

Church in Crisis

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Preacher: James Biesiadecki

[0:00] Boggle the mind this week, okay? So I posted some optical illusions. Now, my kids love to give me a hard time, so any time I do stuff like that, I get the accusation of nerd.

And so I posted those, but there was actually a reason behind that, because that was actually leading into the message this morning. But if you looked at those things, you saw these optical illusions.

If you looked on your phone, it's kind of hard to do, so you probably looked at it and go, I don't see what you're saying at all. But if you look on a bigger screen, a screen with this hazy blue line, you focus, and then all of a sudden, the top part starts disappearing, or the bottom part, or one of the sides.

And then if you start to try to look at it, then the blue line comes back. But if you stay focused, then all of a sudden, in a second, the entire thing just disappears, and all you see is that red dot.

And that is, to me, that's fascinating, okay? And I know what you're thinking. Nerd. The two circles where one is surrounded by larger objects, the other one's surrounded by smaller objects, and you're looking at the two in the center, and you're trying to judge, are these the same size, or is this one bigger?

[1:15] And as you look at it, you're convinced in your mind that one of these is bigger and one's smaller, and it's an absolute optical illusion. If you measure it, Brandy didn't believe me, so she went to measure this, and so she's like, all right, you're just trying to trick us.

And everybody thought I was trying to trick, but I wasn't, okay? And you're saying, this is an incredible, organism. It's not an information that it doesn't know.

It's sometimes blocking things out, trying to make sense of things. This same brain is working. And so this illusion is something that happens naturally, and sometimes it's actually in your favor.

Your mind is actually working in such a way so that you don't have to guess every time you take a step. You see the floor, and your mind is putting together a picture of stability, and so as you walk, you don't...

It appears to us as an angel of light. He's called the deceiver. He's called the father of lies. He is not a red-suited villain with a pitchfork.

[2:29] He is the great illusionist. And so as we read through Revelation, what we're seeing is his handiwork in the churches. He's at work.

And as you read through all of these examples of church after church of these seven churches, what you find is that these... a lot of these problems in the churches are attributed to the... by Satan at every turn.

It may be the most duped church of all of the seven churches. You may note that Sardis does not get a single compliment. There is a glimmer of hope because there are some of them that are still alive and serving the Lord, but no compliment for this church.

Only criticism. Church of Sardis is known for its historical significance. It's a culturally vital city.

[4:16] It's known for many things of being a fortress city, but it is going to forever be known as a church in spiritual crisis, with a crisis of identity because of the illusions that they have bought.

outwardly, they hold a reputation of being alive, active, and yet Christ, through John, reveals the startling truth about them, and that is that they are spiritually dead.

Believers in Christ, together, in a dead or dying church. So, he's not talking about them in terms of being dead Christians.

That's an oxymoron. But, the reality is, Christians who are alive can be in a dead church. Or, Christians that are serving, a remnant of Christians that are serving in a largely dead church can be in a dying church that was once healthy, once thriving, once alive.

It's a reminder of the danger of complacency that can creep into our faith. Where outward appearance of vitality is masked.

[5:31] It's masking the inner decay of a spiritual life that was once there. The message to Sardis is a call to vigilance. It's a call to renewal.

And we need it. We're always needing this call, this reminder. He who has an ear, let him hear. If our church is alive and well, which I think our church is alive and well right now, then it's a warning to us, don't be like Sardis.

Don't let yourself drift into these positions. It's the warning that Paul gave the Corinthian church in 1 Corinthians 10, verse 12, where he said, therefore let anyone who thinks he stands take heed, lest he fall.

every believer needs to hear this. And every church needs to hear this. So that we don't die as a church.

We don't miss out on God's calling for life. They need to snap out of it. And so if we ever find ourselves in this place, it's a warning to us so that we snap out of it and come alive.

[6:38] So what are the illusions that we need to watch out for? Number one, the illusion of life. Notice what he says in verse one.

I know your deeds. You have a reputation of being alive, but you're dead. Now, Sardis is known for being a city of wealth and glory.

