

Revival - Part 2

by Doc Greenway

Doc Greenway emphasizes the foundational principles of faith and preparation necessary for experiencing revival in the church today.

Duration: 56:38

Scripture: Isaiah 65:16, Revelation 3:14, Revelation 3:18

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the church of our day and country, urging them not to turn away in frustration and despondency. He emphasizes the importance of remembering the Christ who spoke so powerfully to the church in the past is still speaking to us today. The sermon is divided into four main points: the Christ confronting them, the charge condemning them for their indifference, the counsel concerning them, and the call challenging them. The speaker highlights the significance of Jesus standing outside the kingdom, temple, and home, but being prepared to stand for us. He also emphasizes the need for the church to overcome and open the door to Jesus, who promises to come in and fellowship with them.

Transcript

Now, last Tuesday night, I said that I felt that the Lord's purpose in our meeting together for the first few Tuesday nights was to lay a foundation, a foundation concerning this great theme of revival. And I must confess that although I have preached on this theme many times during my lifetime, especially as a servant of God, of course, yet I have attempted by the grace of God to look at it as though I'd never heard of the word before. I know it's difficult, but I've consistently sought God to know His mind and His purpose.

As I said last Tuesday night, I'm not the least bit interested in preaching sermons. I do want to give God's message. And in order to speak in living echoes of His tone, one has to wait on God and be sure in one's own heart that you're doing just that.

And so I trust you will bear with me if, for a few Tuesdays, things may not seem to be going as quickly as you expected. You don't expect to have revival overnight. But you may rest assured that if we are faithful to God in our preparation, in our declaration of spiritual principles, in our renunciation of the facts concerning revival, and we are prepared to receive these and go back to the word of God itself, then what is built will stand the test of time and of eternity.

And this takes time, of course, doesn't it? It takes a deal of patience, too. So I trust that tonight again the Holy Spirit will enable us to see something from the word of God which can be a blessing to us in our desire to see God pouring out of His Spirit upon this fair land. God's own country, but as someone has said, is in the devil's own mess.

It's only God can come to meet our need. Now, there is nothing stereotyped about revival. Nothing that you can say must be observed as a fixed pattern.

God is the God of variety. And just as circumstances differ and situations differ, so revival results differ. And even God's method of procedure differs from time to time and from place to place.

But there are certain basic principles which do not change. There are conditions that have to be fulfilled irrespective of anything else. And it does seem that as we are able to see these principles and accept them, that then we have a strong structure for revival.

But if we slide over these things, if we think they are of little importance, if we want to get on with it, then we will discover that our hearts are not prepared before God. This has been brought home to me again and again during my time since last Tuesday, when I have been seeking God for His Word and His message for this evening. The need that we have as people of God to be sure that we know the basic principles in preparation for revival, and we are prepared personally to accept these, whatever it may cost us as Christians.

Now, prominent in the area of revival is the principle of faith--faith toward God, faith in the promises of God. Very minded are we not that without faith it is impossible to please God, and so that if there is no real faith for revival, then all that we are saying is completely meaningless. We might as well shut up shop, in other words, and be done with it.

Have you noticed how time and time again this question of faith arises in agitation, in guidance for our Christian living? And I was struck as I thought of this and went through the Bible looking at these areas. How much is involved in our faith toward God, our personal faith toward Him? It is something which no one else can do for us in relation to revival. And indeed, in other areas of life we have a personal faith which is peculiarly and uniquely our very own, something that is very precious, precious indeed in the sight of God.

Now, I type out some of these scripture references because I want to save time. And in the area of prayer, first of all, you read, But without faith it is impossible to please him. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Hebrews 11, 6. If you come to God, you must believe that He is the principle of faith in the area of prayer. And you remember how James, in his epistle, the fifth chapter, talks about the prayer of faith. I wish there were time to go into that tonight, but in any case, the principle of faith underlies our prayer life.

And without this, then, we are simply sending words, empty words, into the air. Then, again, in the area of conflict, you remember how Paul writes to Timothy in the first epistle, the sixth chapter, the twelfth verse, when he says, Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold of eternal life. In other words, in this area of conflict, faith is the essential thing.

You recall, too, how in writing to the Ephesians, Paul speaks in the sixth chapter, above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith he shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. The shield of faith.

