

Fitting In

by Richard E. Bieber

The sermon emphasizes the importance of fitting into Jesus' will rather than expecting Him to conform to our desires and plans.

Scripture: John 8:12

Topics: "Jesus' Ministry", "Spiritual Surrender"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches about the unique approach of Jesus in fitting into the lives of people, meeting them in their pain, loneliness, and suffering. He emphasizes that Jesus always fits into the heart-cries of broken spirits and contrite souls, offering forgiveness, healing, and freedom. However, Bieber warns against the tendency to expect Jesus to fit into our plans and desires, urging believers to align themselves with the will of Jesus just as Jesus aligned with the will of the Father. He highlights the importance of complete surrender and obedience to Jesus, rather than trying to make Jesus conform to our expectations.

Transcript

Read : Matthew 11:2-10

John 8:12

When Jesus of Nazareth began His work there was something about the way He did things that set Him apart from every prophet who had ever come to Israel before.

John the Baptist, for instance, the last and greatest of the prophets located himself on the bank of the Jordan River and made people come to him, made the people fit in with him. This was his privilege as a prophet of God.

But Jesus went to where the people were. He bent down to them. Jesus didn't start by making people fit into His program. Jesus started by fitting into

- their pain,
- their loneliness,
- their suffering.

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
to the captives and recovering of
sight to the blind and to set at
liberty those who are oppressed, to
proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

Of course, Jesus didn't fit into people's vanity.

He didn't fit into the little religious games of the scribes and pharisees.

He didn't fit into King Herod's whims when Herod wanted to see a demonstration of miraculous power.

He didn't fit into Judas' ambitions.

But always, without any exceptions, Jesus fit into the heart-cries of broken spirits and contrite souls.

And He still does.

When you get to the end of yourself and cry out to Him with all your heart, instantly Jesus is there - every time, He never fails.

Everyone who asks receives, he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened.

If there's anybody reading these words who's at the end of his rope, you don't know which way to turn, the Son of God doesn't just look at you from way off

in heaven and feel sorry for you,

- He comes down to where you are.

- Touches you with the finger of God.

- If your heart is crying to Him for forgiveness, Jesus forgives those sins right now.

- If you're yearning for healing, for a solution to a personal problem, or freedom from some devastating habit, or some haunting fear,

Jesus Christ fits in with you just the same as He fit in with the blind and the lame and the lepers of old.

There are people who are going to look up from these pages knowing that they have been touched by the finger of God.

The burden has lifted.

The fear has gone.

The affliction is healed.

But to have Jesus draw near and touch our lives with healing is only the beginning. How many people who experienced that touch in the days of Jesus' flesh-ministry turned around and walked right back into the darkness.

They were healed, forgiven, set free from bondage.

But instead of walking in the light Jesus had now given them, they went their own way.

Today we see people wonderfully delivered, overflowing with joy. The flame burns brilliantly for a short while and then it flickers out. Why?.....As long as Jesus in His mercy was fitting into their great need, everything was fine.

But, when it came time for them to fit into the will of Jesus Christ, when it came time for them to get up and start following the Light which had come to them, they began to argue,

and question,

and doubt,

and rebel.

"You're not coming up to my expectations, Lord."

"I'm beginning to wonder whether you're really the one."

"Are you the One who is to come, or do I have to look elsewhere?"

There are two things we have to understand if we're going to stay in that light which has visited us in Jesus Christ:

First, the only reason Jesus could bring life to this dying race was because He fit into His Father's will at every point. He could bring God down into our lives because He obeyed God.

The most important thing for Jesus was not to meet the needs of men but to do His Father's will.

- Jesus was not a humanist.

- He was not sentimental.

- Jesus was the obedient Son of the Holy God.

My meat and drink is to do the will of Him who sent me and to accomplish His work.

I have not come to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent me.

When Jesus put His fingers on blind eyes, and those eyes opened, it was not because of His burden for the blind, but because of His utter and complete abandon to the will of His Father.