I mean, this is a powerful city. But at the time of John's writing, this city had declined significantly. It was once thriving, not thriving now.

And he says, I know your works. This is Jesus speaking through the messenger that's going to take the message to the church. I know your works, your actions, or your deeds that have been so much in the past that they've earned you a reputation.

You've made a name for yourself as a church. Use that word in the original language. It's translated here reputation in the ESV. You've made a name for yourself.

[7:59] You've made a reputation. It's talking about a name, the onama, in the original language that's talking about a name, a title that's been given to you.

You've earned a name. It's not just like you're given name at birth. You've earned a title because of some achievement, some greatness. This is a church that used to be great, used to be alive.

They used to be alive. The alive, life here is the word zoe. It's, it's just talking about life. Zoology is where we, this is where we get that word.

It's animal life. It's you, as a church sardis, you have a reputation that you earned at one point and gave you a place of prominence.

This isn't a weak church. Well, at least it used to be. They're not alive and grown. I've gone through, I've, you know, I remember seeing so vividly one of those signs driving down the highway, one of those back highways taking a shortcut somewhere and saying, come see our city alive and rippling and just grown up, over, falling down, you think.

[9:14] I don't think anybody lives there. I think it's haunting. I don't think I'm going to go visit that city. There's no reason why I would go based on what I now see.

There's no reason why I would want to go see that city. Hey kids, we're going to go on vacation. We're going to Podunk, Oklahoma. It's alive and growing. That's what I hear. Not what the churches in the city are saying about you, but Jesus said, I know your words.

It doesn't matter what anybody else says about your church. It doesn't. Well, guess what? It doesn't matter what you say. It doesn't matter what anybody says. The only thing that matters about me is what Jesus Christ says about me.

And when I turn from sin and turn my life to Jesus and put my trust and faith in Him, He makes me a new creation. And the old things have passed away. And behold, all things become new in Jesus. Aren't you glad? Amen. Right? It doesn't matter what they say. I'm telling you on the other side of that, you may be living in past victories that you had and I just want to tell you the message to

Sarvis is on the other side of this.

[10:27] You can't be living in victories of yesterday. God wants some victories for today. You will be under the illusion that you're still what you were if you're not careful.

it's an interesting point for this church. Did you notice that they're not being persecuted? After I went through it, I didn't catch that until I was reading through a commentary.

One of the commentaries noticed that they had no persecution. Why? Why be a dead horse?

Right? Why would Satan be attacking if you're not doing anything?

Right? If he's leaving you alone, you might ask yourself, what am I doing wrong that Satan doesn't want to attack me? Christ is very aware of your status if you're alive or dead.

He knows your heart. It's almost like your life 360, right? Some of you are on your phone and you've downloaded that Life 360 app because you've got kids and you want to know where your kids are at so you download that app and you watch on there and where are they at?

[11:48] So you look at Life 360, you pull it up, there they are, okay, they're okay, they're at school or they're at so-and-so's house or they're somewhere. I just need to know where they're at and sometimes that thing's got a little glitch and it looks like they're in the middle of a highway and I'm like, what's going on?

Where are they at? And then all of a sudden it catches up and then, oh, they're home, okay. Or we call them, hey, where are you at? What's going on? And I'm at so-and-so's house or I'm at work or whatever.

And the other thing with that Life 360 is it's a free app, right? And so you download this app and it's free and so you can find out where you're at where your kid's at and you're giving all that information to everybody else that wants that information.

So they're buying that information from Life 360 and not only does your family know where you're at, all the businesses that buy into that service also know where you're at. They know that you're at Walmart, they know where you go, they see your patterns of behavior and they're watching everything that you do.

They always know your status, right? And they know my status and I don't want them to know my status. I want to kind of block some of those things so they don't know what's going on in my life. But here's one thing that we've got to keep in mind.

[12:58] You'll never block this thing with God knowing your status. He always knows where you're at. He knows when there's life and He knows where there's not life.