This is the heavy shield.

It was four feet six by two feet in size, which is quite a substantial shield, isn't it? Well, says the Apostle, this is the faith upon which the fiery darts, the separate temptations of Satan, will fall, and they will cease to matter. Again, in the area of conflict, Habakkuk tells us in the second chapter and the fourth verse, a verse which is repeated three times in Scripture, but the just shall live by his faith. We have a standard.

It's peculiarly our own. And when it comes to living as Christians, we know that the standard of our personal faith determines very, very largely the way in which we will react. Again, in the area of service.

For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith that worketh by love. Galatians 5, 6. And again you remember how Jesus said, And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible to you. Matthew 17, 20.

In the area of service then, faith has a predominant place in the life of the Christian. Once more, in the area of conquest over the world. For whatsoever, not whosoever here, but whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world.

And this is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith. So John wrote in his first epistle, the fifth chapter and the fourth verse. So much about faith.

So many areas in which it operates. So important it seems to be, by repetition. We well may ask ourselves, Well, what is faith? What is this faith about which the Bible speaks so much? And I think it's worth thinking about.

What is this faith? If we have to have faith with regard to revival, what is it? I've often defined faith in Bible college in this way. Faith is knowledge plus belief plus confidence. You cannot have faith unless you know something.

And you cannot have faith unless you believe what you know. And you cannot really have faith unless you act upon what you believe and know in absolute confidence. Knowledge plus belief plus confidence equals faith.

And I do not think for one moment that these qualities ever change. That these elements can be changed at all when it comes to faith. Knowledge plus belief plus confidence.

But while it is true that the elements that comprise faith do not change, yet there are degrees of faith. Jesus talked about little faith, and again about having faith, and also about great faith. So that with regard to the degree of faith, this can vary from person to person, and from situation to situation.

Another interesting thing. While faith does not change as to its elements, but does change as to its degree, it also changes as to its expression. In salvation, faith accepts.

Accepts the finished work of Jesus Christ. Accepts the fact that He died on Calvary. Accepts His redemptive work as the only means of our redemption.

Faith accepts. And that deals with a penalty for our sin. But in sanctification, faith goes deeper.

Not simply faith accepts now, but faith accounts. Reckoning yourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God. This reckoning of faith is somehow different from the accepting of faith by means of which our salvation came.

For this reckoning of faith, this accounting, deals not with a penalty of our sin, but with a power of indwelling sin. And so this faith is somehow different in expression from the faith that saves. In service, faith adventures, launching out upon the promises of God.

And the person who is determined to serve God will soon discover that faith never works until He does. Faith doesn't become active until He becomes active. For you can talk about faith and sing about faith and pray about faith until you're blue in the face, if you like.

But if you don't step out upon faith, it isn't faith at all. All right? Now what about revival? If in salvation, faith accepts, and in sanctification, faith accounts, and in service, faith adventures, in revival, faith appropriates. Appropriates the promises of God.

Appropriates what God has said in His Word concerning His willingness to pour out of His Spirit upon us. Faith appropriates. But then, you see, when you've said all this, you have begun to explain many other elements that enter into the operation of faith.

For instance, faith is a farce if it neglects the proofs. For then, it is presumption and not faith that ensues. A person doesn't have faith because he closes his eyes to facts.

This is not faith. Faith is knowledge, plus belief, plus confidence. But you must know.

And what you know must be the truth. So faith is a farce if it neglects the proofs. Because then, it is presumption and not faith that ensues.

And I'm sure that the Holy Spirit never sets any premium on ignorance. How many times have we heard them say, Well, of course, they were unlearned men, ignorant and unlearned men, just ordinary fishermen. And see what God did with them.

Wonderful. Marvelous. Not many and mighty are called.

It doesn't say not any. Not many wise. It doesn't say not any wise.

I think we have to disabuse our minds of ideas here. And we should remember that if there is a revelation that comes to us out of the blue, because we are filled with the Spirit, because we are able to speak good tongues and all the rest of it, there is also a very wonderful revelation that comes by research. In the study of God's Word, in seeking to know God's mind through His Word, there is also revelation that is born in this way.

There is no premium on ignorance. Again, faith is a farce if it rejects the facts, if it rejects what it knows. For then it is prejudice and not faith that results.

