who lays up treasure for himself,
and is not rich toward God." Luke 12:13-21

The father of this house has died and instead of considering
the meaning of that death and purpose of his own life, this
man is fighting with his brother over the money. Jesus says
to the man,

"Have another look at your father's death.

What good is his money to him now? What
good will it be to you very soon? Start
becoming rich toward God for the day when
your riches will do you no good."

To another he said, "Follow me." But he
said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my
father'." But he said to him, "Leave the

dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

No, Jesus is not telling this man, or us, to ignore the fact of death or to shirk our responsibilities when loved ones die. Jesus is telling this man, and us, that we've been living our lives in an atmosphere of death. We've been dead while we eat and sleep and worry and fuss and take care of business because we've been fighting over the inheritance instead of being rich toward God.... because we're not wholeheartedly answering the call of God which brings us to life.

"Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God. Wake up, man! woman!"

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel; and as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead?"

Luke 21:1-5

Same message:

"You aren't going to find Jesus in a tomb."

"You aren't going to get the job done as long as you're walking around with this funeral mind-set, this funeral attitude."

"Awake O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light."

And when they turned away from the tomb, they found themselves looking into the face of Jesus, risen from the dead, and they rose from the dead.

After this the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became ill; and his illness was so severe that there was no breath left in him.

And she said to Elijah, "What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to cause the death of my son!" And he said to her, "Give me your son." And he took him from her bosom, and carried him up into the upper chamber, where he lodged, and laid him upon his own bed. And he cried to the Lord, "O Lord my God, hast thou brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?" Then he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried to the Lord, "O Lord my God, let this child's soul come into him again." And the Lord hearkened to the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. And Elijah took the child, and brought him down from the

upper chamber into the house, and delivered him to his mother; and Elijah said, "See, your son lives." And the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth."

I Kings 17:17-24

When the widow came to Elijah with her dead son, Elijah could have shaken his head and said,

"What do you expect me to do woman? Your child is dead ... I'm not God. What else is there to do here but to have a funeral."

Elijah could have said, "Lord, I'll answer your call, but let me first bury this child." But the call of God on Elijah was not to bury this child, but to revive him. Elijah has divine life burning in him because he was answering the call of God.

So, he takes the dead son of the widow, carries him to his own room, lays him on his own bed, cries out to God in strong intercession for the widow's broken heart, lies down on top of the dead boy three times absorbing his death into his life as he prays,

"O Lord, let this child's soul come into him again!"

and the boy comes to life.

Whenever we look into the face of death, as we do every day, if we are answering God's call on our lives, somehow we swallow up that death with life.

When Stephen was stoned to death as the first Christian martyr, Stephen was not raised from the dead ... his body was buried. But out of that death came a tremendous resurrection of the Body of Christ. Revival broke out and spread in the midst of persecution.

-The boy Elijah revived is the church.

- The resurrection that followed Stephen's martyrdom is the church coming to life.

- The body that rose with Jesus when he rose from the dead is the church

And Jesus is saying to the church, to your church,

"Wake up! Come alive! Leave the dead to bury their own dead. I am risen, you will not find me in a tomb or a museum. You will find me as you answer my call on your life! And you'll rise from the dead and you'll raise the dead."

If there is any word the Spirit of God has been speaking to God's people it's this twofold counsel:

1. Don't be wasting time at the tomb. Pursue the risen Christ by- answering his call on your life.
2. Don't be wasting time reasoning, arguing, listening or hanging around with people who insist on remaining dead. Shake the dust off your feet and get on with your calling to proclaim Jesus crucified and risen to those who will listen and who will come to life.

Don't be wasting time at the tomb. Pursue the risen

Christ by answering his call on your life.

Not one believer found Jesus in the tomb. They met him as

they were leaving the tomb, or as he was breaking bread,

or as they gathered at his command on a mountain in

Galilee. And we need to leave the tomb of dead works,

dead attitudes,

dead memories,

dead regrets,

dead ambitions,

and settle for nothing less than knowing Jesus alive from the dead.

And notice that every meeting those first believers had

with Jesus alive from the dead was somehow a reminder of

Calvary.

- When he broke the bread...this was a reminder

of Calvary,

- When he showed them his hand and his side...

...this was a reminder

of Calvary.

- when he invited them to come and dine with him

on the shore of Galilee ... it was a reminder of

the broken bread of his body.

When Jesus says to us, "Follow me," it's "Follow me to

Calvary where my blood will purge your conscience from

dead works to serve the living God."

"Follow me to Calvary where I will raise you

from the death of self-centeredness,

self-pity,
self-righteousness, by
teaching you to lay down your life everyday
right where you are in my name."

Awake O sleeper, and arise from the dead by
answering your call, and Christ shall give
you light."

Don't be wasting time reasoning, arguing, listening or
hanging around with people who insist on remaining dead.

Shake the dust off your feet and get on with your
calling to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, to those
who will listen.

"But whenever you enter a town and they do not
receive you, go into its streets and say,

'Even the dust of your town that clings to our
feet, we wipe off against you; nevertheless
know this, that the kingdom of God has come
near.' I tell you, it shall be more tolerable
on that day for Sodom than for that town."

Luke 10:10-12

The next sabbath almost the whole city gathered
together to hear the word of God. But when the
Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with
jealousy, and contradicted what was spoken by
Paul, and reviled him. And Paul and Barnabas
spoke out boldly saying, "It was necessary that
the word of God should be spoken first to you.

Since you thrust it from you, and judge your
selves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we turn
to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded
us saying,

'I have-set you to be a light for the
Gentiles that you may bring salvation to
the uttermost parts of the earth.' "

And when the Gentiles heard this, they were
glad and glorified the word of God; and as
many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

And the word of the Lord spread throughout all
the region. Acts 13:44-49

In our ordinary daily lives every one of us is surrounded
by people who are hungering and thirsting for a living
word lost sheep who are longing for someone to bring
them home. But so often we're still beating our heads
against the wall trying to minister to people who insist
on remaining dead....

Leave the dead to bury their own dead. Shake
off the dust and proclaim the kingdom to those
who will listen.

We never see Jesus hammering away repeatedly at those
who by their indifference,
their deceit,
their scorn,
their arrogance, are saying, "No."

Jesus simply moves on.... and so must we.

Open your eyes and see that widow coming to
you with her dead son.

Look at those sheep without a shepherd. That
man or that woman who lives within 500 feet of
your house who needs a little kindness,
a word of encouragement,
in the name of the Lord and they will rise from the dead.

There is a work of the Spirit going on in the Body of Christ
which is calling for two specific changes in our lives:

1. "Follow me," that we rise from the dead.

Come out of our stupor, our preoccupation
with ourselves get away from the tomb,
("Why do you seek the living among the dead?")
and follow Jesus to our own life-giving Calvary each day.

2. "Leave the dead to bury their own dead. Shake
off the dust and proclaim the kingdom of God...."

That we stop trying to play amateur providence to
those who insist on remaining dead ... who have told us
in a thousand ways they don't want to change, and go
on to proclaim the kingdom to those who will hear.

To another he said, "Follow me." But he said,

"Lord, let me first go and bury my father."

But he said to him, "Leave the dead to bury
their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim
the kingdom of God."

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