The Old Testament example, I couldn't help but go to Ezekiel 37 when Israel is like, you know, they're in ruins. I mean just ruins.

Armies decimated. Cities are in, you know, this absolute rubble. and the Lord pulls Ezekiel to a valley that He calls the Valley of Dry Bones and He asks him a question.

Ezekiel, son of man, can these bones live? Do they have life? And as He looks at them, He's like, I don't know.

I read through the chapter and it says, the hand of the Lord was upon me. He brought me out and the Spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley. It was full of bones. And He led me around among them and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley and behold, they were very dry.

[14:08] They've been there a long time. Can these bones live? There's been no life of these for a long time. He said to me, son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, oh Lord God, you know.

You know. Your knowledge about the status of any person or any nation or any church is never in question. Then He said to me, prophesy over these bones and say to them, oh dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.

Thus says the Lord God to these bones, behold, I will cause breath to enter you and you shall live. I'll put breath in you and you shall live and you will know that I am the Lord.

It's the Lord who knows our ability to live and grow and move. It's the Lord who gives us life. In any church where the Lord Jesus Christ stops being the focus, it's a church that's dying.

When the gospel is not being preached, and when the word of God is not being taught, boy, you better buckle up. And I've seen it in my lifetime, my very short lifetime.

[15:27] It's shorter all the time, right? Great churches that have just crumbled. Great pastors, great ministries that have just been thrown away because of sin, because of immorality, one thing or another.

God knows who's alive. God knows who's dead. And encouragement to you is turn to Christ and live. Keep our focus on Jesus.

He's the life giver. Works without the Holy Spirit of God, without the focus on Christ, are nothing but an illusion. We need to be careful. The illusion for them was that it was their past life, that it was external praise, it was not from God.

We can't rest on our accomplishments. We can't rest on former glory. We can't rest on yesterday's manna. We can't rest on our reputation.

We need Jesus today. You may be gloriously saved and simply stagnant.

[16:39] So be careful. Watch out for the illusion of life. Number two, the illusion of strength. Notice what he says in verse two.

Wake up and strengthen what remains and is about to die. Now this is a kind of interesting point here because first he said you have a reputation that you're alive but you're dead and now he said strengthen what remains and is about to die.

It's almost like on Princess Bride he's only mostly dead. Right? Well in a sense the church is dead but in a sense there is some hope and there is a little bit of life there.

There is some in the church there are some in the church that have not soiled their garments. There are some in the church that are still serving and what he's giving this encouragement to is those that are still listening strengthen what remains and is about to die.

You think you're alive and you as a church think you're strong and you're not strong. You have some strengthening to do. Sardis has a reputation for being a city that's easily conquered.

[17:58] It wasn't even easy for me to say it but it's a city that's easily conquered. A city that's overconfident in their strength. It was known as the fortress city. So it's a message that really resonates with these believers here because that's what the city's like.

The city that used to be great is a city that's fallen. It's a city that's in ruins. It's a city that's not what it used to be. It's not as strong as it used to be but they're still living in the past.

Living in works that they once did. What you have is weak. You're soft. I mean I go to the gym. Well I don't go to the gym.

I should go to the gym. I want to go to the gym. And so if you my muscles you know I mean you know you can see them right?

I mean they're there but if you come up and you were to squeeze these and then you say Warren come up here let me check out the guns there you know and you squeeze mine and then you squeeze his there is going to be a difference of substance.

[19:09] Right? Because he's working out all the time. He's exercising all the time. And so when he's lifting weights and everything you feel his arm and it's solid. I mean you you push and it's like man that is that is real.

And you push mine and you're like hey buddy you doing okay? How do you even stand up? You know the belt is on me. Okay? And it's come to the end of their life.

Lucas went through that this week. Good friend of his had cancer. He wanted to share the gospel with him so he went and visited. He was not conscious completely maybe some senses were there but don't know.

He was in the past not too long after. And I've been and I've sat there in the ICU area and all the machines hooked up and I'm looking at the person and I'm like they're alive it looks like they could be sure for a person and somebody just passes because their strength is an illusion.

