

END TIMES



Messages by R. E. Bieber

THEY SAY THE END IS NEAR???



They keep saying, “The End is near!” but it never comes.

Life on this planet rolls on. Nations rise and fall.
Catastrophes come and go.

And the human race continues its weary journey.

Why should the present hour be any different?

That’s what they said before Jerusalem fell....

Before Babylon was destroyed.

That’s what they said in Noah’s day.

So how close are we to the End?

Only God knows.

Yet even the hard-shelled atheist knows that Planet Earth is teetering on the edge of Eternity in ways that no one can deny:

Nuclear arms are in the hands of mad men.

The climate is spiraling out of control.

And the voice of God is echoing through it all.

And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy."

"Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense, to repay every one for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

Revelation 22



Prayer: Lord, we do not know when the end is going to truly come. But the fear, sadness, and terror of it grips our hearts. We see so many things coming apart, disasters, increased violence, increasing sin, such sadness, a world spinning out of control, a world that we ourselves can't escape. Help us not to fear. Help us to find you in the midst of sadness, powerlessness, chaos, danger, and despair. Help us to continue to do what is right, just, and to seek your holiness. Cover us with your presence, draw us into the eternity of who you are so we will not fear the end of this broken world. Amen.

Message: Richard E. Bieber January 2020

Featured Artist: Courtesy of Kate Austin at christart.uk

DEALING WITH THE STORM CLOUDS



The war, bloodshed, and carnage which we see in the nightly news no longer seem distant.

We are beginning to taste the uncertainty which others have been living with for years.

We see our own "security" hanging by a thread.

Lord, what's going on?

How far are you allowing the chaos to spread?

"When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, 'A shower is coming'; and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat'; and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky; but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?" (Luke 12:54-56)

i.e. "Can't you figure it out?"

"Can't you see what's going on?"

The Lord himself expects us to be able to "interpret the present time."

History may be "out of control" as far as the powers of this world are concerned. But history is unfolding exactly as our Lord promised it would.

His warning: **"See that you are not alarmed."**

His promise: **"Lo, I am with you always."**

"And then many will fall away, and betray one another, and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because wickedness is multiplied, most men's love will grow cold. But he who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come."

Matthew 24:10-14



Prayer: O dearest Lord, our protector, our hero... help us not to fear the gathering storm clouds. May we interpret them as a fulfillment of your promises. Help us to believe in and live in your warning and in your promise to us...Be not alarmed... I am with you. Protect us from losing our faith, from losing our awareness of your presence. May your Holy Spirit cause us to be abhorred and revolted by the multiplying wickedness, the cold, cruelty of those who claim you in name only. By your grace, may we not only endure to the end, but rise up and conquer any darkness, bringing your true light, and your true testimony to the ends of the earth. Amen.

Richard Bieber 2007
Art: Melani Pyke

SOON



“Behold I am coming soon!”

“Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy. Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense, to repay every one for what he has done.” (Revelation 22:11-12)

“Behold I am coming soon!”

20 centuries and counting. And we’re still waiting. Did the Apostle John get it wrong?

It’s not as if the Lord Jesus is somewhere off in the universe, waiting for the signal to return. As Lord of heaven and earth, he **even now** fills this troubled planet with his glory.

But he is coming---soon.

“Truly, truly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself, and has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man.

Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment.” (John 5:25-29)

The word “soon” begins to make sense when our eyes open to the glory which is closer to us than our breath.

To those who suffer, to those who have been beaten down by our greed, lust and indifference, the Lord Jesus says,

“Behold I am coming soon.”

To the scribe and Pharisee in each of us, the Master warns,

“Behold I am coming soon.”

To those who “have conquered (the devil) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death,” (Revelation 12) he says,

“Behold I am coming soon.”

Whether it’s midnight tonight or two centuries down the road, it’s “Soon”.

Time to repent of *our speculations*,
and *live our lives in the present*, which is always----

----the Eleventh Hour.

Written 2020 REB
Art: Mindi Oaten



ELEVENTH HOUR BLIND

Seeing What We Wish to See



It happens around the eleventh hour---
---- just before midnight, as the crisis approaches.

Before the collapse of a nation...
Before the defeat of an army...
Before the downfall of a corporation...
Before God's judgment falls on the Body of Christ...

... a mysterious blindness spreads among us like a plague.

This form of blindness has been with us since the dawn of time.

But it becomes an epidemic at the eleventh hour--- just before the crisis strikes.

It's called *seeing what we wish to see.*

The bridge is about to collapse---there are cracks in the steel, gaps in the concrete. But when a man cries, "Danger! This bridge is not safe!" he's arrested and jailed for disturbing the peace. Two days later the bridge falls, killing 17 people.

A politician comes to power, promising prosperity and freedom for all. He is hailed as the savior of the nation. Then, right in the middle of a boisterous rally a woman cries out, “*This man never speaks the truth! Do not trust him!*” The guards quickly take her off to prison, charging her with treason.

While the people happily submit to their new leader, *seeing only what they wish to see.*



He tightens his grip on power and emerges as a vicious tyrant.

Their freedom is gone.
Their prosperity evaporates.
Only misery remains.

**Their eyesight is normal.
Yet they see only what they wish to see.**

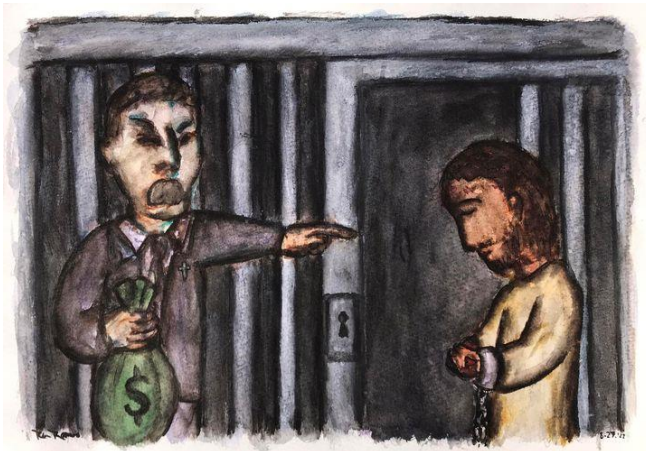
Corruption stares them in the face, and they see only wisdom, kindness and love—until it’s too late.

Eleventh Hour Blindness is occurring at this hour in the worldwide Body of Christ. As the midnight hour of trial approaches, as the refining fires close in, many of us are becoming “*eleventh hour blind.*” We see only what we wish to see, ignoring the warning signs that God places before our eyes.

“Beware of false prophets. You will know them by their fruits.”

Matthew 7:15,16

But he’s a Christian leader, respected all the way to Washington! She’s the best television Bible teacher in the land! Deep within we know that we are looking at “Christian leaders” who are slaves to money.



Yet we see only what we wish to see.

“Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.”

