

The Inner Door

by Richard E. Bieber

The sermon emphasizes the importance of opening our inner door to God's transformative power through worship and repentance.

Scripture: Psalm 51:10, Isaiah 55:6, Luke 4:18, James 4:8, Revelation 3:20

Topics: "True Worship", "Heart Transformation"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches about the transformative power of true worship, emphasizing that our encounter with God should leave us changed, blessed, and empowered to spread blessings to others. Drawing parallels between the reactions to the readings by Ezra the Scribe and Jesus of Nazareth, he highlights the importance of having ears to hear the Word of God and allowing it to open the door to our hearts for the Spirit to bring life. The sermon stresses the need for repentance, vulnerability, and opening the door of our hearts to Jesus for transformation and healing.

Transcript

The test of whether anything real has happened to us while we are worshipping is the shape we're in when we go out the door.

If our minds were dull when we came in, are they still dull when we walk out? Or do we walk out changed, touched by the power of God, blessed, strengthened, cleansed?

Have we been empowered to go out there and spread some blessings to those lives we are going to touch?

True worship not only glorifies God, it can be a turning point in our lives.

Harry worked in the old Cadillac Assembly plant which was located just a few blocks from the church. There was a man in that plant who threatened Harry's life and made him miserable, so miserable that he decided that he better beat this guy to the punch. So Harry figured out a way to kill this man and get away with it.

On this particular Sunday, Harry is driving by the church and sees people in all shapes and sizes and colors going in; so he decides to check it out. He was a total stranger, we didn't know him, he didn't know us and I didn't find out about this incident until 5 years later, when he told me.

Harry had murder on his mind as he sat in here. Somehow during that service, he heard a voice and it said to him "Don't do it Harry." He walked out of church with his burden lifted. What really shook him was that two weeks later the man he planned to kill suddenly died of natural causes.

Harry walked into the church with his heart burdened and troubled, heard a word from God, went out a different man. And Harry has been in church almost every Sunday since. He was a hardnosed, troubled man in the beginning, became a servant in the fellowship and far beyond.

It is not likely that anyone reading these words is planning a murder. But each of us has some cloudy areas in our life that need cleansing. Each of us needs a redeeming touch. Is it too much to expect that while we are reading these words, that the Spirit of God would touch us and charge us with the power of heaven?

"Well," you say, "maybe if you preachers had a little more power in your message, we would come alive. At least we get to church. Don't we get any credit for sitting through your dull sermons?"

You may have a point, but before you make too much of it, consider the following contrast:

Ezra the Scribe

500 years before Christ we see Ezra standing in a wooden pulpit, in an open square, near to the old broken down wall of Jerusalem by the Watergate. The city is in ruins. Below the pulpit where Ezra stands is a huge assembly of people who have recently returned from exile in Babylon.

Ezra is reading from an old Hebrew scroll of the Law of Moses. Ezra is no spell-binder. No power point videos, no fancy music to back him up. He is reading in a monotone. Strangely, as he reads in his dry old voice, people begin to weep. The men are weeping, the women are weeping, the little ones look up at their parents and they start to weep.

They are repenting. They have begun to see how far they have drifted from God, and how gracious, kind and merciful God has been, despite their sin. Something inside of them has broken. Ezra keeps reading, while the Levites say to the people, "This day is holy to the Lord, your God, do not mourn and weep."

Finally, Ezra says to them, "Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to him for nothing is prepared for this day is holy to the Lord. Do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." Gradually, their weeping turns to joy and these people walk away from their outdoor service, renewed, refreshed, empowered to help and encourage each other rebuilt Jerusalem.

Jesus of Nazareth

We move ahead 500 years to the town of Nazareth. The whole town is gathered in the synagogue for Sabbath worship. A young man from the town stands up to read scripture.

They hand him a scroll from the prophet Isaiah, he unrolls it to Isaiah 61. He starts to read,

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor, he has sent me to proclaim release for the captives and recovering sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

He rolls up the scroll, gives it back to the attendant and sits down. The eyes of all in the synagogue are fixed on him. Then he drops his bomb: "Today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Words coming out of this man's mouth are like no other words ever spoken on earth. Every word coming out of Jesus' mouth burns with the fire of Heaven.

Do these people weep? Does the joy of the Lord become their strength?

No. The people are so offended, so angry, they drive him out of town and try to shove him off a cliff.