My strength comes from Jesus. It's the song we sing Christ our hope in life and death. I love that song. What is our hope in life and death? Christ alone Christ alone.

[20:47] What is our only confidence that our souls belong to him? That's our confidence. Our strength is in Jesus. Our strength is in the Lord. It's not in what we've achieved.

It's not in what we can accomplish. It's not what you can do. It's what he's done. We gather together to worship him on a Sunday morning not only because we know he's going to be here with us where we're gathering in his name and his Holy Spirit is going to feed us on a Sunday morning. We're gathering together because of what he's done for us. He saved us. He gave us life. He gave us hope. My hope is in Christ. My strength is in him.

Ephesians 6 Paul told the church be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his mind. How are you going to do this? It's going to be in truth. It's going to be in righteousness.

It's going to be taking on that gospel of peace that you're going to preach. The faith, the salvation that you've been given, the word of God, prayer, all these things God is using to strengthen you.

[21:52] My strength is in him. I don't have strength for the trials that are coming this week. I don't have the ability to fight Satan in all of those battles.

I can't do it. If I do those things in my strength, I'm going to fail. God told Isaiah, fear not, for I am with you.

Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you. I will help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Do not fall for the illusion strength. number three, the illusion of security. If you begin verse two, and then you look to verse three, he uses that phrase twice, wake up.

Wake up. He uses the first time, he uses the most emphatic combination that he can use to call you, or to call Sardis, to wake up.

[22:59] it's a word that means first, it's *genomai*, which means birth, or coming to life. And then *Gregorio*, which means to stay awake, or to be watchful.

It is the most extreme combination that he can use to call you, to wrap you up. And so this fortress city that was the impregnable city, the first time Cyrus sends a guy to go scale the wall in the middle of the night, the guy climbs over the wall, goes into the city, the guards are all asleep because they're so strong, and so the city's impregnable, guards asleep, he opens the gate, lets the army in, and they overtake the entire city.

So that was with Cyrus. Well, they didn't learn from the first time because the impregnable city was so strong, and now they had an army in there that was so great, until Alexander the Great comes along, and what does he do?

He sends some guys to go climb over the wall, to go down in the middle of the night, open the gate, let the armies in, and they took it over again. It's like the movie *Taken*, right?

There shouldn't be a *Taken 2*. *Taken 3*, really? *Taken 4*? I mean, if Liam Neeson doesn't get taken the next time, I'm telling you, there's something wrong in the universe.

[24:23] The idea here is to wake up to a sense of constant readiness and watchfulness. Be aware you're not so secure that you can't fall.

That's a great message for a denomination. That's a great message for a church. It's a great message for you, for me. Jesus said in Matthew 24, 43, understand this.

If the owner of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. He just watched.

Vigilance. Part of the church. You have to be vigilant. About our work together. That our work does not just become empty work for the sake of work and busyness, but that our focus stays on the Lord Jesus Christ.

The proclamation of the gospel is our work. Us proclaiming Jesus to the ends of the earth is our work. Us raising up pastors to send out and plant churches is our work.

[25:42] Us sending out missionaries out of our church is our work, but us preaching the gospel to our neighbor is our work, and there's got to be a vigilance to this.

A vigilance in the doctrine that we hold, making sure that the elders of the church are holding to the doctrine, the sound doctrine of the faith.

That's why we have a doctrinal statement, and we don't expect everybody to look at the doctrinal statement and go, oh, if I miss one little jot or tittle on there, I'm just out, or I can't join the church.

That's not the point of this. Now, this doctrinal statement, our 1689 confession is a confession of faith put together by fallible men, and we recognize that, and we hold on loosely to that.

All it's intended to do is point us to the scripture, and where it varies from the scripture, we need to be vigilant to make sure that we keep it in line, and that we don't overemphasize things that can easily be overemphasized, and that we don't underemphasize things that could easily be overlooked.

[26:50] There is a vigilance that we're called to, that we take God's word seriously, we make sure that our teaching is in line with the scripture, and if we can guard that together as imperfect as we are, the perfect son of God will carry us through the rest.