Luke 12:1b

The voice of this preacher is as smooth as silk. His sermons are wonderfully “inspiring.” Yet anyone with eyes can see that this man is playing a role. His life does not match his message.

Whoever gets close to this man becomes infected with the **“leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.”**



Still, we look at this man and see only what we wish to see.

“When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, ‘A shower is coming’; and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, ‘There will be scorching heat’; and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky; but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?”

Luke 12:54-56

It is impossible to “interpret the present time”
as long as we see only what we wish to see.

We will survive the coming days of trial only if we see what is happening in the light God gives us---what God wants us to see.

The lamp of the body

“The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is single, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is shifty, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!”

Matthew 6:22-23

If your eye is focused on the *Kingdom of God*,
your whole body will be full of light.

If your eye is focused on the *cross of the Lord Jesus*,
your whole body will be full of light.

If your eye is focused on the *footsteps of the Master*,
your whole body will be full of light.



**When our whole body is filled with the light of God,
we will see what God wants us to see.**

The Eleventh Hour is no time to be seeing only what we wish
to see.

The Eleventh Hour is the time for the single eye.

Prayer: Merciful Father, give us a single eye so that we can clearly see the truth. Heal of us our eleventh-hour blindness. Open our eyes to the cracks in the bridge, the bad fruit, the false prophets, the corruption in political and evangelical circles. Loving Master, keep our eyes focused on your Kingdom, your Cross, and your footsteps and as we do fill us so full of light that we see what you want us to see. Amen.

Richard Bieber 2019
Art: Courtesy of Ramone Romero

NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS...



...out there in the world,

No matter who gets elected,
No matter where war breaks out next,

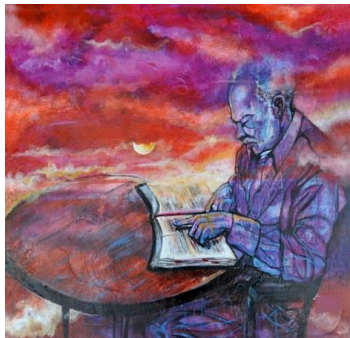
You still have yourself to deal with.

How will I face the day opening before me?
What will I do for the people who need me?
Where will I go with this wealth of mercy I've been given?

There is a need to focus on the essential...which is:

***The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,
His mercies never come to an end.
They are new every morning,
Great is their faithfulness.***

***"The Lord is my portion," says my soul,
"therefore will I hope in him." (Lament. 3)***



No matter how confusing and chaotic the circumstances,

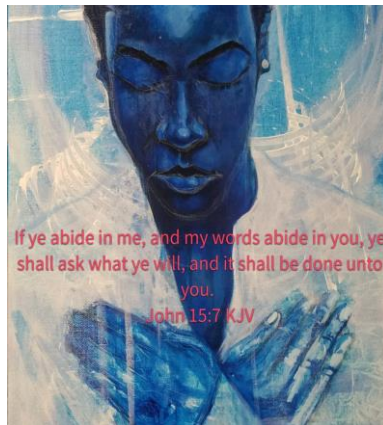
Our first priority is to take care of the requirements of the day which opens before us.

In ourselves we are inadequate.

But God's strength is made perfect in our weakness.

***"If you abide in me and my words abide in you,
ask whatever you will and it shall be done for you.
By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit
and so prove to be my disciples."***

John 15



Prayer: Dear Lord, help us to abide in you no matter what happens. Despite the sadness and bad news in the world, we open our hearts to you today. And yes, show us what to do for the people who need us and where to go with the mercy you have poured into our lives... today... no matter what happens. Lord, you are our portion, you are our great hope... today...no matter what happens. We ask that we are worthy and faithful disciples to you today and that we glorify you... today in every way we can...no matter what happens. Amen.

Message: Richard E. Bieber 2012

Featured Artist: Courtesy and kindness of Rex Deloney at rexdeloney.com

WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR ON THE EDGE OF TIME?



"Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him."

Luke 12:35-36

Sure, waiting is part of living. Waiting for the light to turn green, for the elevator, for the test results. "Please wait, your call will be taken by the first available representative." In the early stages of waiting, we're impatient. Hurry up! Let's get this line moving! But as time wears on, we sink into apathy. What's the use? There's nothing I can do.

Believers have been waiting for Christ's return for a long, long time, so long that many Christians have given themselves over to apathy. But his command is still unchanged; we are to wait for him with our "loins girded" and our "lamps burning." Instead of sitting around marking time until God opens a door to the future that is still closed, we are instructed to get up and walk through a door he has already opened. Our job is to "wait" for that closed door to open by passing through a door where the Lord Jesus is already present and alive and calling to us.

Jesus came to town and said in effect, *"What are you waiting for? It's here! The Kingdom of God is upon you!"*

While the rest of the world continued on its cynical way, Jesus began to bring people into God's world---right in the middle of this world, right here in Satan's territory! He became the door to another world. People could pass through this door into a place where God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven.

That door is as close to you as it was to the people of Jesus' day. When you pass over the threshold, you are standing on the edge of time, and begin to experience "the end of the world as we know it." You still live in the same house, breathe the same air, walk around in the same body. But it's a different world for you, because God's Spirit has lifted you into a spiritual dimension in which the glory of the end of the age is already part of your life.

Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.

Isaiah 35:5-6

This is a picture of the coming glory, but it is also a description of something that is going on right now all over the earth, including the place where you are as you read these words.

People are being delivered from the power of Satan into God's world.

Their eyes are being opened, so that they can see the hand of God at work in the midst of the chaos around them.

Their ears are being unstopped, so they can hear the voice of the Shepherd, who leads them into a new kind of living.

Their stumbling walk is being healed, so they can follow the Master in the paths of righteousness.

Their tongues are set free to offer praise to the God who not only waits for us at the end of time, but is with us now.

It's like waking up from a bad dream.

It's like rising out of a grave and starting to live.

It's like stepping out of a prison cell and walking free.

And it begins, not when the world comes to an end, not after you die, but now!

**We're standing on the edge of time,
poised at the threshold of another world.**

We don't have to wait until the end to see the glory of God...



...We can see it now---and enter it.

For twenty one centuries the world has continued on its way as if there is no "kingdom of God."

The sun rises and the sun sets.
The seasons come and go.
Nations appear, triumph and disappear.

But during these two millennia Jesus' followers have lived, not only in this world of earth-time, they have also lived in a dimension known only to faith.

**They have lived on the edge of time,
on the brink of a new world which has not yet fully arrived.**

But the powers of this new world---God's kingdom in it's fullness---both penetrate and transcend this world of flesh and blood.

Jesus' followers are given the high privilege of tasting the age to come and walking in its light---now!

When Jesus instructed his disciples to ...

"Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding feast, "
(Luke 12:35-36a)

... he was teaching them how to live on the edge of time. He was saying in effect,

"This world of earth-time is not your home.

The kingdom of God is your home, even while you wait for its fullness. Don't get too comfortable. Stay on your toes. Otherwise this world of earth-time will swallow you."

