

Laodicea

by Robert B. Thompson

The sermon on Laodicea highlights the dangers of spiritual complacency and the call to genuine repentance and relationship with Christ.

Duration: 1:04:25

Scripture: Genesis 3:7-8, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 7:14, Revelation 3:14-22

Topics: "True Faith", "Genuine Witness"

Description

The video in the sermon transcript showcases the works of a talented artist who studied art at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. However, the artist felt a calling from God to serve Him among other artists and show Christ to them. It took the artist four years of wrestling with God to fully surrender and give everything to Him. The sermon emphasizes the importance of truly knowing and interacting with God in order to be a witness to others, rather than just preaching about Him. The speaker also discusses the need for the church to demonstrate a genuine faith and righteousness, especially in the face of a world characterized by sin and immorality.

Transcript

Lord, as we come unto you this day, we are so appreciative of all the good things that you have done for us, Lord. Many things we know, most of which we don't know, but we thank the Lord for your watchful care over us. It is just marvelous, and we appreciate it.

We appreciate your presence this day, and that we can be here in health and safety to worship you. Lord, we pray for each family represented here that your presence and your blessing will be with them, to keep them at home and on the highway, Lord, safe and healthy. In Jesus' name, Lord, be with each one, and give us a heart for God, I pray.

Bless the little children, Lord, as they're being taught. And for those of us here, Lord, I pray that everyone will get something. By your Holy Spirit, just guide what is said and perceived, Lord, that we all may partake of Christ's word.

In Jesus' name, amen. You may be seated. We'll turn in our Bibles to Revelation.

Revelation, the third chapter, and we're going to read all this about the church of Laodicea, which is verses 14 through 22 of Revelation chapter 3, starting with verse 14 through 22, to the end of the chapter. To the

angel of the church in Laodicea write, These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot.

I wish you were either one or the other. So because you are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say I am rich.

I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing. But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so that you can become rich, and white clothes to wear so you can cover your shameful nakedness, and salve to put on your eyes so you can see.

Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline, so be earnest and repent. Here I am. I stand at the door and knock.

If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with me. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Laodicea is one of the seven churches is in present day Turkey, and you can go there and visit the ruins. All the seven churches are in present day Turkey, and it is said that it was a prosperous city, and I believe if I remember correctly they were famous for having an eye salve that they produced in Laodicea. The word itself is suggestive of the idea that Laos means people, and Laodicea comes from the idea of words, so it is kind of the voice of the people, or you might say democracy.

Democracy. As a church, it is interesting that to this church of democracy, it is the only one of the seven churches about which the Lord has nothing good to say. It is the only one.

And while all of us believe in democracy because we are children of those who rebelled against the tyranny of Europe, and so democracy is kind of a sacred word to us, and certainly we all enjoy our freedom to speak and to comment, but nonetheless it can be very much against the kingdom of God, because it teaches us that man has a right to do what he pleases, and this is the opposite of the kingdom. In fact, if you were watching a VCR last night of Linna Stratus, it is very good if you can get her to loan it to you. It is on Oswald Chambers.

It is excellent, excellent on the life of Oswald Chambers. And he went through a four year period which he said was hell on earth. This is before he went to Egypt as a chaplain.

He said he had a dark night of the soul and what God was after was for him to relinquish his right to be himself so to speak, to do as he wanted to, to just give up and yield everything to God. Of course out of that came his very famous expression, my utmost for his highest. Well, he didn't get there overnight.

It was a long, hard struggle. He was a very promising artist, my goodness, his works are masterpieces, but God required of him. He wanted to serve God among the artists and show Christ to artists.

He was very much into artists. He studied art at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland and the video shows some of his pictures and they are astonishing. As good as any you will ever see, oil paintings.

But the Lord wrestled with him and he with the Lord until he was willing to give everything that he is to God. Everything. It took him four years to finally, not that he was in rebellion, these things go so deep in

your soul that you can say I want to give myself to God and yet it isn't quite finished, it isn't quite done and it takes a lot of subjective wrestling with God to where you come out into the light and you know that you have given everything to God.

He only lived to the age of 43. He lived between him and his wife who then lived after that until 1966 and since he died, she must have outlived him by 50 years or so and she's the one, he didn't write, she's the one that put out all the books. So I say between him and his wife they have had a profound effect on the church of Jesus Christ because one man was willing to surrender himself to God to the extent that he would do, abandon to God was his idea, just abandon and completely abandon to God.

These are the words, and I say that because of Laodicea, because as Christians in America we try to combine the idea of democracy and Christianity and they are opposites and because in democracy we do what we want to do, so rule upward, by pole if you please, and in the kingdom of God the rule is from the top down. We do what God says, we obey him implicitly even though it means to the loss of our life if need be and many Christians have paid that price. So the Lord had nothing good to say about the church of the voice of the people.