It's an illusion of security. Be careful. Then number four, an illusion of completion. Notice what he says in verse two, I found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God.

This is Jesus, remember how he's scrutinizing the churches, he's looking very deeply into their lives, into the church as a whole, but into the individuals who make up that church, and so it's a message to the churches and to whoever has an ear, so it's to both.

And the message is, I found, I've, look, I know some things about you, I know your works. God is omniscient, he's all-knowing, he can't not know.

I know your works. I know your heart. I know your status. I know whether you're alive or dead. I know whether you're strong or weak. I know where you're secure and where you're insecure.

[28:19] And I know where you're finished and where you're not finished. Remember what we said several weeks ago? We are a work in progress, right? Do you believe that?

God's not finished with us yet. I pray we get a great start as a church, but a great start is not a great finish. That's an illusion.

You think you're complete. You think you're finished. But you're not finished. That happens to a lot of people when they accept Christ as their savior. They turn to Christ, they get saved, they're so relieved of the burden of sin in their life, they're given a sense of hope, and then they stop doing anything.

They stop serving, they don't plug themselves in, they think that they're finished, they're complete.

You're not complete. Are you saved? Yes, you're saved. You're secure in that sense.

But God's not finished with you yet. You're a work in progress and you're going to keep growing.

You need to learn obedience to God's word. And as you get into the scriptures, you need to make application of his word to your life and keep growing.

[29:28] You can't stop. It's not, I got saved and that was it. Now, praise the Lord, I'm going to heaven and I'm going to look like the world and sound like the world and smell like the world.

That's what the reality is God didn't save you so that you'd stay looking and sounding and walking and acting like the world. He called you out of darkness and called you into light. He called you to be changed, to walk a different way, to follow him, learn obedience.

Because the last person didn't want to take all of it.

Because then, they're responsible for the joke, right? And then they've got to go throw it away.

They've got to take some extra joke. I'm going to leave, I'm going to be benevolent. I'm going to leave somebody just enough to be mad.

It's really the, you know, it's an expectation that something should be full and it's empty.

[30:37] I'm looking at your works, Sardis, and I'm expecting them to be full, but they're unfinished. They're empty. You see this over and over.

I mean, there's so many life examples of this. I was thinking of, you think of the video of the guy on the bike going to the finish line and he's just, you know, he's celebrating too early and he's got a big old grin on his face and he's just waving at the crowd and then you get the shot from looking at him to his face and you see behind him, you know, the guys on the bikes and they're catching up and you're going, oh, he doesn't see it, he doesn't see it.

And then, wham, they zip past him right in the finish line. And for that split second, you look at his face and he's like, I just blew it.

Or the guy runs with the football and then they show the slow motion replay as he, as his foot is right before the goal line and he drops the ball so that he can bask in the glory, you know.

He's just celebrating with all the fans and he's jumping up into the stands and they're all patting him on the back. They show the replay and they call it back because it had finished. It was an

expectation of fullness.

[31:55] And this, this theme is so often in the scripture. You look at the parable of the fig tree and Luke 13, Jesus says, he tells this parable, a man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard and he came seeking fruit on it and he found none.

And he said to the vine dresser, look, for three years now I've come seeking fruit on this fig tree and I find cut it down.

Why should it use up the ground? Jesus says. And he answered him, sir, let it alone this year also until I dig around and put the manure in. If it should bear fruit next year, well and good.

But if not, you can cut it down. This idea that Jesus is expecting fruit, he's looking for fruit and there's something wrong when he's looking and expecting and it's not there.

They used to be this way. Now they're not this way. Their works are incomplete. They're not, they haven't continued on in the, in the works that they started with like so many of the other churches.

[33:10] Or then there's the example of Jesus cursing the fig tree. It's a different fig tree story. And Jesus curses it for not bearing fruit. He's walking along the way and Jesus curses the fig tree.

He goes to the city. They come back and the fig tree is dead. Expectation. One day, the scripture says, that there is going to be a separation of the wheat and the tares.