"But suppose that servant says to himself, 'My master is taking a long time in coming,' and he then begins to beat the menservants and women servants and to eat and drink and get drunk. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers."
(Luke 12:45-46)

The issue is not, How soon is Jesus coming? Will it be in my lifetime? The issue is...

...Where am I living at this moment in God's universe?

Am I imprisoned in earth-time or am I living in the dimension of God's kingdom, out on the edge of time in the Vineyard, where Christ's return is always imminent?

No, the kingdom is not here in its fullness.

But the kingdom is here.

If you sit around waiting for the day of glory to arrive, without entering into the labor of the kingdom as it now exists, you will be caught unprepared when glory dawns.

We wait for the kingdom in its fullnessby entering the kingdom which is already here.

Waiting is not sitting. Waiting is acting.

Waiting in Faith

Yes, we're waiting for Jesus to return and bring all suffering to an end. We're waiting for the day when ...

"the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (Habakkuk 2:14)

But we're waiting with a faith which allows us to taste these things now. You pass through that invisible door, and you're there.

You still live in the same place, you look the same, speak with the same tongue.

But you're in heaven, even while you walk this earth.
You've stepped from this world of grief into a world of glory.

You are walking with God.

You have God's life burning within you, inspiring your thoughts, directing your steps.

Jesus explains that the door to this heavenly kingdom, which you can enter any time you choose, is faith.

"Have faith in God!" he says. Mark 11:22

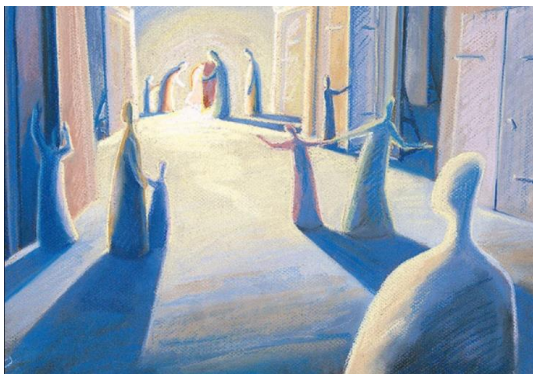
"Everything is possible for him who believes." Mark 9:23

"Anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing."
John 14:12

Most of us have spent too many years in a twilight zone of half-belief where we've been half-aware of what we could be, what we could have in God.

We're still on the outside looking in.
We talk about it, sing about it, even wish for it

.... yet something keeps us from entering the kingdom decisively.



We've been afraid to leave these shallows of half-belief and launch out into the deep waters of faith.

We're in between.

In fact, we've been in between for so long that many of us seem to think that this is all there is---this twilight zone of half-belief.

"Heaven begins," says Jesus, "when you come out of that bunker of half-belief and commit yourself to me all the way." (See *Luke 9:62*)

Jesus pioneered this way of faith for us. He cut a path; all we have to do is follow it.

"How could Jesus pioneer the way of faith?" you say, "he was God! How can God have faith in God?"

Jesus walked the road of faith, not as God, but as a man, as human and needy (yet without sin) as you and I.

Scripture tells us that God the Son laid aside his glory, gave up his divine attributes, emptied himself of all that, so that he could be the Second Adam. So that, where the First Adam failed to walk by faith, and produced a human race that never could walk by faith, the Second Adam---Jesus---did walk by faith and is producing a new race that can follow in his steps. His death and resurrection have made it possible.

We can get up in the morning and present our bodies to God as a living sacrifice.

We can walk by faith twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, in our homes, on our jobs, with our possessions, with our money.

Our hearts can continuously be singing his praises saying, "Lord, I'm yours, and all that I have is yours. All I want to do is live to your glory!"

As we do that, the glory of the world to come sets our hearts on fire... and we know that the kingdom of God is already alive within us.



Prayer: Lord Jesus, guide us to the truth that waiting is acting. Waiting is rising from the grave and living, now. Waiting is walking through the doors you open, now. Waiting is entering your Kingdom, now. And Dear, Living Lord, while we wait, open our eyes so we can see your hand, now; Unstop our ears so we may hear you, now; Guide our feet so we follow your path, now; Open our mouths so we can rejoice in your Kingdom, now. Lord, Jesus what a beautiful gift and honor that we can begin to dwell in your kingdom, now. Help us to keep choosing to live in your Kingdom as we live our lives out on this earth. Help us to leave our doubts behind and step into your world of glory, now. Lord, all we have is yours, now. Amen.

*Richard Bieber Unknown date but excerpted from his book "What are We Waiting For"
Art: Permission and courtesy of Ain Vares at ainvares.com*

LEST YOUR HEARTS BE WEIGHED DOWN



But take heed to yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a snare; for it will come upon all who dwell upon the face of the whole earth.

Luke 21:34-35

Easier said than done.

Whose heart isn't weighed down these day

How can you watch the news and not have a heavy heart?

How can you walk down the street and ignore the pain in those faces?

How can you look into your own heart and still be at ease?

Dissipation: wasted strength

Drunkenness: wasted mind

Cares: wasted worry

And yet.....it can be done.

By the power of the Spirit of God we can walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, fearing no evil.

For thou art with me.

Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

I need to know this in my soul.

I need to carry this in my heart.

To discipline my mind to renew itself in his presence.

But watch at all times, Praying that you may have the strength to pass safely through the things that will take place, And to stand before the Son of Man.

Luke 21:36

The Lord cannot do my praying for me.

But he will help me when I start to pray.

I will know this to be true once I take the one step within my power:
To open my heart and call upon his name.



Lord Jesus, we come to you with heavy hearts, afraid of the future, afraid we won't be up to the task of dealing with the turmoil of this world, the troubled around us, and our own quivering hearts. We open our hearts to you, calling on you to give us the strength, the confidence, the clear minds, and the faith we need to stand before you, knowing you are with us, knowing we never face evil alone, and that in your presence we will find the safety and comfort that lifts our hearts and make them soar with courage to face anything you call us to

Amen.

THE GREAT FALLING AWAY AND THE RISING REMNANT



Jesus made it clear:

There will be a falling away.

There will also be those who endure to the end.

Then they will deliver you up to tribulation, and put you to death; and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. And then many will fall away, and betray one another, and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because wickedness is multiplied, most men's love will grow cold.

Early signs.

The privilege and protection enjoyed for centuries by Christians in much of the world is coming to an end.

Soon this protection will be gone.

In place of favored treatment, Christians will be increasingly despised as hypocrites, wimps and frauds. The minority haters will put Christians at the top of their list.

Many believers will be terrified and melt quietly into the pagan mass.

No longer will there be “a church on every corner.”

The word, “Christian”, will have a different ring.

The name “Jesus” will be jeered as it was on Good Friday.

The “Great Falling Away” will unfold before our eyes.

The remnant.