Interesting, isn't it? Seven churches, this is the only one, and yet to this church the greatest promises are made. Isn't that just like the Lord? These are the words of the Amen. Now this idea of being a faithful and true witness needs to be thought about.

We use the word witnessing incorrectly and I don't say there is any harm done except that we lose sight of what it means to be a witness. There is a big difference between witnessing and preaching. Not everyone is called to be a preacher, but everyone is called to be a witness of God and I do not mean by that preaching.

Oswald Chambers said it's not do and do and do, it's be and be and then Christ will do. And so it takes many years to make a witness. Witnessing is not passing out a tract and telling somebody about the four steps of salvation, that's preaching, that's evangelizing, and that is one of the gifts of the spirit.

Witnessing is what we are and the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in America is strong on evangelizing, but our witness has nearly been destroyed because of our love of money and immorality and other things. We are not bearing a good witness to the world. I wonder sometimes how the Muslim people, and many of them love God sincerely, and I wonder how their attitude would be toward America if we were a righteous nation serving God because that's what they don't see and that's why they call us the great Satan and rightly so.

But they do, many of them, they are not all terrorists. I know because I've been in correspondence with a Muslim and this individual was attracted to our website because of the emphasis and this individual said that's what we believe, that's what we believe. Why can't we get together? What we believe is fearing God and walking in his presence.

Probably the greatest verse in the New Testament on witnessing is found in Matthew 7 where Jesus said, a city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify God. That's where every Christian is a witness.

Not every Christian is called to evangelize. I know that that's taught but I can't help it. It's not scriptural and God has called me to preach the scripture not people's ideas.

Evangelism is a ministry. We all have different ministries but we all are called to be a witness of God by showing compassion, by practicing righteousness, by telling the truth, by being free from the love of money. See this is what the Muslims are looking for.

This is what the Quran teaches and this is what they are looking for. So they don't accept Jesus Christ because they don't see righteousness. I'm talking about the Muslims.

I don't know much about other religions but I'm getting acquainted with this one because of this person whom I'll call Ibrahim although that's not his name. Ibrahim has really given me insight into the Muslim religion and I'm not about to be converted but it's helped me to see what the world is looking for in the church. We are supposed to bear a witness of Jesus Christ and we can send tracts all over the world and do as we like but when our nation is characterized by drugs and alcohol and violence and murder and abortion and covetousness and idolatry and immorality, forget it.

There's no witness. There may be all kinds of preaching but there's no witness. It takes many years to make a witness to show other people about God and his ways requires that you know God.

Not just about God but that you have interacted with him in many situations and pressures and have come to know him and then you can show by your life what you say. Oh hallelujah. That's very meaningful to me because I think of these millions and millions of Muslims and they're waiting to see something in the church of Jesus Christ beside a love of money and immorality and they're waiting to see something better.

God may have something great for the Arab people, the children of the desert. They really are brothers of Israel. But the reason this is on my mind is because during the last three weeks two people on the email have commented to me.

One sent me about three email messages insisting that I change my message so that it's more palatable to people. And Brian has read them all and his conclusion was no matter what you did they would never receive it. And that was more or less my conclusion too.

And then this morning as I checked my email there was a very good letter from a fine thinking person and you could tell it was not ranting or railing, it was just a calm statement. And he said, you're going to cause people to be discouraged. And this was also said by a distinguished minister whom I respect and was a little surprised.

So I pondered that. I pondered that. And then I thought the issue is not whether people are attracted.

The issue is not whether people are discouraged. What is the issue? It's whether it's scriptural. That's the only issue.

The reason you can imagine there's no need for anyone to be discouraged. Jesus always stands ready to help the perused read in the smoking flax. But you wouldn't have to be particularly brilliant to say if you had a nation of people who have been taught that they're saved by grace and it doesn't matter how they behave, at any moment they're going to be caught up to heaven so they won't suffer.

And then some dude comes along and tells them unless they take up their cross and follow Christ they're not a disciple, which is equivalent to not being a Christian by Bible definition. It's no wonder they would be not attracted. It's no wonder they would be discouraged.

Because how am I going to take up my cross and follow Christ? I've got a family. I've got a mortgage. I've got a job that's killing me.

I've got people that are depending on me. I'm into computers and if I don't work 15 hours a day then other companies are going to get the jump on me. Or I'm working for the government in Washington D.C. and it requires that I get there at dark and come home at 9 at night.

But if I don't I can't keep my... But what is this take up your cross and follow Jesus? I'm discouraged. I want to serve God but that's what's causing it. Not the Bible.

