

The Door to His Presence

by Richard E. Bieber

To wait on the Lord is to worship Him, seek His Kingdom, and do His will, which is mercy, resulting in renewed strength and a life of service to God.

Scripture: Isaiah 40:28, Matthew 5:7, Matthew 6:9, Mark 14:26, Philippians 3:10, Revelation 7:9

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Eternal Strength"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches about the power and strength we receive from Jesus' death and resurrection, enabling us to rise above life's storms. Despite our weaknesses, we can learn from Peter's journey of faith and how he overcame his failures through the power of the Holy Spirit. By waiting on the Lord through worship, seeking His Kingdom above all else, and doing His will of mercy, we can mount up on wings like eagles, run without growing weary, and walk without fainting.

Transcript

Jesus died on the cross and rose again so that we might have, burning within us, a flame from heaven so strong that, no matter what storms come sweeping over us, we're able to rise above them.

He poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit so that we should have such strength that we can never say, "I'm the victim of circumstances. It's too much! I can't handle it."

Yet, who of us has arrived at such a place of power?

"When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. And Jesus said to them, 'You will all fall away; for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.'" Mark 14: 26

Here was a word of hope that they could have seized upon, and by the strength of that word, could have continued through the crisis. But no-body seemed to hear it.

Peter said to him, "Even though they all fall away, I will not." And Jesus said to him, "Truly, I say to you, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times." But he said vehemently, "If I must die with you, I will not deny you."

We know what happened. That night it came to pass exactly as Jesus said. Peter ran out of gas. And the circumstances of that awful night rolled over him and flattened like a bulldozer.

We can relate to what Peter went through. How many times have we started out with great enthusiasm ... we're going to live for God ... we're going to serve the Kingdom ... we are going to go all the way with Jesus ... and then we run out of gas. Circumstances engulf us like a ten-foot wave.

Jesus sends us out to make disciples of all nations. We are to turn the world upside down. But instead, the world turns us upside down.

Why is it that we seem to make it for a while? Maybe six months. Five or ten years, maybe. Then suddenly, we're drained of strength. Circumstances that we could handle before, become too much. Somebody hurts our feelings. Too many problems come at us at once. We're torn between God and mammon. We faint in the middle of the road. And the world walks past us without a glance of care.

Where are we missing it? What's wrong?

Peter learned a lesson that night. He learned how weak he really was. He learned that if he was ever going to be able to rise above his circumstances and stand against the powers of darkness, it would have to be by a power which was not his own.

After the resurrection and after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, we see Peter rising up out of the dust of his past failures, able now to stand against forces which before would flatten him.

Now we see Peter standing before the rulers of Israel, men who have authority to sentence him to death, and boldly speaking the truth. His fear is gone.

Tradition has it that Peter was a martyr for his Lord. The story goes that he refused to be crucified right-side-up like Jesus, but upside-down instead. Peter joyfully died for his Lord. He never again ran out of gas, because Peter learned how to rise up over circumstances which, before would smash him.

So how do WE mount up on wings and rise up over our circumstances, instead of being flattened by them?

"Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary, his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." Isaiah 40: 28-31

Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted...

The youths faint and the young men fall exhausted because they draw their strength from themselves.

But now it is possible to have a strength that mounts us up on wings. We can rise above our circumstances. We don't run out of gas. We have courage that comes straight from God, and en-ables us to stand.

"They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength."

So what does it mean to "wait on the Lord"

Three very simple things. They are easy to remember because the Lord put them at the beginning of the prayer He taught us:

"Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name."

First of all, "to wait on the Lord", is to hallow God's name - to worship Him.

"Thy Kingdom come."

Secondly, "to wait on the Lord", is to seek God's Kingdom above everything else.

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."

Thirdly, "to wait on the Lord", is to do God's will of mercy.

First, "to wait on the Lord", is to hallow God's name - to worship Him.

"Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name."

After this I looked and beheld a great multitude which no man could number from every nation from all tribes of peoples and tongues standing before the throne and before the Lamb clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb." And all the angels stood round the throne and round the elders and the four living creatures and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God saying, "Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever Amen." Revelation 7:9-12

This is a description of the goal of our journey - the destination toward which we are always moving as we follow the Lord Jesus.

This is our hope. And we need to think of ourselves as in that multitude even now.

What do we see as we look at the multitude? Worship. Uninhibited praise of God.

They have palm branches, and they're not dragging them on the ground - they're waving them. They're crying out in a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb!"

They are consumed with gratefulness, praise, worship, toward the Living God.

It is unselfconscious praise. No one is distracted by the thought, "I hope they are watching me to see how one should really praise God."

Nor are they thinking, "I hope nobody sees me. I look kind of funny."

They do not care what they look like to others. They are so absorbed in the One who sits upon the throne and so taken up with the Lamb and His glory that they think of nothing but who they are worshipping. They are free from themselves.

Moreover it is uncritical praise.

No one is looking around saying,

"What's the matter with that dummy? His palm branch is upside down!"

"That lady has her eyes shut. Why doesn't she open them?"

"And who does that man think he think he is -- an angel? He's down on his face. Why isn't he standing like I am?"