And how often this happens, where a man says he has faith in certain areas, but closes his heart and his mind to facts that appear. This happens with regard to revival. There are men who are convinced of certain things relating to revival, and they have actually closed their hearts and closed their minds against revival, although the facts are before them.

The facts that during the history of the Church, God has come again and again to pour out of His Spirit. But they talk in terms of dispensations. And the result is that they've got a great big prejudice that somehow makes what they call faith a farce in the sight of God.

What is a prejudice? It's a floating opinion without any visible means of support. And if we desire the principle of faith to be operative in the area of revival, there is seed to it that our faith is built only upon the solid promises of God, not upon the opinions of men. Now, there are some who are prejudiced then, as you will have gathered, against the possibility of revival in our times.

Indeed, they are against revival as such in some instances. And they say they'll have nothing to do with it. And this sometimes is due to the fact that they are ignorant of what it means.

Any suggestion of a change in the service, for instance, or in the attitude of people in general to religion is suspect to them. They think there's something wrong. They are satisfied and settled, and they don't want to be disturbed.

Of course, the trouble is that when revival arrives, it's the voice of God crying in centurion tones, Awake now that sleep is, and arise from the dead. Christ shall give thee life. This is revival.

But the trouble is that their theme song is, If I am dreaming, let me dream on. Don't want to be disturbed. Others won't accept the thought of revival or the fact of revival because of ecstatic happenings, they say, that accompany revival.

Manifestations which they can't accept. They're afraid of it. Do you know the fact is that we always fear the things we don't understand.

And because there are things about revival which go beyond the human and the natural, then they're not prepared to accept it. I think that the first essential in order to overcome this sort of fear is our love toward God. For perfect love casts out fear.

And the second thing in dealing with fear is to know what is involved. To have a knowledge of the facts and an acceptance of them. Now I'd be the first to acknowledge, quite frankly, that there are extravagances that accompany revival.

I've heard old men say to me in wills when I was a young chap, I remember talking to them, they'd been through the revival. They could tell you about many things that happened which were not scripturally based. Sealed without knowledge accounted for much of it.

I can recall one man telling me about the group that he worshipped with. They were reading the scriptures together in their little Bible study. No minister in attendance, of course.

And although they knew the outpouring of the Spirit upon them, they came to this question of dealing with the flesh. And they didn't know how to handle it. So they had some prayer and they decided that they'd got guidance from God.

And down along the main street of the village they went. One behind the other. Beating frying pans and saucepans and making a terrible row, as terrible noise as they went along.

This was crucifying their flesh because everybody knew them. And this was their interpretation of it. There were many other things that happened.

And I'm sure it was due to the lack of teaching, of instruction. But honestly, when you come to think of it, there's hardly a doctrine in the Word of God. That hasn't been suspected some time or other.

And misinterpreted. And misapplied. What are we to do then? For instance, what are we to do with the communion service? Are we to throw it out because in Corinth they mishandled the situation? What are we to do with the rain when it comes? Are we going to say, well, let's have the drought, because when the rain comes it comes sometimes in floods and a few bridges get washed away? We have to realize eventually that if the choice is put before us, it is the choice between divine sovereignty intervening in human affairs or else drifting through our church life and through our life as Christians.

There will be sometimes extravagances. There will be manifestations that are ecstatic. But remember this, that upon all the glory there shall be a defense.

And I'm sure that what God is doing in these days, here and in other places, is preparing the hearts and minds of His people for the time of the outpouring so that when it comes, they will know how to handle it. Now, I believe that there are many who don't want revival because of this fact. And so they smother the hope of revival in the dustbin of theology.

They're plenty of discussion about what happens during revival times. And they see ecstatic manifestations or they hear about them. And that's about all they can see.

What happens is this, that because of their lack of faith in the promises of God, they render the Holy One in the midst of them as a mighty man who cannot save in the language of the prophet. In other words, it is the impotence of omnipotence that results. But I'm sure of this.

If we are prepared, honestly and frankly before God, on an intensely personal basis to say to Him, we are prepared to allow Him to do His own work in His own way and throw our hearts doors wide open to Him, He will see to it that what is given to us will be that which will bring glory and praise and honor to His mighty name. Believe in the Lord your God, we read, so shall He be established. Believe His prophets, so shall He prosper.