Not that Christ won't help us. It's the contrast between our standard in America and the Bible standard. Christ will help anyone who wants to be helped.

Now I say that because notice what he says to the Church of Democracy. These are the words of the Amen. What does Christ say Amen to? God's Word.

God speaks, Christ says Amen. God speaks and people in Democracy say it's too hard. I'm discouraged.

I'm turned off. They don't say Amen. The only issue is the Scripture.

The only issue is the Scripture. There's only so much... We knew a minister once said you had to bait the hook. You had to bait the hook.

I personally think he baited it with an elephant because there was no way you were ever going to get the hook out of that man's preaching. There's no way. And when you fall into that trap, boy you're there to stay because you've won people by easy preaching and you've got to keep them that way.

You can't suddenly turn on them and say well you've got to be a disciple if you're not a Christian. You've got to tell them the truth straight off and trust the Holy Spirit. Do you say Amen to that? The Holy Spirit is not going to buck the rivets on anything except the Word of God.

He's not going to buck the rivets on man's tradition. So either you do it by yourself and your talents or you trust God. But there's something about being a faithful and true witness.

It costs something. Because the majority of church people will stone the prophets. They always have.

And Jesus had to fight the religious people. Everybody that's ever done anything, that's always in the church. Not that church people are bad, they're not.

But to get halfway into God leaves you open for Satan because he's interested in people that are religious but as long as they don't do it too much. These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness. And you think the time when the Lord moved on Jesus to multiply bread and fish and thousands of people.

This is the best show in town. This guy is going to be king. I mean he is the next one in the democratic convention.

This is the next one. Man feeds the poor. And then the Father said don't tell them about your body and blood.

He knew what would happen. He never batted an eye. Amen Father.

Now listen you guys. I'm going to drink my blood. You have no life in you.

When is the next meal? We don't want to hear about eating your flesh and drinking your blood. Forget it. That's against the law.

You know it. You don't drink blood. So what are you talking about? Greatest backdoor in revival in history.

I don't think there's another preacher that ever had 5,000 people and ended up with 12. Maybe so. Faithful and true.

Then it says in Revelation in the NIV it says the rulers of God's creation. And I know why they translated our He ruler. They were afraid we'd think that Christ was a created being.

But it's not true to the Greek. It really should be the beginning of God's creation. Because it's talking about the new creation and Christ is the first born from the dead.

He is the beginning. The are he. The beginning of the kingdom.

The new creation of God. That doesn't make him a created being. But the NIV out of deference to scholarship translated are he ruler.

Which it can be by a stretch of the imagination. The ruler is kind of the head of the parade. But Christ is the first born from the dead.

The first of a whole new world. And when he died on the cross the whole Adamic race died with him. And the only thing you can do to really please God is take your place on the cross and recognize that it's over.

They ain't no more. And until you do that you're beating a dead horse. God isn't going to take the Adamic race any further.

It's finished. It was finished on the cross. It's dead and over.

It was only meant to be a prototype in any case. So if you want eternal life you have to become part of Jesus Christ in his resurrection. That's what being born again is all about.

And that race is still human but it's a transcendent human race. But it will endure forever. So you can spend your time on that which is already over.

Oh you say but people are still being born. I know that. But God speaks in a timeless vision.

And what he says eventually comes into what you can see. But when God speaks it's as real as money in the bank. More real in fact these days.

It's more real than money in the bank. It's already done. And God already has finished with the Adamic race and has brought into being a new race beginning with the Lord Jesus Christ.

And he is the beginning as it says in Colossians the firstborn from the dead. The beginning of the creation of God. How important to say a thing like this to Adamic people who are walking around pounding on their chest like King Kong imagining that somehow their dust is significant.

You'll never be significant until you become part of Jesus Christ. You're not good if detached. You're just dust.

See democracy tends to feed our inflated ego. It's over. The new race is here.

Join the group. They're going to live forever and they are significant. That's why it says there's no more seed.

There's no more mass of Adamic creatures living like grass and then dying and living and dying and breeding and living and dying. It's over. What matters is Jesus Christ and him alone.

Get to be part of him and your life will take on significance. Stay apart from him and you'll grow old and die and never have found significance. You will have missed it all.

It's all in Jesus. There ain't no more. I know your deeds.

Now we've had, this is what Christ says to the churches. We would expect him to say from present day teaching, I know your theology. I know you believe in the virgin birth.

I know you believe in the blood atonement. I know you believe in the bodily resurrection. I know you believe in the literal return of Christ because we think that's how we're saved.