But while many Christians betray one another and hate one another a remnant will emerge, faithful to Jesus through it all.

But he who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come.

Matthew 24

**This remnant will suffer.
It will be despised.
But it will never lose its voice.**



It will rise up and proclaim the gospel of the kingdom with such power that the nations will be shaken.

"For behold, the day comes, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble; the day that comes shall burn them up, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch.

But for you who fear my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings. You shall go forth leaping like calves from the stall."

Malachi 4

Jesus' word to the remnant.

The remnant has been here since the day Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives preparing his disciples for the days ahead.

As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?"

And Jesus answered them, "Take heed that no one leads you astray.

For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray.

And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet."

"Take heed that no one leads you astray."

"See that you are not alarmed, for the end is not yet."

Don't panic.

Don't get carried away by what you see and hear.

Stay focused on the one thing needful: God's kingdom.



“For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places: all this is but the beginning of the birth-pangs.”

And now, for reasons known only to God, the remnant of deeply committed men and women will be the scapegoat, the target of hatred and blame.

“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation, and put you to death; and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.”

Matthew 24

The remnant has been living the kingdom life since the day Jesus gave them this counsel.

The remnant is being sustained by the Lord at this instant.

These women and men are focused.

They are walking in the light.



They are ready for whatever happens.

God grant that we may be among them.

Prayer: Yes Lord, may we be among those who endure to the end. Sustain us Lord, sustain us. Sustain us with your loving presence, your tender guidance. Help us not to be led astray... if we are...call us back. Help us not to grow cold as wickedness is multiplied around us. Keep our hearts warm to you...lit with a fire of passionate love for you, empowering us to live your Kingdom on this earth. And Lord take this remnant that seems so weak and voiceless in the midst of the darkness...and give us voices, give us lives that shake the nations of this broken and dark planet with such force, such power that many will fall before in awe and love. Amen.

Message: REB November 2021

Featured Artists: Wayne Forte- First piece a study from the "Modern Day Prophet" at wayneforte.com . Other pieces by Ramone Romero...Preach the Gospel, Peace in Difficult Times, and The Knowledge of Good and Evil.

THERE WILL BE AN AWAKENING



How wonderful and pleasant it is when brothers live together in harmony! (unity) For harmony is as precious as the anointing oil that was poured over Aaron's head, that ran down his beard and onto the border of his robe. Harmony is as refreshing as the dew from Mount Hermon that falls on the mountains of Zion. And there the Lord has pronounced his blessing, even life everlasting.

Psalm 133 (NLT)

Most of us here have a taste once or twice in our lives of what they call a spiritual awakening, when suddenly in a certain place.... people's hearts begin turning for God.

There's a strong sense of the presence of God.

Of God's judgment on sins.
Of his mercy on those who repent.

The feeling that the end of the age is just pressing down upon us.

Suddenly Jesus becomes very, very real.

And his Word comes alive to us.

And people draw near to him and to each other.

And their lives change.

In 1970, many flocks were touched by such a spiritual awakening as it swept across many places. And it is certainly true to say that, in one sense, the spiritual awakening that really shook those places has never left us and is still at work among us, and the evidence is all around us.

But it's also true to say that this spiritual awakening that visited around that time, was but a miniature taste of a much greater awakening that we believe is waiting to come.

Certainly, an awakening that we personally need, and that your city needs, and that the whole earth needs.

And so we think of Pentecost, that first spiritual awakening, that visited when the Spirit fell and the tongues of flames were visible on the heads of the 120.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language.

Acts 2:3-6

They couldn't figure out what was happening as they heard these people speaking in their mother tongues the wonderful works of God. And some said these guys are drunk.

And so Peter, standing up with the eleven began to explain how this was

For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:

“And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

Acts 2:15-21



The Spirit that visited with such power on the day of Pentecost has never left this earth.

Yet who of us can deny that there is a need among us for a fresh spiritual awakening?

New vision.

New zeal

New joy.

A new abandoning of our hearts to the Lord.

While we know that any spiritual awakening of this kind is the sovereign work of God, we don't engineer it, we can't manufacture it and make it happen, God sends it. Does this mean then, however, that we sit around and wait until it comes? Or is there something we can do to at least invite it? Is there some posture that we can assume together that will make it clear to ourselves and to God that we're waiting and we're ready?

How truly wonderful and delightful it is to see brothers and sisters living together in sweet unity! It's as precious as the sacred scented oil flowing from the head of the high priest Aaron, dripping down upon his beard and running all the way down to the hem of his priestly robes. This harmony can be compared to the dew dripping from Mount Hermon, which flows down upon the hills of Zion. Indeed, that is where YAHWEH has decreed his blessings will be found, the promise of life forevermore! (Psalm 133 TPT)

This psalm is a description of a spiritual awakening.

When the life of the Spirit of God descends from heaven and comes down to the earth and quickens it.

That precious anointing oil that was on Aaron and ran down from his head, over his beard and covered his garments, was a sign. A sign that life from God was overwhelming him, was flowing over him, and coming down upon him and rolling out from his mouth, across his hands and bringing blessing to everything he touched, and everyone who heard him speak.

It's a description of life coming down like the dew of Hermon giving new and fresh life to the mountains around Jerusalem and quickening everything.

Now this anointing oil, this refreshing dew of the Spirit...when it comes, doesn't only bring us joy (as it does of course), or power (as it does of course)

But it flows out from us.



Permitting the world around us to experience life from God.

What do we have to do in order to experience such a thing? And what is the evidence when the Spirit of God brings life upon us that this is really an awakening from God?

In this psalm, we see very clearly that the evidence, always, always when the life of God comes down upon us, is that we draw together and we dwell together in harmony, in unity.

It could also be equally true to say that when we come together in unity around the name of Jesus, the Spirit of the Lord will be there. That every spiritual awakening that has ever hit this Earth has involved people, men and women laying aside the barriers that separate them from each other. And coming together around the name of Jesus.

***Behold, how good and pleasant it is
when brothers dwell in unity!***

When they come together in unity, life from God begins to burn within them, and quicken them, and the dew of Hermon and the anointing oil begins to become obvious, and they have life and abundance for others.

May it be that we all have a desire for this, a craving that is absolutely unquenchable until it is fulfilled by God.

We need to keep asking how can we come into such unity that the anointing oil may come down upon our heads, and that the dew of Hermon may descend upon the Body?

And the answer is very simple.

We need two things.

First, we need to learn how to *really abide in the vine*.

Second, we need to learn how to *really love each other*.

**Abide in me.
Love one another.**

***“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.*”**

John 15-1-11

Now when the branch abides in the vine to the extent, to the degree, that the life of the vine is able to come up into the branch...

...so that the branch can bear fruit.

That branch absolutelymust be in harmony with the other branches.

If one branch is drawing life from the vine and another branch is drawing life from the same vine, how can they be in disharmony? And when the wind blows upon the vine, all the branches move at the same time. If we're gathered in the name of Jesus and the Spirit of God begins to stir among us, surely we're going to move together.