Believe that with God all things are possible. In spite of the prejudice, the fear, the opposition of fleshly antagonism by little men with tiny vision, believe in spite of all this, that if God is allowed to have His right of way in the midst of His people, He will yet make bare His mighty arm. In spite of the fact that many say we are not to expect revival today, we can't expect it in the light of scripture.

What scripture? Oh, such scriptures, for instance, 2 Timothy 3.1. This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, and so on, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, and all the rest of it. And so they say the world is to wax worse and worse. Iniquity is to abound.

Therefore, how can there be revival? What they seem to forget is this, the same book that talks about abounding iniquity also tells us that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. And then they say, well, after all, it's not only in the world that we are to see these things. What about the church in the last days? They're like prophets of doom.

Their only hope is the hope of survival. They have no hope of revival in the light of what they feel to be the scriptural position. Now, this concerns me very greatly because there are many of these people who are not against revival as such, but are dead set against the possibility of revival in our times.

And I think, from my recollection of having spoken to some of these people and read a lot concerning it, that their main scripture is the fact that we're in the Laodicean age, as they say. And they refer to the letter to the Laodiceans and say, now, there you have it. Think of the church in this situation.

Think of the church fitting into this category. How do you expect the church to be revived when we are living in the Laodicean age, in the last days, and the Lord said He will spew the church out of His mouth? I think we ought to lay that ghost for good and all. So I'm going to ask you to turn now to the book of Revelation.

Not revelations. Revelation. John had only one revelation.

It was of Jesus Christ. He tells us so. In the third chapter and the fourteenth verse.

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans, that is the minister, of course, of the church of the Laodiceans, write, These things saith he, Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God. Just a little bit of background. You know that Laodicea was a very famous city.

It had a medical school. It was a great banking center. It was very wealthy.

It stood on the banks of a river and at the confluence of three great routes in Asia Minor along which people traveled. They were a very proud people. Proud because of their material possessions.

And these facts seem to have some bearing upon their attitude and indeed upon their condition. Now in this church of the Laodiceans, Christ found nothing worthy of commendation. So if we're in the last days, well, this is it.

If we're in the Laodicean age, well, this is the picture. I said earlier on that faith is a farce if it neglects the proofs and faith is a farce if it rejects the facts. So it does us good to look at the facts and examine them so that we know where we are.

And the first fact is that in this Laodicean church, Christ found nothing worthy of commendation apart from a few suffering Christians whom he loves and chases. The very name Laodicea, as you know, Laos comes from people and decay to judge. His judgment by the people, the worst possible form of so-called democracy.

They were in charge. And so he doesn't refer to the church in Laodicea such as he did the church in Sardis, the church in Ephesus, but the church of the Laodiceans. It's their church.

And I know that there are people who will tell us today that this is the condition, this is the way in which the church is conducted in our day and age, in general, in the main. This was a proud, boastful, self-deluded church. And is this a picture of the days in which we live? What is the message of this church? What are the lessons we are taught here? This is the important thing.

And here there are four points that I would like you to notice. First, the Christ confronting them. You have this in the 14th verse of the chapter.

And then, secondly, the charge condemning them, verses 15 to 17. Third, the counsel concerning them, verses 18 and 19. And fourth, the call challenging them, verses 20 to 22.

Just briefly, let us look at these points. First of all, the Christ confronting them, verse 14. In each of the seven letters, Jesus appears in a distinctive role.

Here He stands first as the positive confirmer of the divine promises, called the Amen. This is His title. It comes from Isaiah 65, 16.

He will bless Himself in the God of Amen. Swear by the God of Amen. Literally, the Hebrew is the God of truth, the living God.

When this word Amen is used at the beginning of a declaration or a sentence, such as, verily, verily, I say unto you. It's Amen, Amen, I say unto you. It doesn't have the same meaning as when it comes at the end of a prayer.

At the end of a prayer, Amen means, so let it be. But at the beginning, it means, it shall be so. So the Amen of God stands and says, it shall be so.

And here He stands as the confirmer, the positive confirmer of the divine promises. For in Him, we read, are all the promises of God, yea, and in Him, Amen. Christ, in other words, is the guarantee of the fulfillment of the promises of God.

