

Inside the Covenant

by Richard E. Bieber

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living in a covenant relationship with Jesus to experience His power and authority in our lives.

Topics: "Covenant Living", "Lordship Submission"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches about the power of living inside the covenant with Jesus, emphasizing the importance of submission to Jesus' lordship over our lives, the church, and the earth. He highlights the difference between using a formula for power and being in a covenant relationship with Jesus, as seen in the story of the seven sons of Sceva. Bieber urges believers to drink from the new covenant, where Jesus is Lord, and to let His life and power flow through them by submitting to His will in all aspects of life.

Transcript

And God did extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs or aprons were carried away from his body to the sick, and diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them. Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to pronounce the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. But the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, mastered all of them, and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. And this became known to all residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks; and fear fell upon them all; and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled. Acts 19:11-17

These seven sons of Sceva traveled around the Greek world, found the Jewish community in each city, and would hold meetings where they specialized in casting out demons. When they came across Paul at Ephesus they were struck by the authority Paul had at his command. It looked as if Paul had developed a better formula ... Paul had tapped into a better source of power ... this "Jesus thing" really worked for him, so they decided to use Paul's formula.

What they didn't understand was that Paul wasn't using a formula. Paul was not an exorcist,

or a magician,

or a wizard,

or a spiritualist.

The healing and life which flowed from Paul's mouth and from Paul's hands poured out of this man because he was standing inside a covenant that was totally invisible to the spiritually blind eyes of the seven sons of Sceva. There was an invisible circle containing Paul and Jesus. They were in covenant.

It wasn't what Paul knew that gave him this power, but who Paul knew. Paul had come into a covenant relationship with the Lord of Lords. Everything Paul did was done in submission to his Lord ... so the life of his Lord flowed freely through him.

"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me."

....."I am Jesus' bond-slave I am his servant."

And this wasn't just pulpit talk for Paul, this was his life. So out of this man Paul came rivers of living water.

Sometimes we are like the seven sons of Sceva. We read our Bibles and see power flowing from the prophets and the apostles. But when we try to use this power the way they used it, nothing happens. Sometimes it even backfires and we get hurt.

- We read about Abraham bargaining with God to try to save the city of Sodom.
- We read about Jacob wrestling with the Lord.... "I won't let you go unless you bless me!"
- We read about Moses interceding with God to keep him from destroying the Israelites.
- We read Jesus' parable of the man going to his friend at midnight demanding bread for his midnight guest.

"How come when I try to haggle with God, or wrestle with God or even pester God nothing happens ... sometimes things even seem to get worse?"

What we fail to see is that long before Abraham haggled with God over Sodom, Abraham got inside the circle. Abraham had entered into a covenant with God ... Abraham had submitted to God as Lord of his life.

And long before Jacob wrestled with God at the Jabbok River, Jacob had submitted to God as Lord of his life at Bethel.

Long before Moses fell on his face and pleaded God's mercy over a rebellious Israel, Moses had surrendered his life into the hands of God at the burning bush.

And the man who went to his friend at midnight did not go with a prayer formula, he read in some Christian "Bless Me" Book. He went to one he knew, one with whom he was already in covenant.

People keep saying, "Why don't we have the power they had?" The answer is simple: when we live inside the covenant in which they lived, the power will flow ... as God chooses.

On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and proclaimed, "If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, 'Out of his heart shall flow rivers of

living water.'" John 7:37-38

"If any one thirst let him come to me and drink." Don't watch me from a distance... don't admire me from afar. Come and drink what I have to give you.

... "he who believes in me, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water."

To believe in Jesus means commitment to him.

"Take and drink the blood of the new covenant shed for your sins."

The blood of the new covenant what's the new covenant? When a man and woman marry, that's a covenant. "I commit myself to you for life ... you commit yourself to me for life." As they stay inside that covenant with their behavior, with their thoughts, their love grows and there's power and blessing in it.

The old covenant began at the foot of Mt. Sinai when Moses sacrificed oxen, threw half their blood on the altar, spoke God's commands to them. "We will do it!" they replied. Then Moses threw the other half of the blood on the people.