Everybody is so absorbed in the worship of God that anybody can do it any way they feel led to do it.

To wait upon the Lord is to worship him.

We need to worship when we are alone in our room with the door shut, thanking God for who he is.

"Thank you, Lord God, for your answers to my prayer."

"Thank you, Lord God, for scrapes you've gotten me out of."

"Thank you, God, for who you are."

"Thank you for you."

When we come together in worship, may the Lord help us to truly let go of ourselves and give him uninhibited praise - unselfconscious praise - uncritical praise.

"And when they sang a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives"...

Everything we do when we gather in his name is worship.

It's worship when we're singing hymns.

It's worship when we're following a liturgy.

It's also worship when we're in prayer.

It's worship all the way through.

May the Spirit help us to let go of ourselves and melt into that multi-tude that no man can number as we worship the Lamb and the Father who sits on the throne. As we worship we shall mount up on wings like eagles. We shall run and not be weary. We shall walk and not faint. We shall serve and never burn out.

Secondly: To wait on the Lord is to seek his kingdom above every-thing else.

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come.

A man found treasure buried in a field. In his joy he sold all that he had and bought the field. What was the treasure? The Kingdom? Yes, the Kingdom, but the Kingdom embodied in a man whom we can know and love: Jesus.

Jesus is the treasure.

To sell all that I have and buy the field is to put away from my life all things that distract me from the Lamb.

"If any one thirst let him come to me and drink."

He who believes in me; from his heart, his mouth, his hands shall flow rivers of living water - water that gives life.

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eat of this bread he shall live forever."

To live forever is simply to live a life, now, that is saturated with heaven. And that life will never die.

"Come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."

Rest, even while we labor. Because we are renewed, refreshed, replenished with the energy of the Lord Jesus himself.

Getting to know Jesus is a joy that never ends.

Paul, after following Jesus for years and years, still says, "...that I may know him in the power of his resurrection, the fellowship of his sufferings, being made like him in his death."

The pursuit of Jesus always comes first. Accomplishing things for the kingdom comes second.

Kingdom miracles will flow freely from our lives only when our hearts are one with our Messiah.

So we need to ask ourselves, "Am I in pursuit of the face of the Lamb of God, who is himself the Kingdom? He is the King. He is the life of God in this world. When I see him, when I behold him, I am renewed. I mount up on wings like the eagle. I rise above the circumstances that threaten to overwhelm me

Thirdly: To wait on the Lord is to do his will:

"Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord', will enter the Kingdom of heaven. But he who does the will of God."

"Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy."

The will of God is mercy. And when I live his mercy, I'm in his King-dom. I mount up on wings like eagles.

I pray mercy.

I think mercy.

I do mercy.

Perhaps somebody has wronged us terribly. The only thing we can seem to think of is how to get revenge. But the Spirit of the Lord convicts us. The Spirit says, "Pray mercy on that person. Ask the Father to flood that person with his fulfilling mercies."

"Lord, I cannot possibly do that without your help."

"You have my help. Just pray."

As we pray mercy upon this person, blessings from heaven descend upon them, while light from God visits us. We mount up on wings.

We also have to think mercy.

We are going down the elevator at the hospital from the ninth floor. It seems as though we're trapped in this confined space with some strange characters.

A couple doctors who think they're God.

Some nurse's aids giggling about Friday night's party.

A man in his eighties with a face ten miles long.

Suddenly we're convicted by the Spirit of God:

"Who are you to be jumping to conclusions about these people? Do you know what they've been going through? Those doctors have been up for the last three nights caring for people. Those aids are angels of mercy, loved by their patients. That man's wife of 54 years is in a coma."

We are called to think mercy toward people, no matter who they are or how strange they may appear to us. As we begin to think mercy, we are released from our judgmental prison, the elevator door opens, we mount up on wings like eagles.

But we also have to do mercy.

As we walk out into the lobby, we find the elderly man in a panic. He's lost his wallet. And he has begun to weep.

"Can I help you? Is there anything wrong?" we inquire.

"I lost my wallet. I don't know what to do!"

We return with him to the ninth floor, entering the room where his wife lays in a coma. There on the night table is his wallet --- everything is in it except his money. We reach into our own wallet and give him our last two twenties. The man begins again to weep.

"Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary, his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted;

(everyone who relies on self) but they who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." Isaiah 40: 28-31

To wait upon the Lord is to worship Him.

God help us to lay aside our reserve, our self-consciousness, and enter into that great multitude that no man can number and begin to praise the Lord the way He would have us praise Him.

To wait upon the Lord is to seek His Kingdom.

To seek the face of Jesus, who is the Life of God in this world.

The living Bread.

The Living Water.

The True Sabbath.

To wait upon the Lord is to do God's will, which is mercy.

....As we see it revealed in Jesus' own life and His teachings.

And as we do that will of mercy...

As we pray mercy upon those who have wronged us...

And think mercy upon all people...

And do mercy to everyone who comes across our path...

We mount up on wings as eagles.

We run and are not weary.

We walk and never faint.

We serve God and never burn out

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

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