

The Blessed Forgotten

by Richard E. Bieber

The sermon emphasizes God's heart for the forgotten and marginalized, calling believers to actively seek and support them in their communities.

Scripture: Psalm 61:2, Luke 4:18, Luke 7:22, Luke 14:21, Luke 15:12

Topics: "Compassion Ministry", "Kingdom Living"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches on the importance of reaching out to the forgotten and marginalized in society, reflecting on how Jesus prioritized spending time with those considered of little worth. He emphasizes that the Kingdom of God is about finding the lost, saving sinners, and remembering the forgotten, as seen in Luke 15. The sermon highlights the deep compassion of Jesus towards the outcasts and sinners, showcasing the joy in heaven over one sinner who repents and the significance of the Cross for those who acknowledge their need for forgiveness.

Transcript

Read: LUKE 15

When we keep saying that the Spirit of God is doing a new thing in this city these days,

when we talk about our city being visited by God, it's important that we understand what it means for God to visit a city. We're not talking about lightning, thunder, and earthquake.

God can come with power to any city - speak to it, touch it with His hand, and yet, be completely unnoticed by the vast majority.

Because, when God visits a city in the Spirit of His Son,

- He does it in a very peculiar way.
- He comes to the people in that city everyone else forgets.
- He spends most of His time with the very ones who are regarded as of little worth.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor." Luke 4:18

Who cares about the poor?

A lot of people say they do, but who really cares?

What does it matter what happens to the poor?

Yet Jesus goes first to them!

"He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind.

To set at liberty those who are oppressed." Luke 4:18

And He does it in a very undramatic, unrevolutionary way. You don't get headlines by going to folks in convalescent homes, and spending time with people who live in the side-streets. Yet, when Jesus comes to town He concentrates on these forgotten ones.

John the Baptist couldn't believe it when the reports came to him that all Jesus ever did was fool around with these nobodies. John had set things up for a coup and Jesus was blowing it.

"Are you the one who is to come, or do we look for another?"

"Go and tell John again the things which you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." Luke 7:22

"Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind." Luke 14:21

And now, in Luke 15, comes the last straw:

Tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to Jesus to hear Him. And the Pharisees and the Scribes,

- who were deeply religious men,

- who, all their lives, had been praying and looking for the Kingdom of God,

are convinced by this that Jesus can't be of any real importance because He receives sinners and eats with them.

So Jesus spends the rest of the 15th chapter of Luke cluing them in, showing them what the Kingdom of God is really all about.

The Kingdom of God is here for the precise purpose of finding the lost, saving the sinner, remembering the forgotten.

There is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. Luke 15:12

The Cross of Jesus doesn't mean a thing to anybody except those who know that they're sinners.

Sinners can understand what Jesus was doing up there.

Sinners can appreciate why He shed His blood.

- They have at least some idea of the burden that weighed down on Him as He took sin upon Himself.

- They have some hint of the awful, God-forsaken, loneliness Jesus suffered as the Holy Father turned away from the sin Jesus carried to the death.

Who else can understand these things but the ones whose consciences are still alive enough to be troubled?

Who else is ripe for the comfort of that blood but those who have come to know that there is no other comfort in this world. None!

Hear my cry, O God.. Attend unto my prayer.

From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee,

When my heart is overwhelmed.

Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I. Psalm 61:2

The thing that Jesus is now doing in this city, and will be doing in the coming days, is exactly as He describes it in Luke 15, and exactly as He lived it in Israel of old.

Jesus is moving through the streets of this city, in the bodies of His people, looking for the very ones whom the world has forgotten. And, if we are going to be a genuine part of what Jesus Christ is doing, we're going, to be taking that low road with Him, we're going to be searching out the forgotten ones of this town.

No doubt this is why so many of us have been taken through a season when we knew what it was like to be forgotten.

Perhaps nobody guessed what we were going through, nobody cared any way.

It seemed as though nobody needed us,

nobody loved us.

Sometimes, it almost seemed as though God Himself forgot about us.

If there is anyone reading this who is going through one of those lonely deserts, the Lord wants to give you evidence that you aren't walking out there alone, that the loneliness you have felt is

now joined by his powerful presence.

- He will comfort you today!

- He will impart to you some vision of the good things that are in store for you even on this side of His return.

But the value of those lonely days (and once you've tasted them you never forget them) is that you at least have some inkling of what it's like for those people who are far more forgotten by this world than we have ever been.

What it's like for these people who are really out of it.

- We're not talking about some elaborate program of social justice.
- We're not talking about a war on poverty, welfare reform, women's rights.
- We're talking about one person at a time.
- We're talking about that one lost sheep, that one lost coin, that prodigal.
- We're talking about Lazarus sitting by your gate.
- We're talking about Mary Magdalene with seven devils waiting in the shadows for someone to come and give her some hope before she throws herself in the river.
- We're talking about the man who lives among the tombs.

These are the ones who get special attention from our God. Oh, it doesn't look like they're getting special attention. Lazarus looked like a forgotten man until he got to the other side of death. The man who lives among the tombs sure looks God-forsaken until Jesus comes.

But always, sooner or later, Jesus does come and He comes to them through us. Or, if we won't remember these forgotten ones, He will raise up somebody else in our place.

If we concentrate on these forgotten ones, the other people will find their way to us automatically.

Jesus didn't go out looking for Nicodemus. Nicodemus came looking for Him. The rich young ruler came to Jesus of his own accord.

When the followers of Jesus faithfully bring in the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind, when they diligently seek that one lost sheep and that one lost coin, that prodigal son, the Nicodemus', the rich young rulers, and the Josephs of Arimathea will somehow be drawn. They will find their way to the light.

Forget about trying to influence your important friend! You've told him and told him! Leave him for a while and go find that lonely little old man, go get that dirty eccentric, go bring that repulsive woman, go out and get that bore. Next thing you know, your hard-headed friend will be asking questions too.

When we go out on the streets most people rush by on their way to the latest bargain. Some people insult us, some even threaten us. But every once-in-a-while a person stops who is just so glad to have somebody to talk to, or who has such a burden he doesn't know what to do. These are the ones we're sent to.

For reasons of His own, God has included us in this last harvest. It's a glorious harvest, a miraculous and wonderful harvest from Heaven's point of view. But don't expect it to be dramatic from the world's viewpoint. It won't be.

- We're going to be harvesting the dregs.
- We're going to be going behind gleaning the souls that Satan and his army, in their sick pride, considered worthless.
- We're going to be going after that second cousin who spent the last ten years of his life in an institution.
- We're going to be running across those fellow misfits from our old high school class.
- We're going to get acquainted with the neighborhood nag.
- We're going to drink coffee with the most disagreeable man on the block.

And, we're going to bring them to the one place where these people are really welcome: The Kingdom of God.

You think this assembly is funny looking now? Wait until you see it in a few months!

And, as the banquet table fills up with sinners, with the misfits of this world,

- music from Heaven will be heard among us,
- songs coming from voices that are not human,
- shouts of praise that will roar like the thunder of the sea,
- the sound of harpers playing on harps,

and they will sing a new song as Babylon crumbles down and the earth is reaped in judgment.

"Just so, I tell you, there is more joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents...."

And that one sinner will repent if we will go out and find him and bring him home.

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