If our hearts are one around him, then we move as one, as branches, a body in the same vine. And when we are in that kind of unity around him, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers as well together in unity, then the life of God must flow.

The Spirit moves up through the vine, into the branch,



and it begins to flourish.

The anointing oil comes down upon the head in abundance. It rolls down over the beard, covers the garments with life. The dew of Hermon descends upon the assembly, and there is an awakening.

Now the problem for many of us, is that we have tried to abide in the vine single-handedly, individualistically.



“Lord, I will abide in you. I want to dwell in you. I want to rest in you. I want to trust you. I want to do your will. But Lord, please don't ask me to open my heart to other Believers. Lord, I've had too many bad experiences. I've been disappointed too many times. It's been too painful. Let it just be me and you Lord.”

And the Lord responds, *“My child if you abide in me, you have no choice but to open your heart to the other branches that are abiding in me.”*

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

John 15: 12-17

Spiritual awakening is the sovereign work of God.

We cannot make it happen. God makes it happen.

And if he wants to He can make the stones cry out to his praise.

And yet every spiritual awakening that has come to this earth since Pentecost has involved two things.

First, men and women who are deeply and radically committed to Jesus as branches on the vine.

Second, men and women who are deeply and radically committed to each other in holy love.

**Abide in me.
Love one another.**

You'll never love one another unless you abide in me.... and you'll never abide in me unless you love one another.

But if you abide in me and love one another, you will have the unity of Heaven. The anointing oil will come to rest upon the head, the dew of Hermon will come upon the body, and there will be an awakening.

“And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

Now the Spirit has come. And He is in our midst, but the power of the anointing of His Spirit upon us hinges on the extent to which we respond as he calls us to two things.

Commit ourselves to Jesus as branches in the vine

First, the spirit is calling us to deeply and radically commit ourselves to Jesus as branches in the vine.

And our response is often, *“I’ve heard that a million times and I’ve done it a million times, what are you talking about?” “I know all about that, I’ve done it”*. And yet, if we’re honest, surely, we need to see that there’s more. Who of us can say that, that we are the way we should be?

We’re called to a rest in the vine that is deeper than we’ve ever known. A trust in him, a listening to him, a surrender to him, an obedience to him....as we’ve never done before.

“We’re going to listen to your word, Lord and whatever you tell us to do, we’re going to do.

I want to know you Lord as I’ve known you before.

*I want to walk with you.
I want to listen to you.
I want to trust you.
I want to fellowship with you.*

When this becomes supreme in our hearts, then when we pick up the Bible, it won't matter whether we're in Genesis or Psalms or Isaiah or Ezekiel or Revelation or some other book... Everywhere we look, we'll see Jesus.

**And we will hear his voice.
And mysteries will open to us.**

We'll begin to open our hearts in prayer to God, and we will know that we are being helped by the Lord himself, that he's there interceding.

And now we will experience as never before what it's like... this little branch getting its sustenance from the vine. The life of the vine begins to come up into us. We're drawing our life from him. And drawing strength from him.

When the wind blows we'll know we are going to be alright. The vine is holding us. And now we begin to bear fruit without even trying.

Abiding in him.... life after life that we touch, soul after soul that we touch in his name.... comes bounding into the Kingdom of God... to our own amazement.

Commit ourselves to each other in holy love

The second thing to which the Spirit of the Lord is calling us today... is to deeply, radically, rootedly commit ourselves to each other in holy love.

Have you ever heard the Holy Spirit calling you to love your wife or your husband? Or that child you've been disappointed in?

Have you ever sensed the Holy Spirit speaking to your heart and telling you to begin to love that mother of yours, that you've been mad at for years? Or that father who seemed to close his heart to

you before you became a teenager? Or that boss at work? You're walking around with this.

And now comes the command love.



When we hear the Spirit of the Lord, calling us to love this person, the power to do it comes to us and it's like heaven breaks forth in our hearts.

Now in the same way, the Spirit who set us in the Body is commanding us to love each other.

This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you.

And this works out practically in such things....

Now you go out and you begin to pray for the very person in the fellowship who has hurt you, abused you, ignored you, who has misconstrued your motives.

Then you go out to the people in the fellowship who are bearing wounds that you have inflicted and you ask forgiveness, and you make it right.

Then you reach out to people whose names you still don't know, after all these years.

Then you reach out to people who seem to be in some kind of need.

If we're abiding in the vine, we get all the strength we need to love each other.

We can do it. We can do it. Even we can do it.

**Spiritual awakening is not something far away.
Mighty spiritual awakening is not something out of reach.
It's very, very near.**

It comes when the branches get down to business and really, really abide in the vine... and really, really begin to love each other.

Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes! It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion! For there the Lord has commanded the blessing, life forevermore.

The call of the Spirit is upon us today... and if we will respond in faith...



There will be an awakening.

Prayer :Yes Lord, help us to really, really live in harmony with our brothers and sisters and to really, really abide in you. Oh, how we want there to be an awakening like no other. Oh, how we want you to pour your anointing oil on us, for your life to flow out of us bringing great healing to this world. We abandon ourselves to you. Help us to live in such unity, such love for each other that the dew of Heaven covers the Body. And that dew causes us to flourish and bear precious, holy fruit. Lord it is time. We want to know you as we never have before. The world needs to know you as it never has before. Give us the deep, radical commitment needed to bring the awakening you promise. Amen.

Message: Richard E. Bieber 1983 aka A Spiritual Awakening.
Featured Art: Courtesy of Gwen Meharg

WINNING THE REAL WAR



Imagine for a minute that the town where we live has become a war zone.

The big bombs have done their work and now two armies are battling for control of what's left. Those of us who have survived are staying in our houses and apartments. Food and water are in short supply. We're trying to get up enough nerve to venture out and see if some abandoned house might at least have a little rice or flour or a can of beans.

But the chatter of automatic weapons and the rumble of exploding shells frightens us... *"Maybe we better wait and stretch out what little food we have left."*

Suddenly, in the middle of all this chaos, we hear singing. We pull back the drapes and look out on the street. And to our amazement we can see an old truck piled high with sacks of potatoes and rice and fresh fruit and corn. Behind it is another truck with jugs of water.

Men and women, singing at the top of their lungs as if there were no war at all, are carrying food and water from the trucks to each house ... and singing all the time.

"They'll be dead by the time they get to the end of the block," someone says.

"But how come they got this far?"

"Where did they get the food?"

"And how can they be singing?"

There's a knock on our door. There stands a man loaded down with food. Behind him is a woman with a jug of water. "Here, take this," they say, and head back to the trucks singing their hearts out.

Suddenly a burst of automatic fire ... the woman is hit.

From out of a house across the street two women run to take her place. By the time the food trucks reach the end of the block, the army of helpers has doubled in size ... still singing.