Then He stands here also as the authoritative testifier to the truth of God, the faithful and true witness, we read. Faithful in this sense means trustworthy, contrasted with the unfaithfulness, untrustworthiness of the latter scenes. True witness, for He who is the truth, the way and the life, cannot lie.

Therefore He stands as the authoritative testifier to the truth of God. He will not deceive. He stands here as the creative administrator of the things of God.

He is called the beginning of the creation of God, in the sense of being before all creation, not in the sense of being the first created being. The beginning of creation, the fount of creative power and authority and ability. That's why you read, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation.

For if you're in Christ, He has the power, the ability, not simply to take hold of natural talents and sanctify them to a divine use, but to impart new potentials, to impart new talents, to create where there was nothing. This is the Christ who stands confronting the latter scenes. This is the Christ who faces us here tonight.

So there He is, appearing to say, I am the Amen, confirming every promise. I am the faithful and true witness, never deceiving you. I am the beginning of the creation of God, never failing you.

Is anything too hard for me? This is the Christ confronting them. What are the charge condemning them? Verses 15 to 17. What are they condemned for? They are condemned for their indifference.

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou art cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spill thee out of my mouth.

They sicken their Lord, neither cold nor hot. Cold here is icy cold. Hot here is boiling hot.

Because they were neither one thing nor the other, then they are condemned. Indifferent. Indifferent to the convictions of the Spirit.

Indifferent to God's call in their lives. Resisting, grieving, quenching the Spirit of God. They were indifferent to God because they refused to give Him that deeper dedication for which He asked, that greater sacrifice, that fuller service, that higher ground that He offered them.

They were indifferent to it. Lukewarm. Indifferent to the claims of Christ.

His claim to their absolute loyalty, their absolute devotion, their absolute surrender to Him. Indifferent. They had enough religion to lull the conscience, but not enough to prod the will.

They were lukewarm. And so He says, according to the Orthodox version, I will spew you out of my mouth. But the Greek is not as strong as that.

The Greek gives us this. I am about to spew you out of my mouth. Be warned.

Which puts a different complexion on it. And they are condemned for their independence. The end of verse 17.

Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods and of need of nothing. They equated material resources with spiritual riches. They couldn't tell the difference.

They mixed up gold with God. They thought it meant the same thing. They thought of prosperity as the hallmark of spirituality, which was a pure Hebrew concept.

So they were independent, self-satisfied, self-sufficient. They could get on by themselves. They didn't need God, really.

They could manage. And I wonder if this is the kind of church in the main, in which people live out their days, in our country at this time. Is this truly a picture of ourselves? I read some time ago of a bishop who was very, very fond of boasting about this beautiful church.

And all the trappings and the trimmings, you know. And someone went to visit. Another fellow minister, who was a humble man of God.

In the course of the tour of the great and beautiful church, the bishop said, drawing himself to his full height, You know, my brother, he said, we can no longer say, can we? Silver and gold have we none. Those that is fair, neither can we say. Arise, dig up thy bed and walk.

You can't equate material wealth with spiritual riches. But this is what happened in the Laodicean church. And they are condemned for their ignorance.

And knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. It's only Christ that could use these terms. And knowest not, that's the sad part, isn't it? They just didn't know their true position.

Wasn't that true of Jerusalem? When Jesus set over the city and wept and said, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, if thou hast but known, even thou in this thy day, I would have gathered you together. They didn't know. It was the trouble with the woman at the well.

If thou knewest who it is that speaketh with thee. If thou knewest the gift of God. But she didn't know.

And it is a sad commentary on people when they can go through life in this Laodicean independence and indifference and ignorance, never knowing what God intended for them. I heard the Maryshills speak once, that great salvationist. And she told the story of her son, William Booth Clibbon, when he was just a little boy.

They were in France, of course. And William Booth Clibbon could speak French like a Frenchman because he had been born in that country, naturally. But they'd been invited to some social gathering, some titled lady.

And the Maryshill knew that the house would be packed with these important guests moving in high social circles. And so she laid down the law to him, just as any mother would. Now, William, you behave yourself now.

Remember, it's not just like going to somebody's cottage. You behave yourself. Don't you shame me, William.

Remember now. And of course, William made all the promises under the sun. Certainly he'd be very good.

