

From Dead Works to Living Service

by Richard E. Bieber

The sermon emphasizes the transformative power of living service through a genuine relationship with God, encouraging believers to dwell in His presence and minister life to others.

Scripture: Psalm 91:1, Matthew 5:14, Ephesians 4:15, 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Hebrews 4:16, Hebrews 9:14, Hebrews 10:19, Hebrews 13:15, 1 John 1:7

Topics: "Holy Service", "Christian Unity"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches on the transformative power of Jesus' blood to purify our conscience from dead works, enabling us to serve the living God. He contrasts the lifeless teachings of the Scribes with the life-giving ministry of Jesus, emphasizing the importance of dwelling in the Holy of Holies to experience God's presence. Believers are encouraged to come together in unity, confessing Christ before men, stirring one another to love and good works, and never neglecting to meet for fellowship and encouragement.

Transcript

.....how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Hebrews 9 When Jesus came on the scene the people noticed a tremendous difference between what he was doing and the work of all the other teachers in Israel. Both Jesus and the other teachers taught out of the Bible. Both quoted Moses and the Prophets. Both taught the Commandments. But things happened in peoples' lives when Jesus taught that never happened in a lifetime of "church-going" under the teaching of the Scribes.

It's not that the Scribes deliberately tried to keep people in the dark - the Scribes were religious, upright, Bible students. But you got the feeling that they were talking about a God they themselves did not really know. Whereas when you listened to Jesus you knew that God's very life was coming through the man's mouth. To this day there are believers who can open their mouths and speak, and life flows. They stretch out their hands and minister, and things happen - while others can quote the Bible or talk profound theology - but it's death.

Even the good deeds they try so hard to do just make you feel uncomfortable. There is a difference between dead works and living service. Living service brings life to everything it touches. Every believer reading these words ought to be able to perform living service to God. Every one of us ought to be able to go out into the world and minister life, touch people with the finger of God, speak words that will ring with

the authority of Heaven. God did not bring us into the Body of Christ merely to make us feel better, or give us spiritual thrills.

God brought us together to empower us to exercise a corporate ministry of life to that dead world out there. You are the light of the world. You are the salt of the earth. You are a city set on a hill. If flesh-born people are ever going to see the Kingdom of God it will be through you and people like you. And yet, we're all too well aware of the fact that much of the time it isn't happening. - we open our mouth and speak but the words are dead - words, words, words, but not a living one among them. - we try to do good deeds yet we know that something's missing.

In Hebrews chapters 9 and 10 we are shown what makes the difference between dead works and living service. When people have ideas in their heads about who God is and what God requires, and what God promises, but are not actually living in conscious communion with God - - not walking in God's blazing, holy, glorious, wonderful presence, - they cannot produce anything but dead works no matter how hard they try. The ancient Tabernacle had an outer court and a holy place inside where the priests came and went.

And deep inside, behind a veil, was the Holy of Holies where God focused his presence. Nobody could go in there but the High Priest, once a year. But now - through the blood of Jesus - the veil in front of the Holy of Holies has been opened. And those who belong to Jesus can pass with Him through the veil into the Holy of Holies and live in God's shining presence all the time. In order to produce living service to the living God you have to dwell - - not in the outer court of the temple, - not even in the holy place where the priests come and go (religion), - but in the Holy of Holies, behind the veil where God Himself shines with heaven's light.

You have to dwell there! You have to know that there is nothing standing between you and God! No sin standing in-between so that God's life and Spirit and joy are pouring down on you like a waterfall. This was the difference between Jesus and the scribes. Jesus' relationship with His Father even as He walked the earth as a man was absolutely unclouded. There wasn't the slightest tinge of doubt, or rebellion, or self-will hanging between - - so that every word Jesus spoke came directly from the Father!

By contrast, the scribes were mere theoreticians - they knew the doctrine, the theology, but not the God to whom these things pointed. They were outside the veil - something was hanging between. Their communion was blocked - and without living communion with God it was impossible for them to impart to others anything but death. In Hebrews 9 and 10 we are also told how ordinary people like you and me can come into the Holy of Holies and remain in clear, pure, wonderful communion with the living God and serve Him by imparting his life to others.

In Chapter 9 we are told that the obstacle which has stood between God and us is now removed by the blood of the Lamb - not theoretically removed - actually removed! How much more shall the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God. And yet there are countless people who hear those beautiful words from Hebrews 9 all their lives and never experience them. They hear about having their conscience purified, but it never happens.