And all of those that are in the church that look like wheat, that aren't wheat are going to be separated out. Jesus said, and I'm going to pull the wheat into my barn because I expect fruit.

I expect change. I expect life. So Jesus said to the Pharisees who were often doctrinally correct.

He said, woe to you scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites, for you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones.

[34:11] So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. It is nothing but illusion of completion.

Be careful when you don't complete what started. As followers of Jesus, Paul said to the Philippians, he said, we're to be like this, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Jesus Christ.

He's going to finish the work that he started in you. If you are like the seeds that are on the side of the road where they they sprout up and then the sun comes up and then scorches them and then they're gone.

He said there's no reward for that. I expect fruit. I expect change. I expect difference. And that is the illusion for us is that we're we're done and that we're grown as much as we're going to grow.

And you have no idea how God is going to grow you in the days ahead. The things that he's going to bring into your life. If you'll submit yourself to him and watch him grow you, you'll start looking at some of the circumstances that are the crisis and the trials in your life.

[35:23] And you'll realize God's bringing those very things into my life that caused me to grow. not so that I'll step back and think that I'm going to believe. Finish the race.

Starting the race is not a victory. Finishing the race. Therefore, Hebrews 12.1, we're surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses.

Let us throw off everything that hinders us and the sin which so easily entangles us and let us run with perseverance the race that is marked for us fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

Following after him. Finishing the work. Paul told the Corinthian church, 2nd Corinthians 8.11, he said, now finish the work so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion.

One thing to say it. Say you're going to do it. Say you're going to grow it. Say, oh man, God's doing so many awesome things. That's, it's great. It's great about what he did yesterday.

[36:37] Don't miss out on the goodness of that. Immediate sense, which could also have long-term application. So yes, it is. He is coming like a thief in the night and coming for judgment and reward at the end time.

But this is talking about them in context. I'm coming for you at a time that you do not know. Just like the other church where he was going to remove their lampstand.

I'm coming and I'm going to bring judgment on your church. You don't know when. You don't know how much time you have.

If you know when the thief is coming, you'll prepare. But you don't know. It could be today. It could be 10 years from now.

I mean, I've had that situation where I'm working on my lawnmower in the driveway. I go inside to have a sandwich. I come back out and it's all gone. You ever had something stolen?

[37:40] Or Warren's radio from out of his truck. We watch all the security camera video. This guy coming in the middle of the night. Door was unlocked. He sneaks in. He's got a backpack.

He reaches in. He grabs a little radio speaker or Bluetooth speaker. Puts it in his bag. Zips it up. Clothes the door. Walks away. Well, he looked for more.

There wasn't anything else in there. If we had known when he was coming, we would have prepared. Time is an illusion. You think you have time.

You don't know how much time you have. You know, my mom having a stroke is a good reminder that she can't talk right now.

She's trying. Things are tumbled up. She can say two or three words in a whisper. And we can make sense out of some of it and sometimes not. I bet there's a lot of things that she wants to say.

[38:39] I bet there's a lot of things that she wished she would have said. I bet her heart is just heavy right now on things that she wants to tell my sister or me or brand new kids.

And she can't say it. And I know we're the same way. We've got time. We've got time. There's plenty of time. The time that you have with your kids, you blink your eyes and they're moving out. They're in high school. They're gone. You've got little kids in this room and you think you've got time. You think you've got time to do the things and instill in them the things that they need.

You don't know how much time. You don't know how long they're going to be with you. You don't know how long you're going to be with them. The security of time is an illusion.

