

The Risen Lord

by Zac Poonen

The local church is God's dwelling place, where He seeks to reveal Himself and speak to others through the life of Christ revealed in its members.

Scripture: Exodus 3:3

Topics: "Church Community", "Jesus Christ"

Description

Zac Poonen preaches on the powerful imagery of John's vision in Revelation, where Jesus is seen in the midst of the churches, emphasizing the importance of the local church as God's dwelling place to reveal Himself and speak to others. Through various symbols like the burning bush and the attire of Jesus, Poonen highlights Jesus' eternal nature, righteousness, judgment of sin, and the power of His Word spoken in gentleness and rebuke.

Transcript

In Rev 1: 12,13 when John turned around to see who was speaking, he saw Jesus. But he saw Him in the midst of the churches. It is through the local church that the Lord seeks to reveal Himself and to speak to others.

The first dwelling-place of God mentioned in the Bible is the burning bush that Moses saw in the wilderness (Deut.33:16). Like John at Patmos, Moses also turned aside at that time to see that marvelous sight. And that's when God spoke to him (Exod.3:3).

Today the church is God's dwelling place. God desires every church to be aflame with His Spirit like that burning bush was. When people look at a local church, they should be able to see the life of Christ revealed through the members of that church. Then God can speak to people through the church.

John then goes on to describe the Lord Jesus as he saw Him. Even though the Lord is risen, He is still called the "Son of man", emphasizing the fact of His identification with humanity permanently.

His long robe (undoubtedly white in colour) reaching to His feet, points to His High-Priestly ministry of intercession for us - for this was how the Jewish High- Priest was dressed when He went into the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle, on the day of atonement every year (v.13).

The Lord was wearing a golden girdle (belt) across His breast (v.13). Gold symbolises what is Divine. The girdle symbolises righteousness and faithfulness (according to Isaiah 11:5). This emphasises the perfect

righteousness of God that was seen in Jesus' earthly life and the perfect faithfulness with which He keeps His promises to us.

His head and His hair were white like wool (v.14). Daniel 7:9 uses this very same symbolism to refer to God's eternity (His endless age). The white hair also speaks of wisdom. So this emphasises the fact that Jesus, although the Son of Man, is nevertheless also the Eternal God, perfect in wisdom.

His eyes were like a flame of fire (v.14). That means that "all things are open and laid bare" to Him (Heb.4:13). His eyes penetrate through all religious veneer, and can see through the flowery and pious language and the "form of godliness" of the religious hypocrite. It also sees beyond the broken, stuttering words of the God-fearing soul into the sincerity of his heart. As a result, His evaluations are totally different from man's.

His feet were like burnished bronze (v.15). Bronze was the material with which the altar of sacrifice was made (in the outer court of the tabernacle), where the sin-offering was slain. Bronze therefore symbolises God's judgment of man's sin at Calvary. While crushing the serpent's head, Jesus' feet had to be pierced on the cross (Gen.3:15).

His voice was like the sound of many waters (v.15). The rivers of living water symbolise the Holy Spirit (Jn.7:37-39). The speech of Jesus was always full of the gentleness and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

Out of Jesus' mouth came a sharp two-edged sword (v.16). This refers to the Word of God that He speaks (Heb.4:12). We noticed in verse 15 that His voice was like the sound of many waters. These two verses put together indicate that Jesus always speaks God's Word in the power of the Holy Spirit. He speaks with great gentleness, but He also rebukes firmly, where necessary.

His face was like the sun shining in its strength (v.16). This is how Peter, James and John saw Him on the mount of transfiguration as well (Mt.17:2). This symbolises the "unapproachable light" in which God dwells (1 Tim.6:16). The holiness of God is compared here to the noonday sun, which we cannot look at directly. The sun is a ball of fire in which no germs or bacteria can dwell. No sin can dwell in the presence of God either (Isa.33:14).

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