Much more radical and consuming is the new covenant in the Lamb's blood. It means that I agree that Jesus bought me with his death and is now raising me to life by his Spirit, and that now I am not mine but his. He is my Lord ... I am his servant, his slave. Inside this covenant is tremendous freedom and unspeakable power.

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come..

II Corinthians 5:16-17

... if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation what does it mean to be in Christ? It means to be in covenant with him ... to be in submission to him, dead to myself, alive to him. Crucified with him so that he can live in me.

Our problem has been that we get the doctrines and the principles of the new covenant down cold, but when it comes to the way we treat our mate,

the way we handle our money,

the way we function on the job, we step outside the covenant.

"It's my money! ... it's my time! Those are my kids! I'll deal with them according to my mood."

There will be a difference in the way we live,

the way we treat each other,

the way we handle our possessions,

the way we function on the job, when we live inside the covenant.

"Take and drink the blood of the new covenant."

If I drink this blood and enter this covenant, this means three things:

1. Jesus is Lord over my life.
2. For me, Jesus is Lord over his Body, the church. (No one rules the church but he.)
3. For me, Jesus is Lord over the earth. (No one rules the earth but he.)

1. I stay inside the new covenant by submitting to Jesus' lordship over my life.

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me."

If Christ lives in me ... if I live by faith in him ... this means I submit to him. I get up each day and present my body to him ... submit my mind to his mind.

I need to keep reminding myself that Jesus is not my servant to give me my hearts desires. I am his servant to do what he desires.

"Behold, the handmaid of the Lord," said Mary.

"Let it be to me according to your word."

And that's how she lived. And when her son was grown, the one prayer that governed his life was,

"Lo, I came to do your will, Father. Not my will ... your will."

As his followers we submit to him as he submitted to the Father. If Jesus says, "Feed my sheep,"

... we feed sheep.

If Jesus says, "Let your light shine,"

... we let it shine.

If Jesus says, "Love your enemies,"

... we obey.

2. I stay inside the new covenant by submitting to Jesus' lordship over his body, the church.

Churches split, divide, fall apart when we try to rule them, or when we submit to the rule of some man or woman instead of Christ.

But when we submit to His lordship over the Body, and walk in the light as He is in the light, then we have fellowship with one another and His blood cleanses us from all sin.

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call.... Ephesians 4:1-4

...one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord one!

"But I still don't know what my ministry is here in the Body. I don't know what the Lord is calling me to do."

Listen to his words to us,

"If I then, your Lord and master, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you."

Our primary call in the Body is to wash feet ... some act of service ... something to refresh that sister or brother.

- A refreshing word.
- A bit of help with transportation.
- Money for their needs.
- Some hospitality.

When I submit to Jesus as Lord over this body and start washing feet I stay inside the covenant. Foot washing with no partiality ... every member of the Body treated with respect.

- A word of encouragement.
- A deed of encouragement....

for any brother or sister who needs it.

3. I stay inside the new covenant by submitting to Jesus' lordship over the earth.

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and get gain"; whereas you do not know about tomorrow. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and we shall do this or that."

James 4:13-15

We find it hard to see how Jesus is Lord over Babylon out there. So when we go to the plant,
or the school,
or the hospital,
or the office,
or the neighborhood meeting,
or the warehouse,
we often act as if "in this rat race, I'm on my own."

"Excuse me, Lord, but I work at Ford. I have to step outside the covenant to work at Ford. I have to run this rat race by the rules of Babylon."

No, wherever we are, whatever the problem, whatever the program is, Jesus is Lord there too. And we stay inside the covenant ... we are his servant in that place. And as we stay inside the covenant, the life of God fills us, the power of the Lord moves in us, the lordship of Jesus is confirmed before our eyes in that place ... people in that place are touched by him through us.

"Take and drink the blood of the new covenant shed for your sins."

If we drink this blood,

If we stay inside this covenant, our lives will burn with his life and his power will flow forth from us like a river.

The question each of us needs to ask is:

"Am I living inside the covenant?"

Daily, in every situation---am I living right now within the new covenant?"

If we are, we will know it and every life we touch will feel the impact.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/richard-e-bieber/inside-the-covenant/>

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