The security of time is an illusion. The security of time is an illusion. The security of time is an illusion. Psalm 90 verse 12. Psalmist said, Lord, teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

[39:53] This is, I think, a place where some people stumble at the sovereignty of God and think, I just won't, I can't believe in a God that's got something set in the universe. really you just said your days are numbered there are some things point in time when I'm going to die and God knows it God actually knows it it's not a surprise when people die there are numbers to my days my time is limited I don't know when I'm leaving this world I don't know when God's gonna have enough of my shenanigans and say that's it I'm finished with this I've offered you time to repent just like she did not it's an illusion dying church is always falling for this illusion that we've got time to fix things we got time to get our act together we got time to to make the gospel the focus we got time to be a praying people we got time to make discipleship a priority we got time we got time we got time we got time you don't have time you don't know if today is your last day with us and I pray it's not man Lord let us not fall for this illusion

I'll fall for the illusion of time and then the last one the illusion of uniformity the illusion of uniformity verse 4 yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments there is an illusion in a church that's dying that everybody's the same well we've all got the same struggle no we don't we're all the same strength no we're not we're all at the same level of holiness no we are not we are not all at the same level of holiness are we all saved yes if we're born again we're born again praise the Lord my sins been forgiven in one sense one sin is the same as all it makes me guilty before a holy God whether it's stealing a pencil or murdering my grandmother right it's in this it's not stealing the pencil that sends me to hell it's that I'm a sinner and this is representative of my fallenness so stealing a pencil is not just the only issue although I'm breaking the consequences whether temporal or eternal are not necessarily the same for stealing a pencil is the same as murdering my grandmother and the consequences in this world are horrendous for one over the other the temporal consequences are worse and there is punishment although I'm in hell there is this sense

that God's gonna be just in my punishment that's a sermon for another day I'll just leave you with that one we're not all the same there are some who have not so there are some who have not soiled their garments and the reality of that is the word we use we don't like to talk about holiness all the new cutting-edge churches they'll talk about all kinds of stuff except holiness there's no contemporary word for holiness are we gonna be holy before the Lord set apart clean useful in the master's hands there's some in here that have not soiled their garments and the reality is as he says I'm gonna rope you in white and walk with you and again there is some present reality to this and some future reality I'm gonna walk with you you have you're walking with me in holiness I'm gonna be with you as a church I'm gonna I'm gonna be with you Jesus walking along among the lampstands in this vision of John's and he's being glorified in this moment he wants to be glorified in you and me and us as the church we go to the market in China and we try to buy stuff at the marketplace and I've got this blue shirt and they say oh let me not saying not saying or they go to the back they come back and it's like a green shirt I'm like no I want the blue one same same no it is not the same and try to do that with home decor right Brandy's there she's getting home decor and they're like same same and I'm just gonna tell you it ain't same same I can go to the store and try to get some of those things and it ain't same thing it's different she wants an exact thing there's something that she's looking for what God's looking for in us is holiness and sometimes we keep trying to say God's same same and it's not the same

Romans 9:6 not all who are descendants from Israel for us we need to keep in mind what Paul said to the Roman church in Romans 8:6 for to set the mind on the flesh is death set the mind on the spirit is life and peace for the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God where does not submit to God's law indeed it cannot those who are in the flesh cannot please God you however are not in the flesh but in the spirit if in fact the spirit of God dwells in you anyone who does not have the spirit of Christ does not belong to him but if Christ dwells in you although the body is dead because of sin the spirit is life because of righteousness if the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you then he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his spirit dwells in you a Christian can be fooled by the illusions of Satan a Christian can be fooled by the illusions of Satan a church can be fooled by the illusions of Satan but as believers in Christ Jesus we need to cling to God resist the devil you can be fooled you can think you can think you have life you can think that you're strong you can think that you're secure you can think that you're complete reality is we need Jesus we need to cling to him in his word serve him with our heart, mind, soul, and strength we have victory of Christ and nowhere else

I heard an old, old story how a savior came from glory how he gave his life on Calvary to save a rich like me I heard about his groaning of his precious blood's atoning and I repented of my sins and won the victory the victory in Jesus my savior forever he sought me and bought me with his redeeming blood he loved me ere I knew him and all my love is due he plunged me to victory beneath the cleansing flood our victory is in Jesus so I'll hold on to him father we come before you today and praise you we exalt you we worship you come into this place today Lord and we are if you're we increase how they eat how we huge do you do you strategy you you you you you you