Jesus could call men back from the dead, feed the multitudes with five buns and a couple of fish, command the storm to cease.

He had authority over these things,

- because He was absolutely submitted to

the authority of His Father,

- did absolutely nothing out of his right

to himself,

- sought nothing but to please His Father.

- He obeyed.

The Cross was not Jesus' idea. It was the Father's command. So He submitted. "Lo, I come to do your will O God." He laid down His life and the curse that was on this race was broken.

All the time there were those who wanted Jesus to fit in with their plans, their idea of what Jesus should be and do. Even His mother -

"Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you anxiously."

"How is it that you sought me? Didn't you know I must be in my Father's house?"

John the Baptist -

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

"Go tell John again the things which you see and hear.... and blessed is he who is not offended in me."

The apostle Peter -

"Lord, you're not going up to Jerusalem to die!"

"Get behind me Satan. You savor not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men."

Never once did Jesus waver from His Father's will to fit in with somebody's expectations - and so the Father's purpose was worked out on this earth through Him.

Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father but by Him.

The second thing we must understand, if we are going to stay in the light which has visited us in Jesus Christ, is that Jesus now calls us to fit in with Him in exactly the same way He fit in with the Father.

Listen carefully:

The men and women who have the authority of the Living God resting upon their lives, through whom God's redemptive power gushes forth and heals, restores, gives life to others, are not those who claim, with their mouths, to have

this power - not those who make a production out of the spiritual gifts they say they have - but those who have given up all rights to themselves and who fit in, body, soul, and spirit, to the will of Jesus Christ.

If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love

him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling in him.

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever.

Just as God sent His Son to fit into your need, to die on the Cross for your sin, so that you might pass from death to life, so -

if you want to enter into that life,

if you want to walk with Jesus in the power of His resurrection,

if you want to have the Spirit of the Living God dwelling in you,

you have to fit in to the will of your Lord!

And, that's the last thing we want to do, especially when we get to be "spiritual."

We're "spiritual,"

- now we think we know what the Kingdom is all about,

- now we think we understand what God is doing,

and we're forever trying to make Jesus Christ fit in with our picture. We're trying to bend the Son of God to fit our vision. Before we know it we're trying to use Jesus to fulfill our plans.

And when Jesus fails to fit in with our plans we get bitter.

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

Yes, there are men and women by the hundreds who will gladly take to themselves a false Christ - a Christ who does not have the marks of Calvary on His body - but who will fit in with their ambitions.

They will gladly deceive themselves - deliberately evade the warnings of the Lord and listen to any lying spirit that comes along in order to have a Christ who will gratify their vanity and make them successful in the eyes of men.

Once the light of the living God in Jesus Christ has come down to you and lifted you up, it's no longer a matter of Jesus fitting in with you, my friend, you fit in with Him as completely as Jesus fit in with His Father.

If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me (fit in with me) cannot be my disciple.

Whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

So now, the question comes to those who have met Jesus and have tasted His grace.

Are you still trying to make things go your way, angry when they don't. Upset even about the weather - always kicking against your circumstances.

Or, have you really given yourself over to your Lord? Day-by-day, hour-by-hour yielding to Him?

I am the light of the world; he who follows me (fits in with me) will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.

Are you following Jesus? Or, are you still trying to make Jesus follow you? Are you His, for Him to do with as seems good to Him, even if He puts you in the wilderness and lets you spend your days shining to the glory of God, unobserved by any man?

Or, are you still trying to use Jesus to advance your own little kingdom?

If it's God's Kingdom that we want, then the word of the Lord to us this day is very simple:

The time has come for us to give up trying to make Jesus fit in with us. It's time for us to fit in with Him.

If you love me, keep my commandments, fit in with my will, and I will use you as I please to hasten the coming of my Kingdom.

PRAYER

Lord God, help me to trust you for all things, so that I may serve you with joy, wherever you put me. Wherever you put me!

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