It's by theology. There's no salvation in theology unless it brings you to the man because the salvation is in the man, not what you believe in your head. There are people who believe the facts of religion who are wicked and the demons themselves understand the facts.

There's no life in the facts. It's got to bring you to the man. The life is in the man.

And so our stress on we're saved by belief or saved by faith, meaning we're saved by belief in religion is false. It is not true. Only as we come to Jesus.

You know there's a great difference between religion and Jesus. I've been thinking about that. I guess Abraham got me thinking about the difference between religion and Jesus.

People have been murdered in the name of religion. Jesus never murdered anybody. It's fine to be religious as long as it doesn't interfere with your salvation.

As long as it doesn't keep you from walking with Jesus. The thing is in Jesus we make a religion because we have to have something to adapt to and make sense in our daily life. But it can so easily occlude, that means bar out, black out, opaque out, our vision of Jesus.

And there's nothing except in him. And all religion and all the artifacts of religion and its architecture and everything else will one day be gone. That's why it says in Revelation 21, I saw no temple therein.

There's only scaffolding. They'll be done away. And if you don't know Jesus, you don't have anything going for you.

I know your deeds and we have a teaching and we need to get it up off and out of the shelf that God does not see us except through Christ. Or we're covered with the blood so that God cannot see us. There is no scripture for being covered with the blood.

The blood doesn't cover us, it forgives us. We are not shielded from God's I know your deeds. He knows everything you're doing.

Hey, this is a great day. Sometimes I run afoul of tradition. You know what you do? Go back and find your belief in the Bible.

If it isn't there, then get rid of it. It isn't going to stand. The days to come are too pressured, too immoral, too dark.

It's an age of moral horrors. Our traditions are going to vanish like a drop of water on a hot stove. Make sure you've got Bible for what you believe.

God says I know your deeds. I know what you're doing. I know everything about it.

And I say hallelujah because there's salvation in that because that means I won't be doing a lot of stuff God doesn't approve of it. I want God to know what I'm doing. Every stick and stone of it.

How about you? I don't want to be hidden from God's sight with my own fig leaves like Adam and Eve. Forget it. I know your deeds.

Oh, there's comfort. There's salvation in that. And you are neither cold nor hot.

He could tell from their deeds they weren't cold or hot. You want something that runs afoul of our current culture, it's this idea. We much prefer that people be well-rounded.

We don't like extremes. We like people that are predictable, that are comfortable, that are not way off in religion. And on the other hand, we don't want people that are totally wicked.

As one lady said, she was on her way to Las Vegas, she said, I like it a little dirty, but I don't want it real dirty. Americans can buy that. You know, I don't want a wicked guy around me, a Satanist with satanic marks on his forehead.

I don't want anything to do with someone who's worshipping the devil. But on the other side of the coin, I don't want anything like you're talking about Oswald Chambers. I don't want to abandon my one and only life to God, not knowing what's going to happen.

I just don't like extremes. I don't want to be wicked, and I don't want to be overly righteous. Oh, glory.

How do you feel about that? Don't you think it's really better to be well-rounded? You wouldn't like people to refer to you as a religious fanatic, would you? Say that person, they're way off. All they talk about is Jesus. I guess that's all they know.

They don't know anything except Jesus. Why don't they get a life? But Jesus says, I would rather you were wicked, or really wicked, or really righteous. I can't do anything with you.

How many like their coffee hot? How many like their iced coffee? On a hot day, there's worse stuff to drink. How many like coffee that's neither hot nor cold? Or tea, or anything else? We don't like stuff lukewarm. Did you ever drink a cup and thought the water in the kettle was hot, and you poured it out and made your instant and everything, and drank it, and it was lukewarm? What are you allowed to do? Spit it out.

Well, it is somewhat humbling to know we are all in the mouth of Christ. But that's what we assume if he's going to spit us out. So, if you want the Lord to swallow you, get off.

Get off the middle thing. It is not... You're going to be in the days to come, you'd be like the ship that Paul was on, with the prow beached up on the sand bar, and the back part being broken by the waves. That's what's going to happen to lukewarm Christians in the days to come.

The wicked are going to be better off than you. You want to know why the republicans have not gotten farther than they have with impeachment, and the china gate, and the rest of it? I'm going to shock you. They're not wicked enough, and they're not righteous enough.

Now think about that. They're not wicked enough to have the brains to outsmart the wickedness that's going on. And they're not righteous enough that God is with them.

They're just lukewarm to try to keep from getting bumped out of office. Think about it. And that's the way it will be in the future.

You're going to have to know God. You know, there's people that get arrested for what I would call non-violent crimes, such as drunkenness, for example, or cheating on their income tax, or something like that. And you know that sometimes they get put in cells with satanists.