Two armies are battling for control ... both of them are pawns of Satan the Prince of this world.

A third army comes up the street without a gun.



... this is the army that will conquer
because it is overcoming evil with good,
even at the price of death.

Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they were defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and

Satan, the deceiver of the whole world --- he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. Rejoice then, O heaven and you that dwell therein! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!"

Revelation 12:7-12

We could sit down and discuss for the rest of our lives why God, if he is all powerful, should permit any opposition from men or demons. Why does he allow this war to go on? But that wouldn't change the fact that there is a struggle in the realm of spirit, of which the political, military, economic wars being waged at this hour, are only a dim reflection.

Evil is not just the absence of good ... like cold is the absence of heat.

Evil is not just something inside our heads.

Evil exists outside of us as well as within us.

- Evil is intelligent.
- Evil is personal.
- Evil is organized.
- Evil is a kingdom.

If we survive all the wars that will ravage the earth in the coming years but allow our hearts to be conquered by evil, we've lost the real war.

The real war is between good and evil ... between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan ... and every one of us has to choose which side we're going to be on.

"I came to cast fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled! I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how I am constrained until it is accomplished! Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division; for henceforth in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three; they will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against her mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

Luke 12:49-53

These are the words of a man who never carried a sword, never raised his fist, never gathered an army, yet he came to divide the earth ... and he did.

And each of us has to decide whether we're going to surrender our lives to the kingdom of evil or surrender our lives to Jesus, and by his power conquer evil.

- We don't conquer evil by hiding in the house with the drapes drawn.
- Nor do we conquer evil by picking up a gun and going out there shooting.



- We conquer evil by joining the army of the Lamb.

Observe how the Lamb, Jesus, overcame evil: by walking right into it!

"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 mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon; they will scourge him and kill him, and on the third day he will rise."

Luke 18:31-33

He went up to Jerusalem and laid down his life and conquered Satan. And so we overcome the kingdom of evil not by running away from it, but by walking straight toward it.

And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death."

Revelation 12:10-11

They conquered him....

1. By the blood of the Lamb.
2. By the word of their testimony.
3. By loving not their lives even unto death.

Thank God there are no shells exploding out there.

But to pretend there is no war going on is to be willfully blind.

The dragon and his angels have been thrown down to the earth ... and things are out of control and there is not a man or a nation that is able to bring things under control again.

Yet the simplest child of God can go out there like David before Goliath and conquer.

We are not helpless victims on a sinking ship.

We are sons and daughters of the most high God. And we are given everything we need to conquer the lying spirit which has captured this earth.

We conquer him,

- by the blood of the Lamb,
- by the word of our testimony,
- by defying the fear of death.

We conquer Satan by,

1. The blood of the Lamb, which brings peace into our own hearts.

In order to win the battle on the outside we first have to win the battle on the inside. You win this inner war by getting your sin covered.



***Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven;
whose sin is covered.***

Psalm 32:1

...."God be merciful to me, a sinner."

Satan only has scope within us when he has sin-ground to stand on.

Call for the blood ... the ground drops away and Satan sinks.

- By the blood of the Lamb we put away the old nature.
- By the blood of the Lamb we call for the Spirit and put on the new nature.
- By the blood of the Lamb we end the war inside us by driving sin, guilt, fear of death and Satan himself out.

In mercy the Lord has instituted the meal we call Communion so that we can come together and renew our vision of his atoning death, confess our sins, repent of them and join ourselves, with thanksgiving and praise, to his broken body and his shed blood.

- Now we have peace.
- Now we can handle the battle on the outside.

We conquer Satan by,

2. The word of our testimony



.... they sang as they went down the street feeding the hungry.

Thou art my hiding place, thou shalt preserve me from trouble; Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.

Psalm 32:7

When the war zone around us begins to hear those songs of deliverance ... begins to hear a word of testimony, Satan will be driven back in defeat.

And what is the word of our testimony?

Our testimony is that Jesus of Nazareth is the Savior of this world.

- He alone is its healer.
- He alone is its hope.
- He alone is its peace with a holy God.
- He alone is the escape from the false God of this world.

Jesus is Lord!

Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords now ... and we need to confess this to him, to each other and to the world.

We don't conquer Satan by just being respectable and proper.

We conquer Satan by a strong, clear, bold Spirit-anointed word.

Lord God! Open our mouths and give us tongues to speak your burning truth until it sets fire to the earth!

We overcome Satan by,

3. Loving not our lives even unto death.



Who of us can deny that far too long we have loved our lives to death?

- We loved our lives so much,
- we played it so safe,
- we pampered ourselves so much worrying about dying
....we were dead.

Help us now, Lord God, to throw away the fear of death and all the fears that hang with it.

God help us to go out into the streets of the city of this world with the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony...

... and feed the hungry, and free the captives, and conquer Satan.



If in the process we lose our lives ... praise God ... what better way to die?

Whether we like it or not,

- there is a war going on.

Whether we like it or not,

- we're in it ... on one side, or the other.

God help us to see clearly who the real enemy is and to conquer him,

by the blood of the Lamb,

by the word of our testimony,

by loving not our lives even unto death.



Prayer: Lord Jesus, we bow before you, seeking your strength to overcome evil with good. In these times and the coming times, dear Jesus, keep us singing of your beauty, your perfection, your peace, your hope, your healing, and of your love. May we joyfully, without fear, join the army that truly conquers. We are not helpless victims. We are your beloved sons and daughters, equipped to conquer. Holy Lord, help us to see who the real enemy is, and may by your power we conquer that real enemy. Lord be merciful to us, cover us, drive this sinful nature out of us so we may go forward with a new nature, so we can face the true battle outside. May your truth burn so strongly on our lips that Satan is rendered defenseless, and that fire is set to this earth. And yes Lord, help us to throw away the fear of death and all other fears, so we may courageously win the real war.

Amen.



HOW SOON IS SOON?



"Behold I am coming soon, bringing my recompense, to repay every one for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

Revelation 22:12-13

Soon.

Jesus never implied that we could relax and dabble in distractions.

He said, "Stay awake."

Which means:

"Abide in me."

"Pay attention to my words to you."

"Stay under my yoke."

"Walk with me."

"Be my witness."

---with your life.

---with your mouth.

Whether you live or die, he is coming.

And you will answer for what you did with the grace he poured out upon you through his shed blood.

You will account to him for the fruit you have borne by the power of his Resurrection Spirit.

Don't make the mistake of trusting...

your "experience of salvation,"
your certainty that you are "one of the elect,"
your "superior kindness."

Trust only Jesus,

enough to repent of yourself and answer his call---daily.

Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the Tree of Life and that they may enter the City by the Gates.

Revelation 22:14



*Richard Bieber 2007
Art: Chris Powers at Full of Eyes*

HAPPENING NOW



So what's it going to be?

Nuclear war?

A climate cataclysm?

Economic melt-down?

The Messiah's return?

Everybody knows something's going to happen soon.

