

The Dwelling of God

by Richard E. Bieber

The sermon emphasizes the importance of unity in the Body of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit in proclaiming the gospel and serving Jesus together.

Scripture: Joel 2:28, John 13:34, Acts 2:1, Acts 4:31, 1 Corinthians 1:10, 1 Corinthians 12:12, Ephesians 4:3, Colossians 3:14, Revelation 21:3

Topics: "Church Unity", "Holy Spirit"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches about the importance of believers being united as one Body in Christ, emphasizing the need to come together at the Cross, in love for one another, and in the work of the King. He highlights the power of the Holy Spirit working through believers when they are united, contrasting the cynicism and despair of the world with the new thing God is doing. Bieber urges believers to repent of selfishness, fear, and hardness of heart, and to embrace unity, love, and dedication to the King's work.

Transcript

"and I heard a great voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God Himself will be with them'" On the surface things have never looked more hopeless for really reaching people with the gospel of Jesus than they look now. It's like Sodom and Gomorrah out there. You've got to be a fool to believe that anyone out there is going to listen to you tell them that Jesus is Lord, or that Jesus is returning soon.

It's easy enough for us to sit here and talk about reaching the world with the gospel. But go out and try - and listen to what they say. "Yea, yea, I've heard that before!" "Look, man, if you want to live in that dream world and think you're in the Kingdom of God, fine. But don't come bugging me with that stuff." "I'm minding my own business, why don't you mind yours." We're tempted to say, "Let the world go to hell. Why should we go out there and beat our heads against a wall? ...Expose ourselves to their insults and ingratitude?..."

Let's just sit here with each other and wait it out. The end is near" Every group of believers for the last 2000 years that has withdrawn unto itself has died. The command is: "Go out into that world and proclaim the gospel. Call them to repent. Preach to them the remission of sins through my Cross. Disciple them." Jesus is not saying, "Open your church doors and give the hassled souls a chance to escape back into the 19th century as they enter the sanctuary." He says, "Go out into that world and proclaim my gospel!"

It would be hopeless if all we could see right now were that Sodom and Gomorrah out there. But there is something else that can be seen. To see this other fact makes all the difference: While Satan has poisoned the minds of this earth with cynicism and despair, God is also doing a new thing. In the last days, saith the Lord, I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, And your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams.

We all know that on the Day of Pentecost, and for a few years during the apostolic age, this prophecy of Joel was dramatically fulfilled. Jew and Gentile alike, as many as called on the name of Jesus, experienced this outpouring of the Spirit of God. Not hocus-pokus in somebody's living room. Not silly women and spineless men working themselves up into a state of effeminate hysteria. Power! Rock solid, fire-filled heaven sent Power! Power that changed lives. Power that drove the demons back to where they came from.

Power that filled and baffled multitudes with dumb-struck awe. Those apostles didn't have to advertise. They didn't have to bill themselves as "God's man for the hour." They knew that the Spirit of God was in them and when they spoke under the anointing of the Spirit things happened. And their world, which was also Sodom and Gomorrah, didn't know what to make of it. Suddenly everywhere you go you hear about Jesus. That was the Alpha time. Now we're at the Omega time. That was the beginning of the end.

Now we're at the end of the end. And what God did then and has been doing in out-of-the-way places these 2000 years, He is doing now with greater force on a wider scale than ever. God is doing a new thing. God is pouring out His Spirit in such power; that even the cynicism of our Sodom and Gomorrah world will crack, those gates of brass will yield, those bars of iron will break. Out on those streets, and in those bars, in hallways and alleys, the Word is going to be going forth so clearly people will break down, tremble, fall on their knees.

They're going to be knocking on the doors of the saints, pleading for help. Everywhere they can find Jesus they're going to be seeking. Wherever the power of God is present these things are already beginning to happen. And the power of God is present wherever believers function as a Body. Not the structured church. Not the clergy. Not the respectable nice people. Not the Christian Opportunists. The Body. "The dwelling of God is with men." That beautiful prophecy of the New Jerusalem is already fulfilled where the saints of God are together.

On Pentecost the Spirit did not come to one individual or two. He came to the Body. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit. All began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. All who believed were together and had all things in common. In Acts 4 we see the same thing. And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the Word of God with boldness. Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul.

They didn't have the "insiders" here and the "outsiders" there. And they didn't have the half-baked here and the committed there. All were committed. All were under the anointing. All spoke forth the Word of God with boldness. All who believed were of one heart and soul. When the Spirit moves He does not move on certain individuals for their own sake. He moves on all - the whole Body. "The dwelling of God is with men and he will dwell with them." Not with this man, or that man.