Ezra the scribe reads from the Bible in a monotone. Everybody starts to weep.

Jesus, the incarnate Word, speaks under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, they want to kill him.

One group leaves church refreshed, changed. The other group leaves church hardened.

What do we have to do to be able to hear the word in such a way that it changes us? Of course, in many churches these days the word is rarely heard. You have lectures on self-esteem, motivational speeches, this issue, that issue, how to prosper, how to succeed. But assuming the Word of the Lord is present, what does it take for us to really have ears to hear?

Inside the heart of each of us there is a door. That door was designed to open into God's world, where his Spirit burns with redemptive fire. The problem is that door inside each of us has been closed ever since the days of Adam and Eve. Not only closed, but locked.

Locked until we begin to grasp a glimmer of what the Word means. The minute we begin to catch on to what the Lord is saying, the lock falls off. The door is still stiff, the hinges are still rusty, but now that you have heard the word, it is possible for the door to open and the Spirit of God to bring life.

If, after once grasping the meaning of the Word, you repent, the door opens.

If you become offended, the door remains closed.

The only one who can open that door is you. No preacher can open that door, no evangelist. God himself won't open that door. It won't open until you reach down in there and begin to pull, forcing that rusty hinge to move.

So when Jesus says "Have faith," it means, Open the door.

When He says "Believe", he's saying, "Open the door".

When He says "Follow me," he's saying, "Open the door".

The moment you make an effort to open the door, you get help. God's Spirit comes to your aid and leads you into God's World. Suddenly the same thing that happened to those people by the Watergate happens to you. The same thing that happened to Harry happens to you. Something inside you begins to weep. Something hard in there, starts to break. You are standing on holy ground, you are beginning to repent.

As you throw yourself on the mercy of God, he begins to flood you with His love. He is blessing you, He is changing you, He is redeeming you, He is cleansing you.

And now our weeping turns to joy. The joy of the Lord becomes your strength and you walk away from the blessed moment flooded with God's peace.

"All right" you say, "but how come all those people at the Watergate opened the door when they heard Ezra the scribe reading scripture, while all those people in Nazareth kept it shut when they heard Jesus speak?"

The people gathered at the Watergate were starved for the word, they hadn't heard it for years. When they heard it, it was like a glass of cool water in the desert. It was like music after hearing nothing but noise. Whereas the people in Nazareth were complacent, "this guy has been around all these years; we've seen Him grow up." So then when Jesus speaks this word with anointed power, they become offended. Complacency hates to be disturbed.

When Harry stumbled into church that first Sunday, he wasn't complacent, he was thinking murder, but his heart was upset and troubled, needy. When he heard the voice of the Lord in his heart, he repented. Maybe Harry didn't weep outwardly, but he repented.

That door inside Harry and inside each of us is located at that place in us where there is the greatest need, where we are the most vulnerable, where there is a great big wound which only God can see.

Maybe I've been walking around with a grudge against somebody for years, and I don't even realize what this thing is doing to me --- how it's poisoning my life, destroying me.

Or maybe I'm a worrywart, and I think "Oh, well, that's okay. I'm a worrywart." Not realizing what that kind of thinking does to me.

Or maybe I'm a miser, I just love money, can't get enough of it, but I think of myself as a generous man, not realizing that covetousness is destroying me.

Maybe there is a volcano of anger in here that I keep repressing, I won't even look at it, but it is there, and then I wonder why I'm depressed all the time, why I am paralyzed emotionally.

Wherever the problem is, that's where the door is. And on the other side of that door, right now is the Spirit of the Lord. He is standing there with the scars of the nails in his hands that were driven in for our healing. So he says,

"Those who I love are reproved and chasten, so be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him and Him with me. I will come into her and eat with her and she with me."

"I'm going to have fellowship with you, I am going to connect with you, I am going to make my presence known and I am going to bring life into your death, into your loneliness, into your sadness, into that problem. "

The only one who can open my door is me. The only one that can open your door is you. We can open it if we will. The instant we do, Jesus does for us what we could never do for ourselves in a million years. He knows exactly what the problem is, He knows better than we do. He knows where that wound is, He knows where the problem is in each one of us. So, let's go ahead and open the door and come before him in prayer.

Lord Jesus, I repent of myself
and throw myself on your mercy!

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/richard-e-bieber/the-inner-door/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net