The cloud is still there between the heart and God. They never get on to Hebrews 10 which tells us how to make it our experience. Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary, the Holy of Holies, by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way which he opened for us through the curtain, that

is through his flesh, and since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering for he who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. 1. Notice that this passage is in the plural. Since we have confidence to enter and since we have a great high priest, let us draw near. We don't come alone into the holy presence of God, we come in together and get washed in the blood together.

To come into the Holy of Holies we have to leave our little individualistic compartments and become one. Our Father who art in heaven.... Give us this day our daily bread.... Forgive us our trespasses..... Lead us not into temptation.... Deliver us from evil.... You will never experience the presence of the living God who dwells behind that veil of flesh and sin until you break down and come together with brothers and sisters and go through that veil together. Jesus sought you as an individual.

But when He found you, He set you in the Body. - He put you in a family. - He gave you brothers and sisters. - You are not an only child (for your own good you are not an only child.) 2. This passage tells us that we can come into the presence of God now! Because the blood of Jesus was shed for us and clears away our guilt before God - and because Jesus stands in God's presence with us as our great high priest. There isn't a person reading these words who can't come into the holy presence of God - now! (if your sins are still condemning you - turn away from them, confess them and put them under the blood.

Jesus paid for those sins. He atoned for them. Let go of them - let them sink under the blood at the foot of the cross.) And if you are afraid of God's holiness look up and see that we are not alone in this awesome place. The High Priest stands with us before the Throne of the Most High interceding for us. 3. This passage says - Draw near! Knowing that the way is opened by the blood, and knowing that we have a great high priest, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.

Come! Don't stand at a distance! Draw near! If our hearts are sprinkled with that blood and our bodies are washed in the Word and Spirit of God, we can come right into the presence of the living God like the angels in Heaven. "Father, here we are! Father, flood our lives with thy holiness, your purity, thy perfect love. Hold us in your hand. Keep us in your glorious light." And it is done! 4. Next this passage tells us how we can stay in the Holy of Holies - not just for an hour, but forever, day and night, no matter where we are, dwelling in the secret place of the Most High, abiding under the Shadow of the Almighty.

To stay in the holy presence of God we have to exercise our ministry. You don't just come in and sit. You come in and do His will. And our ministry is to confess Jesus before men. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering for he who promised is faithful. Now when we confess Jesus Christ before men, crucified and risen - things happen! Because we are confessing Christ, not out of our flesh, but from the Holy of Holies! We are not guessing about it. We are not just repeating it as something we heard from someone else.

We are confessing the Christ we see here in the Holy of Holies as our High Priest. We are confessing the blood we feel washing our own heart and conscience 24 hours-a-day. On the other hand, when we let go of our confession we lose our place in the Holy of Holies. 5. To stay in the Holy of Holies we stir up one another to love and good works. I need to have brothers and sisters stirring me to love, stirring me to good

works - and they need me to be stirring them - "let's go out and do that thing!"

"let's go out and help that brother!" "let's not forget so-and-so." Not nagging. Not criticizing. Stirring up one another to do these things. 6. To stay in the Holy of Holies we never neglect meeting together. Fellowships don't have to grow weary. Fellowships don't have to be torn by strife. Fellowships don't have to dwindle. Fellowships don't have to be processions where people are going out the back door as fast as they're coming in the front. God will preserve us and continuously refresh us if we do our part in : Not neglecting to meet together as is the habit of some.

This is not a luxury - it's a necessity. Some of us still don't understand how important this is. It is not a luxury - it's a necessity. 7. We are to encourage one another.encouraging one another all the more as you see the Day drawing near. It's when we meet together under the Spirit of God, and encourage one another in the will of God that the experience of being in God's presence is renewed to us. When the service ends, we start serving God by encouraging one another.

If we have been ministering death instead of life - If our words have been hollow and our hearts dry - it's because we have been dwelling outside the veil of the Holy of Holies. There is no reason why we can't come in right now. God help us together to come into His blazing presence today and dwell there. Not to be satisfied with anything less than living in His presence all the time. God help us to deal right now with anything - anything that stands in the way - that we may go out into the world with consciences that are purified by the blood of the Lamb from dead works, to serve the living God.

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