Now just think what that would be like. If somebody found out that you were a believer in Christ and spent their time with their incantations cursing you. You better be.

You better have more than that satanist has. You better have more of God than he does of Satan. Don't you agree? So that's the kind of thing we're coming up against.

We're not going to get anywhere unless we're really wicked or really righteous. And those in the middle, Christ says, well, Lord, at least I'm trying. You know, well, it's true.

I've spent a lot of time doing things I shouldn't, but I go to church and, you know, I'm not really out in the satanist group. And the Lord says, oh, cool. My job is to preach the Bible.

Your job is to believe it. What are you supposed to say? Amen, brother Thompson. I never heard him that wise, but amen.

That's what the book says. I wish you were one or the other. I wouldn't say that, but since the Lord said it, I'm saying it in his name.

So because I'm going to speak, you say I am rich. Now you'll never hear a church say they're rich. Never.

And we don't say we're rich because we have quite our need of expansion right now. We do not have room enough for our young people, and we're very concerned about it. And the leaders, both of the girls and the boys, are distressed because there isn't enough room.

And I'd like you to pray about that. I'm not asking you to give. I'm asking you to pray about it.

You've always been generous, and I'm not up here banging on you about money. But if we had it, and we'll get it in God's time. He's been so good to us here.

We need room for our kids. We don't have it. There's not enough room in the old church in the house to do the job.

We need more property. We need more buildings to fit our kids. And a Sunday or two ago, there was only seven spaces left in our parking lot.

Seven. Seven more people attended church in cars than we would have had. Anyone after that would have had a park in the street.

That's the way churches usually are, if they're healthy and growing. So they don't usually say they're rich. Which tells me something about this church.

Somehow, it was very popular. Had plenty of money. It was like in the tabernacle, where the two builders of the tabernacle had to go to Moses and tell the people to quit bringing it.

We've got more than we can ever use. Which is rare. But that's because a lukewarm gospel appeals to people.

Like the man said to me, you can't just say it in some way that will attract people. So people have been attracted here. And they gave.

I didn't need anything. Isn't that wonderful? Except that the Lord was not pleased with it. I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.

I've got plenty of room for the kids. I've got real estate I can rent out, lease out. I don't need anything.

Marvelous. But you do not realize that you are wretched. Now, that tells us something.

Because in the Song of Solomon, the Lord raves about his bride. Raves about her. Particularly in the sixth chapter.

Raves about her. Oh, she's the only one of her mother. Oh, she's this, she's that, and the next thing.

And then we get over to the fifth chapter of Ephesians. And the Apostle Paul says that the Lord has purchased to himself a bride without blemish. Unblemished.

Bride. Well, you know the Son of God has never been married before. Never had been married before.

So this is a new thing for Jesus, getting hooked up with a bunch of people. He's always had it pretty much his own way. You know, he could get up in the middle of the night if he wanted to, and drink coffee, and read, do anything he wanted to.

He had things pretty much his own way. He didn't have to ask anybody what they thought. This is what I'm going to do.

I'm going to do this today, Father. Okay, good. It all belongs to you anyway.

Do it. Now he's getting hitched up. Well, now, that's pretty heavy.

And as far as I know, it will never happen again. I mean, this is she. This is the one.

And personally, I don't think the Lord knows who she is. There's some things the Father keeps in his own counsel. I think from the beginning of the church era, the Lord was saying, Is this the one, Father? Is this the group? Hmm.

There's some things only the Father knows. So this bride, it says in Ephesians 5, she will be bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. She will be an integral part of him, a counterpart of Christ forever, a helper suitable for him.

I'll tell you what, she will have overcome just as he has overcome. Whoa. I'll tell you another thing, she'll be a worker, she'll be a helper.

That's what it says about Eve, I'm going to make a helper suitable. The most important of all, she will love him. She will love him.

He's not going to marry someone who doesn't overcome. It isn't going to happen because then you have a mismatch. Here the Lord is God is everything.

And he's got a bride that doesn't feel that way. And she says, I wish you wouldn't be that religious. You're going to be the same.

You find that at the last, second to last verse of this chapter. To him who overcomes, even as I overcame. Ah, that's heavy.

And Jesus said the same thing in John 14.3 where he said that she may be with me where I am. That's not in heaven, it's talking about in the presence of God. So she's going to be Miss Universe for sure.

I mean, this gal is going to be something else according to the scripture. Now, what's this coming to the church and saying, you're wretched? That ought to tell us something, what is it? The church on earth is not the bride of the Lamb because he doesn't refer to his bride as wretched. He sings songs about her in the song of Solomon.