And almost the first thing that happened when they got there was that she turned around and saw William gaily sliding down the banister from some rooms upstairs, coming at a great rate. And when he got to the bottom, she took hold of him by his ear and yanked him to his feet. And she said, What did I say to you? Oh, mother, you say, if I'd only known you were so lovely and so beautiful, I'd have come to you much sooner than I did.

If thou didst know, the trouble with the Laodiceans was that they didn't know. And they are condemned for that ignorance. No, it's not that thou art wretched.

The wretched one among the churches of Asia here. And this word, wretched, means enduring trials, enduring temptations, enduring testing by the wealth that surrounded them, of course. And how many people succumb to prosperity who would fight their way through an adversity and miserable, pitiable, an object of compassion.

They didn't know this. And poor, spiritually denuded, not poor in spirit, which is a good thing. This word comes from a root meaning to crouch, to cringe as a beggar, becoming destitute.

They didn't know this. They thought they were all right. And blind, without spiritual vision, not yet blind absolutely, but short-sighted, unable to evaluate the things of God, unable to see through.

So we are told, well, there it is. That's a picture of ourselves in general today. This is the Laodicean age of the church, brother.

And this is how we are in the sight of God. How do you expect to have revival in these circumstances? Let's go on. Here is the counsel concerning them, verses 18 and 19.

I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness will not appear. And anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chase them.

Be zealous therefore, and repent. The living Savior faces them. He doesn't say to them, I'll have nothing more to do with you.

Drift on into obscurity. I'm finished. No.

This is not the Christ of God who is the head of this church. There are four requirements which they needed urgently. As I discover them here in the words of Jesus, this backslidden church needed these things in order to bring them back to the place they should be with God.

First, the gold of holiness. Buy of me gold tried in the fire, in the place of refinement. Something which is very costly.

If salvation from the penalty of sin costs us nothing, salvation from the power of indwelling sin will cost us everything. Everything in surrender at His feet. It will mean enduring the fires.

So we may well say from our hearts, as we face the possibility of revival in our days, and say it and mean it by the grace of God, burn up the dross of this desire and make the mountains flow. Spirit of burning, my life inspire. For I am yearning to feel the fire, searching, consuming from every sin, cleansing, refining deep within.

For this I pray in His dear name. Burn in my soul Thou living flame. Something more than speaking with tongues or prophesying or having gifts of healing or marvelous times of blessing and great hallelujah times.

Something more. Go, tried in the fire. Instead of fleshiness and carnality, this lard I see in church may be revived until there is spirituality in their very character.

If they will accept the counsel of the living Christ to the robe of righteousness and quite laymen that thou mayest be clothed. The book of Revelation interprets this as the righteousness of the saints. The white robe of pure righteousness.

So this lard I see in church, far from being finally rejected, is counseled that they may have spirituality in their conduct, a standard of righteousness which is pure in the sight of the Lord. The third thing, the salve of clear-sightedness and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve that thou mayest see. The glitter of gold hath made them short-sighted.

Like Bunyan's man with a muck-rake, they were always scraping along in the muck. The lard I see in church is offered spirituality in their concept of values, for their blindness can be healed. They can be made to see and for free the spirit of lowliness.

Verse 19. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous, therefore, and repent.

As many as I love. Here, of course, it is the strong love word. The love that prizes.

It is as though he is saying, I know your works. I understand what you are. I know that you have failed.

I know that in the eyes of those who look upon you, your situation is completely hopeless. I know this. But I love you.

I love you. And I can see the Christ of God looking down upon the church in New Zealand. And I believe He is saying the very same thing.

In the eyes of those who would measure by human standards, the situation is hopeless. And we are a helpless lot of people. But the Christ who said it aloud is here saying it to us.

I love you. I don't know why He does. But He does.

I rebuke sharply and penetratingly, as here, and chasten with the rod of His word. Oh, I know it is not easy to take. But remember, divine censure doesn't mean hostility.

If He chastens us, it is only because He really does love us. And He wants us to be different. Be zealous, therefore, and repent.

Zealous. Have warmth of feeling, literally. Instead of being lukewarm, get a boiling pit in this.

Be zealous, therefore, and repent. Be enthusiastic in doing this. What a counsel it is.

Repent. Sorry enough to quit. Not sorry enough to have a conscience that is stirred up and a challenge that comes, that lulls your conscience very often, simply because you've been challenged.

