

Behold We Are Going Up to Jerusalem

by Richard E. Bieber

The sermon emphasizes the importance of following Jesus to the Cross, where we must be willing to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters, in order to experience true unity, power, healing, and joy.

Scripture: Isaiah 53:5, Luke 18:31, John 12:23, Romans 6:20, Hebrews 12:2

Topics: "The Cross", "Sacrificial Living"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches about the pivotal moment in Jesus' ministry when He declared His journey to Jerusalem to die on the cross, emphasizing the disciples' need to understand the significance of the Cross. He challenges believers to not just enjoy the benefits of the Cross but to personally embrace the sacrifice and surrender their lives at Calvary. Bieber urges Christians to follow Jesus to the Cross, emphasizing the necessity of laying down one's life, serving others, and finding unity and power in the journey towards Jerusalem.

Transcript

Read: Luke 18:31-43

There came a point in Jesus' ministry - and each of the four gospels refers to it in some way - when Jesus knew that it was time to go up to Jerusalem. Not as He went up to Jerusalem many times before to participate in some feast and teach and heal and then go back to Galilee. This time He was going up to Jerusalem to die.

And taking the twelve He said to them,

"Behold we are going up to Jerusalem and everything that is written of the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. They will scourge Him and kill Him, and on the third day He will rise."

This was the turning point - everything that went before this turning point was a preparation.

- This trip to the Cross was what He was born for.

- This is why He left the regions of everlasting light, to take away the sin of the world by the shedding of His life-blood.

From this point on, even though they don't get it, Jesus starts teaching the disciples about the Cross. Every day He's driving it into their heads about the Cross. One day they'll remember these things and they'll make sense; in the meantime He keeps hammering away.

The hour has come for the Son of God to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me he must follow me (to the Cross) that where I am there shall my servant be also (at the Cross).

Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? No, for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father glorify thy name!

Now is the judgment of this world. Now shall the ruler of this world be cast out. And 1, when I am lifted up from the earth (on a cross) will draw all men to myself.

John 12:23-31

We read these words Jesus spoke about His cross and we say, "Thank you, Lord!"

"Thank you for laying down your life."

"Thank you for taking my guilt upon yourself."

"Thank you for conquering the Evil One as I could never do."

"Thank you for breaking the curse of death."

But where so many believers mess up is that they think they can take the benefits of that Cross of Jesus,

- the forgiveness,

- the peace,

- the new life,

without ever getting near that cross themselves!

Mail-order salvation. Salvation from a safe distance. They want to be washed in the blood without ever getting near the blood!

My friend, if you want to be clean, you have to go up there to Calvary and wash in that blood. If you want to be redeemed you have to get down on your face and take hold of that cross. It won't happen just by singing "That Old Rugged Cross" with tears in your eyes. You have to go up to Jerusalem with Jesus.

Note carefully in the gospel Jesus does not say to his disciples;

"You fellows stay here down in Jericho and lay low. I'm going up to Jerusalem to die for your sins. And when I've won the victory and risen from the dead, I'll meet you back in Galilee."

Jesus says:

"Behold we are going up to Jerusalem. I'm going to die for your sins. But you're going to go through these things with me and learn what it's all about. Then, when I'm risen from the dead, I'll go with you to your Jerusalem and your cross."

"If anyone serves me, he must follow me. Not just through the villages of Galilee, not just up the grassy hillsides where the birds are singing and the sky is blue, but to Jerusalem - to the Cross."

This was the lesson these disciples had to learn and they learned it. Every one of those men except Judas went up to a Jerusalem of His own - to a cross of some kind. They poured out their lives in Jesus' name and the power of Jesus rested upon them.

There will be no unity in the Body of Christ on earth at this hour.

There will be no power.

There will be no liberty and there will be no joy until the people who say so profusely that they believe in Jesus start following Jesus up to Jerusalem.

I see plenty of saints who in their living are headed toward Babylon.

They're after the money.

They're after the fame.

They're after the power.

They call it Kingdom work but it's all flesh work and it will all go up in smoke with the rest of Babylon.

I see saints who are headed toward the Dead Sea to meditate and find serenity. They turn their Bible into a Dead Sea Scroll. They build a wall around themselves to shelter them against the ugly realities of this world and cover the wall with scripture verses.

I see saints who are headed with starry eyes toward Harvard and Yale and Oxford. They have theological jargon dripping out of their ears - but no life, no vision, no insight, no wisdom. They can read Hebrew, Greek, French and German but they have as much a grip on reality as a dead fish.

I see saints who are headed toward their camp meeting and their feet-stomping religious pep rallies. They shout and sing and cry and wave their arms around and have a great time. But at the first sight of real blood they pass out.