Men. The believers together. The believers in unity. Give the Spirit a Body, and he will move with power. And the body he needs is not just your body or mine, but all of us together. All our bodies joined in Jesus

into one living sacrifice. Here's a man who says, "I was reborn 5 years ago. I died to myself. Jesus lives in me now. I belong to Him." It all sounds very good. But then you find that the man is one of those "Lone Ranger" Christians. He's trying to follow Jesus all by himself.

It's as if there were no other believers in the world but him. If that man had died to himself and were living to Jesus, he would have found his place in the Body. He would have recognized that he is one flesh, one bone, one blood, one breath with every soul on earth who belongs to Jesus. That man would be practicing unity with brothers and sisters in some family of believers where the Spirit has set him ... and practicing unity means much more than singing, "We Are One In The Spirit" while we hold hands in a circle.

The Holy Spirit dwells in you to the extent that you are one with your brothers and sisters in your mind and heart and your daily life. When you are one in fact not in some little token act. 1. The dwelling of God is with us when we are one at the Cross of Jesus. If we're really going to get together we have to get to the Cross. Those barriers that separate us do not come down until we get to the Cross. We're blacks and whites and Spanish and German and young and old, long-haired and straight.

We are separate until we get to - the Cross. But when we get to the Cross then we're nothing but sinners before the Lamb of God. And we are one in our sin, one in his forgiveness, one in his blood. We've got nothing to be proud of anymore. Nothing to be defensive about. That garbage is behind us. As long as we stay close to the Cross we remain one. But as soon as we move away from it, we're right back into Satan's lies. The old walls are there again twice as high. That's what happened to the Corinthians.

They got away from the Cross and immediately their unity was gone. "I'm of Paul. I'm of Apollos. I'm of Cephas." We don't just start at the Cross. We live at the Cross. We stay there together as long as we are in this world. 2. The dwelling of God is with us when we are one in our love for each other. A new command I give to you that you love one another as I have loved you. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples because you have love for one another. Not love that's a quarter inch thick.

Not love that you put on when you go to church and take off when you get home. Not nauseating syrup. - Love that lays down its life for its brothers every day. - Love that denies itself. - Love that never makes a production out of what it's doing. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. But if this love doesn't flow among us, if we hold it back, if we're afraid to go out of our way for our brothers, if we're unwilling to show a little patience - a little forgiveness, if we retreat into our own ego world, the love of God in us dies - rots.

So that instead of going out there in the world with the love of God burning in us, we walk through that world under a cloud of fear and hate and paranoia. Believers have no power because they have no love. How are they going to love the lost when they have no self-denying love for each other? When they measure what they're getting instead of giving love. The Spirit is calling us this day to repent of our hardness of heart and our self-pity and to love one another. 3. The dwelling of God is with us when we are in our work.

It's not my work or your work. It's the King's work, and we fit into it together. If you're serving Jesus and I'm serving Jesus it's got to be one work. All too often it's as if there's one pile of bricks in the middle and I'm building a house here and you're building a house there, and Jack is building another house over there. So I'm trying to get the best bricks and you and Jack are doing the same. Someone comes along and says, "What are you building?" "O, I'm building something for the Lord."

"Whose initials are those on the cornerstone?" "R.E.B. - that's me. I just wanted to add a little personal touch, but it's really for the Lord." "See we're all doing it. Jack has his initials. Mary has hers. But it's all for the Lord... Jack! Put that brick down! It's my brick!" At last all our houses are built. All with our initials on the cornerstone. And God comes along and knocks them all down. "If you really want to be serving me go over there to my Son and start taking your orders from Him."

There stands Jesus with the scars in his hands directing a swarm of saints in building a single temple. They go where he sends them. They do what he tells them. There are not hundreds of churches in this city. There is only one. It's made up of the saints who are taking their orders from Jesus himself and fitting in with each other right down on the street level. It's made up of the saints who have quit doing their own thing and are about the business of proclaiming Jesus Christ and him crucified - to those multitudes out there ... those fainting sheep who know no shepherd.

If we are one in His work the dwelling of God is with us. When we have given up this nonsense of glorifying ourselves and work only to the glory of the King, then His power rests upon us. There was a time when we could close our eyes to reality out there and live in our own little church world and think we were getting away with it. Now God won't let us even think we're getting away with it. No group of believers is ever going to survive in this Sodom and Gomorrah much less do the job that needs to be done unless it has Power.

Power that can cut through the hard, cold, hostile anti-God spirit out there and conquer it. That Power is available in an intensity you might be afraid to imagine. That Power is hovering above our heads waiting to enter and fill our hearts and make us truly a light in this city and a terror to every evil thing that opposes itself against God. Power from on high that will confirm every true God-given word we speak with signs following. If we will but believe when He tells us that we are now one Body.

If we will but obey when He commands us to live that unity every day until He comes. The dwelling of God is with men now in the Spirit where there is unity. And he will dwell with them and they shall be his people. And God himself shall be with them and be their God. Fulfill it Lord in us today!

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