One look at you and I'll overcome. Feed me with apples, I'm sick. And now he looks at her and says, you're wretched.

Not the same gal. So, what does that tell us? That the church on earth and the church of Jesus Christ are not the same set of people. I like to say the church is within the churches.

Now that's important to remember because sometimes we think, well I want a church all my life and I'm a regular church mouse and I'm always there and I pay my dues, etc, and so on. That is not it. That's the church on earth.

To be a part of the bride of the Lamb, you have to overcome as he overcame. Now he'll help you do that. Boy, you've got a mean business.

I mean, you go climbing that ladder and you're hanging on like the cat in the chitting bar. The Lord's underneath you to catch you. He'll take care of you.

But I mean, you've got to give it your best shot. And you're climbing up the wall and the Lord's up there ahead of you and he's on the top rung and he's holding you and he looks over and here you come. Weary with the battle.

Exercising patience. Scraggling up and you look down and he says, don't look down, don't look down, it's high up here, just keep going. He finally looks over and you've got your hands on the top bar and then he starts down.

He gets down quick and then he goes around quickly like that and gets under you just in case you fall. Let me tell you, this is the way it is. She's got to love him.

She's got to overcome as he overcame. He's got to have somebody who can march with him. I don't say she'll be as great as he, she'll never be as great as he.

That isn't the point. He had things to overcome, she has things to overcome. Christ had things to overcome.

Obedience was one area. We know about the three things in the desert. The question of food.

The question of the authority and glory of the world system. Tempting a man who by nature is a king. And finally, the desire to act in a religious way to prove your spirituality.

And that followed him all through his life. Come down from the cross, come down from the cross. And then the humiliation of it all.

And then the envy, envy, putting up with envy, and the malice continually. And the perversity of the religious people is not even conceivable. After he raised Lazarus from the dead, they wanted to kill Lazarus because of the testimony.

That's utter perversity. It's perversity in its foulest form. This Christ had to endure and keep a heart full of faith and love toward God.

Not become bitter, not become resentful, not become unforgiving, not clash out. Constantly challenged with this thing, constantly challenged with it. And then to be crucified in the humility of it all.

Not even strong enough after being up all night and beaten to carry his cross. He couldn't, didn't even have that. And for a man not to be able to pull your end of the log is somewhat embarrassing, as I'm finding out at my great age.

It's embarrassing. He's only 33 years old, then he gets somebody else to help him. Pick him up out of the mud and help him carry his cross.

The Son of God had things to overcome. And he doesn't want a bride that is a marshmallow. Never has overcome, kind of religious, kind of believes in God, accepts the blood atonement, wants to go to heaven to be with Jesus, but the slightest thing that comes along becomes full of malice and envy and jealousy and bitterness and backbiting.

Knowing better than this, still continuing to gossip, still continuing to live in the material realm. She's not up there. When he looks across, she's way down there.

I didn't even start it up the ladder. There's no marriage there. There's no marriage there.

He's going to marry one who is as terrible as an army with banners. One who has learned of the Father and trust in the Father and as over, as he overcame. He looks and says, boy, you did it, didn't you? Of

course, he had to help her, but she had to do it.

He doesn't do it all for you. He didn't do it all for Oswald Chambers in the dark night of the soul. And I imagine Oswald Chambers is one of those rare Christians that really did it.

The Lord looks across at him, says, man, okay, I can live with that. And Oswald says, I trust in God and I give myself to God. And Jesus says, I trust in God and I give myself to God.

And Oswald says, I love you, Lord. What needs to be done to help her? Suitable. That's what Christ is going to marry.

Not one that he looks at and says, you're wretched. You don't have a heart for God. You're trying to hedge your bets.

You've got one foot in the world and the other one in the kingdom. Don't you know that? Don't you understand that? Don't you know you're wretched? What has blinded you? Can't you see your condition? Can't you measure against the word? No, you cannot say amen. You say, what can I say that will attract people? What can I say so they won't be discouraged? Tone it down.

Sit down and write on your bill. You owe a hundred, write fifty. You owe two hundred, write a hundred.

Make friends. You're pitiful. Why? Because the angels look down at you.

They don't know anything. They don't have anything. Lord, what are you going to do with them? Pitiful.

And meanwhile, they're boasting about their money, their parking lot, the new organ. You're poor. You're not rich.

All you've got is money. You're not rich. All you've got is money.

You're blind. In Laodicea, famous for its eyesalve, you're blind. You don't see.

You cannot see it. I would give you the kingdom gladly, and you can't see it. And you're naked.

You have not lived so as to build before me a beautiful white robe with which to clothe you in the day of resurrection. You're going to be naked. Just a corrupt Adamic nature that had a religious facade.