I see saints wandering around the borderlands of the occult. Flirting with the spirit world. Having demon hunts. Playing the old "you-got-one-leg-shorter-than-the-other-let-me-pray-for-you" game. Toying around with peoples bodies and spirits, and having the audacity to say they're doing this nonsense in the name of Jesus.

But where are the saints who are going with Jesus up to Jerusalem? Where are the saints who are following Jesus to that Cross? Where are the saints who are laying down their lives for their brothers and sisters? Where are the saints who have truly put themselves into the hands of the master to be with Him - broken bread and poured out wine for that sick, troubled, lost, hopeless mass of humanity out there for whom the Son of the living God shed His blood?

The call of Jesus is going out to His church on earth at this hour with the same message that He gave to the twelve that day as they drew near to Jericho, He is saying to us: "Behold we are going up to Jerusalem".

The hour in which you and I live is a turning point for all the disciples on earth.

We are now entering into a time for which all our past life was but a preparation.

- The fun and games are over.

- The days of idleness and self-indulgence are over.

We've come around that turn in the road and the Cross, our cross, is in full view.

We are going up to Jerusalem with Jesus. And when we're heading toward Jerusalem with Jesus the world is behind us - we are free from our bondage to it.

Every time our mind wanders -

Every time our eyes roam -

Every time our memory conjures up some alluring picture of the flesh-pots of Egypt, the Spirit of Jesus reminds us instantly "You don't belong to that any more. You don't need that any more - you're free!" And we go forward praising God that we are free as we have never been free in our lives.

When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But then what return did you get from the things of which you are now ashamed? The end of those things is death. But now that you have been set free from sin and become slaves to God, the return you get is sanctification and its end eternal life. Romans 6:20-22

And the only ones who are actually free from sin, death and the power of the devil - the world - are those whose faces are set toward Jerusalem and whose hearts are fixed on their cross.

If you're still having trouble with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, it's because you don't have Jerusalem in view. You got your mind off the goal and Satan was right there to dangle some goodies before your eyes.

"Behold we're going up to Jerusalem" - we're not slaves any more we are free men and women bound only to that Cross up ahead.

When we are heading toward Jerusalem with Jesus we are one.

People whose sins are covered by the Lamb's blood and who are following Him unto death have to be one.

They have no rights to stand up for any more. They have nothing of their own to be imposing on their brothers and sisters. They are bound together by His death and their own.

I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice - one beautiful glorious living sacrifice - one blazing bush out of which the voice of God still speaks.

Where there is no unity, it's because there is no Cross. The saints are doing their own thing - scattered like wandering sheep upon the mountains of Israel. But when they hear that call, "Behold we are going up to Jerusalem" and they obey it, they must come together.

When we are headed toward Jerusalem with Jesus we are anointed with power to bless other lives.

"Jesus, Son of David have mercy on me." "What do you want me to do for you?" "Lord, let me receive my sight." "Receive your sight, your faith has made you well."

It was no coincidence that Jesus' words about going up to Jerusalem to die are immediately followed by a miracle of healing. Every miracle Jesus ever performed was an out-flowing of life from that Cross to which Jesus' heart was already nailed.

He was wounded for our transgressions.

He was bruised for our iniquities.

The chastisement of our peace was upon Him.

And with His Stripes we are healed. Isaiah 53:5

And the healing that God has willed to flow from our hands and from our lips has its source not in some cross of long ago and far away - but in a Cross on which we are nailed with Jesus now.

It's the Jerusalem-bound saints who are the healers. Watch out for those so-called healers with their private jets and their \$900 suits. The real healers are the insignificant little saints who bear about in their bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus - who are continuously being given up to death for Jesus' sake so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in their mortal (dying) flesh.

You're heading toward Jerusalem with Jesus and some broken soul cries out to you for help. You can help! You have something to give. God will confirm your words of hope to that soul. God will awaken faith in that heart even as you speak.

You have a well of divine life in you. And the source of that well is the Cross of Jesus on which your heart already hangs with Him.

When we're heading toward Jerusalem with Jesus we have joy.

Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:2

And that joy is set before every follower of Jesus who is heading toward Calvary - joy that will make you sing.

You won't need to have the right tune or rhythm. You won't have to wait for the right mood, you'll sing with joy any song or hymn that glorifies Jesus. You won't have to wait for the sun to come out, you'll have joy at midnight walking through total darkness.

Show me the saints who are marching up to Jerusalem to die with Jesus and I'll show you saints who have found the joy that no man can take from them. Saints who will be rejoicing all the way to the journey's end and on into the halls of glory, across the sea of glass mixed with fire, right up to the very throne of the Most

High.

So the question to every believer and every earnest seeker reading this today is this:

Are you ready this day to start going with Jesus toward Jerusalem?

Are you willing to round that bend in the road with Him and head for a cross with your name on it that stands waiting for you at the journey's end?

If you are - tell Him now. But don't tell Him unless you mean it - because Jesus will take you at your word.

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