We're all focused on the future.

But who's paying attention to what's *happening now*?

What are we going to do about the worldwide mess staring us in the face? Do we just stand, wring our hands and wait for the End?

And where is God?

Our world is disintegrating before our eyes, and God does nothing?

We're not the first ones to be asking such questions.

John's complaint

“Why doesn't Jesus do something!” cried John the Baptist as he sat in prison waiting for the Messiah to shake up the world.

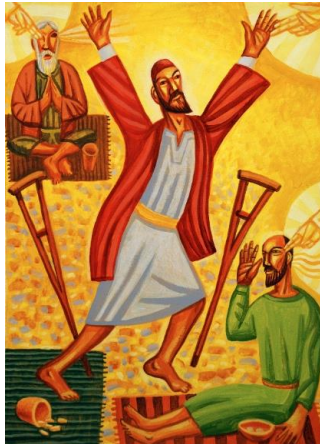
“Did I not announce Jesus as the Coming One? If he is the Messiah King, what's he waiting for?”

John can't stand it any longer. He sends messengers to Jesus to find out what's going on.

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

“Go tell John what you hear and see. The blind receive their sight, the lame walk; lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who takes no offense at me.”

Matthew 11:3-6



While John was waiting for Jesus to roll back the heavens and bring down fire,

Jesus was doing exactly what he was sent to do.

“Pay attention, John, to what's going on right now!”

Happening now

It's not as if God is sitting in heaven drinking tea with the angels, while the world burns. God is doing exactly what Jesus told us he would do, as the earth smolders.

**God is making his eleventh-our visit to the Marketplace,
hiring laborers for his Vineyard.**

The sun will not darken and the moon will not turn to blood until the Vineyard workers have finished what needs to be done.

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and to them he said, 'You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. And about the eleventh hour, he went out and found others standing; and he said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too.'"

Matthew 20:1-8

The Householder is hiring vineyard workers for the last time.

This is his final trip to the Marketplace.



The Marketplace

The Marketplace is where we go when we discover the futility of money and fame and power and shallow pleasure.

We wake up one day and say, *“What am I doing here? How did I end up in this barren place?”* Now we’re in the Marketplace waiting to be hired, waiting for God to come near and show us the way.

“Why are you standing here idle all day?”

“Because no one has hired us.”

“Go into my Vineyard.”

The Vineyard



The Vineyard is not some fancy “ministry” or another elaborate “program.” The Vineyard is right where you are.

A gate swings open before your eyes and your circumstances are bathed in light. Now you are not just “making a living” or “pursuing a career,” or “taking care of the old folks.”

While you do those things well, you are a servant of God, preparing yourself and those around you for the arrival of God’s Kingdom.

You are the Salt of the Earth

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt has lost its saltiness, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men.”

Matthew 5:13



In the Vineyard, we aren't striving to be the salt of the earth...

We are the salt of the earth.

Once the Lord Jesus brings us into the Vineyard, his Spirit within us conveys hope.

We carry the taste of God.

We bring the encouragement of heaven into the room just by being there.

Our words are “seasoned with salt.” Our lives are marked with integrity. People who seek the truth know they can trust us.

But if the salt has lost its saltiness, if we relapse into our old ways, we become useless to ourselves and to God.

Why did Jesus give us this warning?

Because it can happen so subtly, so quickly.

Lord, have mercy!

You are the Light of the World

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand; and it gives light to all in the house.

***Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works
and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”***

Matthew 5:14-16



In the Vineyard, we are not striving to be the light of the world.

We **are** the light of the world.

The Spirit of the Lord within us is light.

As we walk in the light, doing the Father's will, good works flow from our lives.

They emerge so naturally that people who see our good works don't even notice us; they see God. They give praise, not to us, but to God. If God is not evident in our "good works", people are seeing, not "good works," but vanity.

In the Vineyard our daily life is humble and down-to-earth, yet charged with the light of the coming Kingdom.

We do our work. We connect with our neighbors. Buy groceries, pay our bills, just like everyone else. But all the while our focus is on following the Master, doing the Father's will.

You are a Herald of Good News

In the Vineyard we are ordinary people answering a heavenly call.

He opened the book and found the place where it was written, "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, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

Luke 4-17-19

We are not nitpickers.
We are not morality police.
We are not undercover judges.
We are heralds of hope.



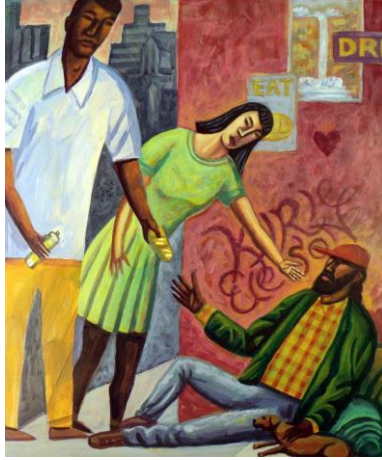
The good news of God's Kingdom flows with power from our ordinary lives. God imparts this power as we carry on the work our Lord began. In varying degrees of power, signs of his Kingdom follow us, as we follow the Master.

The blind receive their sight, the lame walk; lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

Matthew 11:5

It happens in our neighbor's kitchen, at a bus stop, in the lunch room at work, in the nursing home and hospital. The living God pours encouragement through us wherever he puts us.

You are harvesting, not grapes, but people.



Like picking grapes from the vine, we reach out and bring living souls into God's World. And we do it so naturally that the miracle unfolds all by itself.

Jesus shows us the way.

He has no agenda as he sits by the well, resting from the journey, when a Samaritan woman comes to draw water.

"Give me a drink," says Jesus. And before the conversation is over, this woman has been harvested for the Kingdom. Jesus' disciples are not pleased as they approach the well and see him talking to a woman. What's going on?

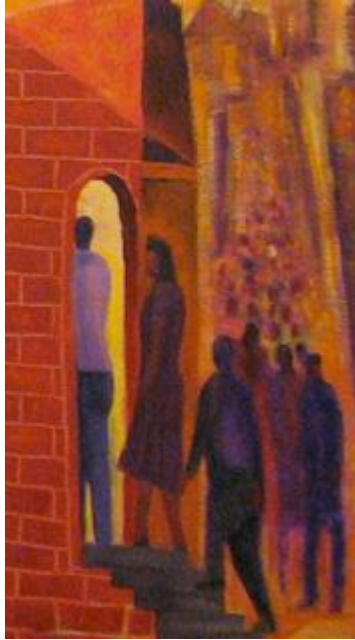
The woman leaves her water jar at the well and hurries back to the village. She returns with a crowd of people. As they approach, Jesus points to this multitude and says to his disciples,

"Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see how the fields are already white for harvest. He who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor; others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

John 4:35-38

In the Vineyard, harvesting is not a matter of strategy, technique, or program. Harvesting takes place as we treat with integrity, the people God sends across our path.