So much for the church and the rights of the people. He said, I'll tell you what you can do. You can buy from me gold refined in the fire.

Gold is the nature of God, and he gives it to us. But it has to be refined. Not that the gold is impure, but when it reacts in our person, it has to be made pure in the fire.

We have the gold of God's word. But until it's tested, it's easy to say, he supplies all my needs through Christ Jesus when you're making \$4,000 a month. It's very easy to do that.

Oh, they supply all my needs. Oh, I trust God. When you've got tenure or you're on retirement and you're getting \$4,000 or \$5,000 a month and you've got your stocks and your bonds.

Oh, I trust God. I just think the scripture says he provides all my needs. That isn't tested with fire.

I'm glad you got that much money. We need room for the kids. But this is talking about faith.

Faith that has to be tested. You don't know whether God will provide your needs until you're stone broken. There's no way to know if anything's coming in.

That's what he means, gold fried in the fire. White clothes to wear and you get those by continually washing your robes in the blood of the lamb. You do that on a constant basis as you confess the things that God has shown you in your personality that are not right.

As you bring them to the Lord, he keeps washing your robe and that's how you get yourself a white robe. But it's an intense daily interaction with Jesus. It's an intense daily interaction with Jesus.

You have to come to know the Lord and keep washing your robes to make them white. You can't say, well, I'll take care of that later. Or I know I shouldn't gossip, but or I know I can't forgive that person.

But you can't do that. You can't do that. That means your robe is dirty, dirty, and you've got to wash the thing.

That's what Jesus is saying. And to cover your shameful nakedness and sad to put on your eyes so you can see. Now, the secret of spiritual sight is godliness.

When you're following the Lord and doing his will, he will open your eyes. Spiritual sight says back in Isaiah, if you turn away your ears from hearing of blood in your eyes from seeing things that are wrong in your mouth and speaking slander and gossip and so on. He said, you'll see the king very far off.

Again, over in Peter, it says to add to our faith virtue and all these things we add to says, then you will not be blind. So spiritual sight comes from godliness, and there's no other way. You know, you can have a spirit of revelation and all that.

But true spiritual sight follows godliness. And the more you follow the Lord and doing his will, the more clearly you will see. When you don't follow the Lord, you think you're seeing, but you're blind.

That's the way that is. Those whom I love, I bless and reward with a successful, happy, and prosperous life. It's right here.

It's verse, what is it? Eighteen, something. I can't see. Numbers are too small.

Nineteen. How many see that? Put your finger on it. Raise your hand if you see that.

Those whom I love, I bless with prosperity and a successful life. Oh, Lord. There's so much accent today on finding out how to get the Lord to bless you.

I'm trying to find out how to get the Lord to rebuke me. Because then I know he loves me. I don't want power.

I want Jesus. I don't want success. I want Jesus.

I don't want prosperity. I want Jesus. If these other things come, fine.

But I can live without them. But I can't live without Jesus. Hallelujah.

How do you feel about that? You know, we think we need all these things. You know, if something happens, some colossal breakdown, and there was no more electricity or anything. We were driven back a

century or two and had to ride around in buggies like the Amish.

Well, we haven't lost anything. They were wonderful cooks. Eat better than you ever ate in your life without electricity.

Oh, yeah. We don't need all the things we think we need. But we do need Jesus.

And without him, I don't care how good the cherry pie is. There's nothing without Jesus. Or maybe you prefer rhubarb.

Those whom I love, I rebuke. What's the matter with you? Shape up or ship out. How wonderful, Lord.

Rebuke us all today. Soundly. And discipline.

So be earnest. Christianity is not a big fun trip. You have to be earnest about it.

Sincere. Zealous. Be earnest.

And repent. And there follows the two greatest promises. The greatest of all promises.

And therefore today, those whom I love, He said, I stand at the door and knock. And I'm here to tell you people, that's going on right now. The Lord is more real than he has ever been.

He is right at the door of your heart. You can almost see him. He is so present.

He is so present. He wasn't standing at the door of the world. He's standing at the door of the church of Laodicea.

He's standing at the church of democracy. He's standing at the door of the popular rich church. People don't let him in.

They got a church. They sit around with Christian soldiers. But Christ is outside.

Is he outside of your life? Is all you have religion? Or are you opening up your heart to Jesus? In every aspect of life. I mean every aspect of life. Without exception.

Are you opening to Jesus? Come on. Don't miss it. I've been a Christian now for 54 years.

And I cannot remember a time when the presence of Christ was so close. He is so near to us. All you got to do is look up and there is Jesus.

And he wants your life. I mean no monkey business. He wants your life.

Geraldine, he wants your life. And no foolishness. He wants your life.