But to turn your back upon the whole stinking mess, this is what repentance means. To walk away from it. And so tonight, if you are conscious, as these people must have been by now, of anything that causes the censure of Christ in your life, here is what you do about it.

Don't turn away in frustration and despondency. Don't spend sleepless nights worrying about your condition. But remember that Christ, who spoke so penetratingly to the Laodicean churches, speaking to the church of our day and our country.

And the fourth thing, the call challenging them. Last verses. Behold, I stand at the door and knock.

If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

What a tremendous call this is. Think of the person who stands. Behold, I stand, said Jesus.

The king outside his kingdom. The priest outside his temple. The head outside his home.

But thank God he is prepared to stand. And think of the plea he makes, not only standing, but knocking and calling. I remember when I stood looking at Holman Hunt's great painting, The Light of the World.

I remember something I'd read about a little boy who stood, where I was standing evidently, with his father. And looking up at the painting, he turned to his father and said, Daddy, that's Jesus, isn't it? He said, yes. Why is he standing at that door and why is the door closed, Daddy? Father said, I just don't know.

And the little boy pondered and with all the wisdom of a little boy, he said, I guess it's because they are too busy in the kitchen someplace and they can't hear him. His father said, yes, I guess that's about right. The plea that he makes, standing, knocking, calling.

And think of the tremendous promise that he gives. I will come in and sup with him. And he with me.

I will come in. I will have fellowship with him. I will bring everything that is required for fellowship.

We will have fellowship together. Is this the lardessee in church? It is the lardessee in church. Then in the remaining verses, 21 and 22, instead of ending on the dismal note of the prophets of doom, what do you read? To this church, in which Christ found nothing to commend, this church which he challenges, he gives this tremendous promise.

I will grant, he said, to those who overcome, to sit down with me on my throne. The choicest promise of all to this particular church. How could it be? So to those who say, in this lardessee in age, we can't expect revival.

It's the end. Never allow that to influence you at all. I have taken time tonight to go over the scripture passage with you for this one reason.

Just lay this aside and forget about it from now on. Because there is nothing that will militate against your faith so much as these prophets of doom who are forever predicting, not revival, but perhaps some possibility, some faint possibility of survival for a few. I know there is apostasy.

I know there is declension. I know there is humanism and self-sufficiency in the churches. I know there are many who think it depends on human cleverness.

But thank God for His Word upon which we can stand. And as we come to examine what is said, in spite of all these things, we see opening before us the glorious possibility of God marching in triumph into the midst of this situation and making bare His mighty arm. I am sorry if I have touched upon the negative side of it tonight.

There is a positive side in it. And I hope to touch on this next Tuesday night. There are so many wonderful positive promises concerning revival.

Joel's prophecy, for instance, that outpouring which was never finalized on the day of Pentecost, which seems to continue and will continue until before the coming of the Lord there shall be times of great refreshing from His presence. There are tremendous promises here. And you know, the promises of God stand upon four pillars.

The pillar of His righteousness He will not change. The pillar of His love He will not forget. The pillar of His truth He will not lie.

And the pillar of His power He will not fail. Upon those four pillars the promises of God for revival stand secure. It is upon these that we are to reckon whereupon the floating opinions of men will come and go.

All right, so much for the lard I see in age. You can forget it now. Remembering that in spite of all that may point to the contrary God is still willing and able and prepared to come in to the situation and transform it.

This is the promise of the Christ who confronted the lard I see in us. It's the same promise which holds good for you and me. May God bless His word.

Let us pray. O God, our Father, we thank Thee and praise Thee because in the process of breaking up the fallow ground there is so much that we are able to learn so much that Thou wouldst teach us. That we pray, O Lord, that Thou wouldst not keep our eyes riveted upon the fallow ground but upon the rain of righteousness which is to come upon the outpoured blessing.

For Thou hast said it and we believe it there shall be showers of blessing floods upon the dry ground. We are believing for this, O Lord. And if in the preparatory process Thou dost challenge us in the deep places of our hearts and lives we say to Thee very humbly Go on with Thy work, O Lord.

Prepare the ground in us that when the day shall dawn we may be among those who rejoice in the latter rain as well as in the former rain in the outpoured blessing in the revival that only God can send when the conditions are fulfilled. We ask this for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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