If we do it the way Jesus did it at the well, we will bring in a rich harvest before quitting time.



Quitting time

Quitting time is when the Householder gathers the laborers and gives them their pay.

At Quitting Time all accounts are settled.

"When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left.

Then the King will say to those at his right hand, `Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;

for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.”

Matthew 25:31-37



Prayer: Lord Jesus, instead of fearing and dreading what's going to happen in the future. Open our hearts to what's happening now, the work to be done, now. Despite the lateness of the hour, change our idleness into action. May we lift our eyes and see the harvest that is before us now. The broken, the sick, the hopeless, the poor, the deaf, and the blind are waiting for your healing touch. Lord, it is you who love these souls, you who have prepared them for harvest. Show us the way to their hearts, show us how to reap, despite our own inadequacies and feelings of insignificance. No matter how mundane, humble, and seemingly futile the job, may we carry into each task, the extraordinary power of your presence. You have said that we are salt, that we are light, and that we are messengers of your good news. As salt may we flavor every interaction with the taste of your eternal Kingdom. As light, may everything we do, be illuminated by your holy light. As heralds of your good news, may your encouragement and hope, may the power and joy of your kingdom, be poured through our lips and our lives, so that those souls that are ripe, miraculously and easily fall into your hands. And at quitting time, O Righteous King may we be of those you call blessed, because we lovingly worked the harvest you bring us now. Amen.

*Richard Bieber 2019 (one of his last sermons)
Art: James Janknegt at .bcartfarm.com*

HOW NEAR?



They keep telling us that the End is near.

How near?

Only the Father knows the day and the hour.

But wherever the Spirit of God is moving on this earth with redemptive power...

....We are witnessing the beginning of the End.

The Spirit is the foretaste of the end.

He comforts the mourners
He heals the sick.
He redeems the lost.
He convicts the arrogant.
He shakes the complacent.
He warns the smug.

He brings the lordship of Jesus the Messiah to bear on our present circumstances.

When the Spirit of the Lord speaks to your heart, you are looking at the End.

Depending on where you stand with God, you are either staring into a terrifying black hole, or beholding the glory of the Lord.



"Behold I am coming soon, bringing my recompense, to repay every one for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and fornicators and murderers and idolaters, and every one who loves and practices the Lie.

Revelation 22:12-15

Prayer: Holy coming Lord...You who are the beginning and the end, open our eyes to your coming, open our hearts to your presence now. May our fear of impending doom and our alarm and speculation not cause us to lose faith, to turn away and to make alliances with darkness and evil. May we trust in you, turn to you, love you with all we have. May we obey your command to be the light of the earth. May we continue to wash our robes in your redemptive blood. Speak to our hearts so we can arise in your redemptive power and bring your holy touch, your holy healing to any soul who needs it. And Lord when we look at the end, may all we see is your magnificent glory. Amen.

Richard Bieber 2003

Art: First photo via Unsplash, last Elizabeth Wang

LIGHT IN THE GROWING DARKNESS



Who can deny that darkness is spreading over the earth?

Hatred and mistrust dividing nations.
Tribes rising against each other in deadly battle.
Violence.
Greed.
Corruption.
Sleaze in high places and low.

And yet.....

The light of the Kingdom of God has never been brighter.

All who seek the light are drawn to the light.

All who ask for the light are given light.

"Ask and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him."

Luke 11:9-13

**Don't waste your time lamenting the darkness.
Seek the light!**



Whether you feel that God is near or far, even if you aren't even sure that God is there, cry out for light! "Lord God, show me the way in this dark world!"

It's a prayer that God never fails to answer.

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." John 8:12



Prayer: Yes, Lord show us the way in this darkening world. Help us to live in the light despite the growing darkness. Help us not to despair, but to know that nothing, nothing can overcome your light. Without your light, we have no hope...but with it, with you, we can go on, we can find joy and purpose in the midst of chaos. So bring us close to you, fill us with your Spirit, so we may continue to follow you...the light of our lives, the light of the world and live in the light of your Kingdom for life. Amen.

Message: Richard E. Bieber 2008

Featured Artist: Courtesy of Anke Weimer (Germany) ankewiemer.de

THE BRIGHT MORNING STAR



“I Jesus, have sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and offspring of David, the bright morning star.”

Revelation 22

It's been a long night. Seems like things are darker than ever.

But wait!

The Morning Star has come over the horizon with a two-fold message:

The Darkness will soon end.

A New Day is about to dawn.

The darkness will soon end.

The sadness and the suffering that engulf the earth, the hypocrisy and deceit that corrupt God's Temple, will soon be gone.

A New Day is about to dawn.

The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let him who hears say, "Come." And let him who is thirsty come, let him who desires take the water of life without price.

Revelation 22

One drink from that spring, and our eyes can already see the New Day..

And he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night within his temple; and he who sits upon the throne will shelter them with his presence.



They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."



Revelation 7

At the moment things are still dark.

They may become darker still.

But not for long.

Listen to the message of the Morning Star and rejoice!



Prayer: We look to you, beautiful, shining, Morning Star, to bring darkness to an end. We rejoice in the new day that's dawning. May we rise up and come and drink deeply of your life... drawing strength from your living water, so that we can confidently endure the trials of our life journey with obedient adoration, so that we can remain faithful, pure, and loving in the midst of evil, and so that we can unleash your healing and love on this broken world. And dearest Lamb of God, give us the vision to see that you will wipe every tear from our eyes and shelter us with your presence forever. Amen.

Richard E. Bieber January 2020
Art: Chris Powers at Full of Eyes

[Maranatha Mirror Messages](http://mmirror.net)

mmirror.net

maranathamirror18@gmail.com



THE LAMB
WHO WAS SLAIN
HAS BEGUN HIS REIGN

END TIMES

Message Series

The Message series are themed collections from the Maranatha Mirror postings. They were written by Richard Bieber (1927-2021) ... a prolific writer and a beloved pastor (in the truest sense) who disciplined and shepherded believers in Nova Scotia and Detroit for 60+ years.

Each message includes the art and prayer it was posted with.

These powerful messages encourage, convict, and inspire followers of Jesus to seek him, love him, and obey him. May your heart be touched and draw close to the Master, as you read the messages, contemplate the artwork, and pray the prayers.

Since these messages are collected around a theme, some are similar, and may reference the same Scriptures...yet each individual piece is unique... beautiful, meaningful and moving...filled with gems of truth, power, and encouragement.

More messages like these can be found on the mmirror.net website, our Facebook page, and are also emailed to subscribers 2x a week. Contact us to subscribe to postings or order free print materials. Any contact with us involves absolutely no marketing, special offers, or appeals for money.

[Maranatha Mirror Messages](#)

mmirror.net

maranathamirror18@gmail.com

4119 V Achatz St Clair MI 48079
586-530-6983



THE LAMB
WHO WAS SLAIN
HAS BEGUN HIS REIGN

Cover art: Courtesy of Ramone Romero