If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in. This is the Lord of hosts. Psalms 24.

And eat with him. We eat his body and blood. He eats.

He feeds on our worship and our love for him. That's his portion. Ours is to eat of him.

And he eats of our praise and our love. And then a promise that is so stupendous. That it would be blasphemy if it weren't in the word.

It would be blasphemy if it weren't in the word. And to think. It's made to the church of the rights of people.

The church of the people who are in love with themselves and have need of nothing. He gives the greatest promise in the Bible. To him who overcomes.

Though, see, it's not to him who gets saved. But to him who overcomes. Not, you know, there's a difference.

I was pondering. Did you ever ponder the scripture that says There'll be people who do miracles in my name. Who do miracles.

Actually do miracles. And prophesy in the Lord's name. And cast out devils in his name.

Surely that person is a Christian. And the Lord says, I never knew you. I'll just see if you can work the moves.

You can work the Christian moves. You can use the name of Jesus and work the moves. People will get healed.

People will get delivered. Miracles will happen. You can work the, you can work the moves.

And the Holy Spirit's interested in one thing. And that's getting the job done. And he'll honor the word of God.

And here you are, where you've learned to work the moves. And people are getting healed. People are getting this.

And people are getting that. But the Lord never, never even knew you. Say, how can that be possible? It is.

It is. So the thing is not spiritual success we're after. It's that Jesus knows us.

Would you agree with that? To him who overcomes. Overcoming has nothing to do with casting out devils and healing the sick. Overcoming is your personal thing in your heart.

Am I really with it? Am I really getting rid of the junk in my life? Stuff. Am I really getting rid of it? Or am I doing the church number? The promise is to him who overcomes. Not to him that sits in church.

I will give the right, the authority to sit with me on my throne. Do you have any idea of that? You have to look down to see the rest of the power and all the other things. And Satan is way down there and up above everything.

And his name is Jesus Christ. And God rules from within him. And he's saying, if you let me into your heart, open the door.

And by my body and blood, overcome what I set before you. Show your ability to rule in this world. I'm not going to put you on any throne if you can't rule in this world.

Show your ability to rule in this world, to govern. Now, right now, let me see your mettle. Let me see what you're made of if you're going to rule with me.

He says, if you do that, if you'll overcome. Because I had to overcome and I know what it's like. Because I was a man too, and on the earth, there was no piece of cake for me.

My whole godly, pure nature rebelled and revolted against everything I heard, see, and felt. And I still made it. Now, come on and make it with me.

And if you do, you'll sit with me on my throne just as I overcame and have sat down with my father on his throne. Shall we stand? I didn't mean to come out with all that this morning. Hallelujah.

But I used to, when I was in the old church, I used to ask the Lord, Lord, it's so heavy that people are not used to this. Every time driving home, the Lord would say the same thing to me. Was it the word? That's all he ever asked me.

Was it the word? Did you preach the word? I'll leave it to you if we preach the word this morning. If we did, Jesus is happy. And what's he saying? What are you saying? Praise the Lord.

Father, we come unto you this morning. Lord, it is our desire to be a faithful and true witness. Every one of us, Lord.

We don't want to mess around with this thing. Lord, we don't want to be unfaithful and we don't want to be untrue. Father, there's no point in this.

There's other things to do in the world other than to falsely represent God. So Lord, help us to be faithful and true witnesses. And Lord, we know you've come down to America in 1999 to look about yourself and see what the witness is and see if it's scriptural.

And Lord, we trust there are many, many this morning who are preaching your word, preaching the Bible, preaching it as it is. And oh God, our nation is in such need of repentance and godly behavior. Now help us here in this church and those within the sound of the tape, Lord, to listen to you, to open the door, to accept the rebuke, to repent, to buy gold fried in the fire.

White Raymond, I said, Lord, we need your help. We're in a democracy. We're in a nation and so many nations that the big thing is what people think.

They run their government through polls. And Lord, they're not going to run you through a poll. We've got to learn, Lord.

Be your servants. Hallelujah. Not be bemused by the idea that we're the great all there is to be because we're not.

And Lord, we realize that. We realize without Jesus Christ, there's nothing going for us. It's only him and only him and only as we're part of him.

Now Lord, we've been challenged this morning to overcome. We know it was not easy for Jesus. We understand that.

But the man of God did it. He did it by God's help and strength, the spirit of God. Now, Lord, you have given us everything we need to overcome.

And we pray that none among us will be faint hearted. We know you don't approve of that, Lord, but we will be strong and love you, overcome by your strength and be suitable helpers. Oh, grant that for us this day, Lord, in Jesus name.

Hallelujah.

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