

Be Zealous and Repent

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[0 : 00] Now, as the Lord enables us, let us turn together for a short while this evening to words we find in this chapter we've read. The book of Revelation on chapter 3, and focusing as our text on verse 19.

Verse 19, those whom I love I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.

So these first chapters of the book of Revelation are addressed to the seven churches, as we find here.

And of the seven churches, only two are commended. The others are asked to repent.

In the church of Ephesus, chapter 2, verse 5, we find there, Remember therefore from where you have fallen, repent, and do the works you did at first.

[1 : 24] Also, the church at Pergamum, in chapter 2, at verse 16, Therefore repent, if not I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth.

Also, Thyatira, Revelation 2, at 21, same words, I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality.

And the following verse, Behold, I will throw her into a sick bed, and those who commit adultery with her, I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works.

And then, in chapter 3, at verse 3, we find the church in Sardis, Remember then what you received and heard, keep it and repent.

And then this chapter 3, the church of Laodicea, in verse 19, It would seem that repentance is not just for the very beginning of the Christian life.

[2 : 41] When a person comes to an awareness of his or her sin, at the very beginning of the Christian experience, the Holy Spirit enables us to repent of our sin and turn from it with hatred and grief unto Christ and commit ourselves to him with full purpose of and endeavour after new obedience.

But as we journey through life as believers, we need to repent of our sins time after time after time again. And this is true in these particular churches.

And we see here that in verse 19, the Lord reminds her that he loves her. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.

If we are to know the Lord's love and the Lord's favour and the Lord's blessing upon us, we cannot have these things while cherishing and cradling a sinful disposition and a sinful lifestyle.

We must turn away from our sin, whatever sin it might be, unto Christ and come with true penitence and godly sorrow that we might have our sins forgiven.

[4 : 09] Not that our repentance is the basis for our blessing. No, the basis for our blessing is Christ as our Saviour and Mediator and the grace of God dispensed to us through the finished work of Christ.

That's the basis of our blessedness. But we are nevertheless directed to repent of our sins constantly. Now, focusing particularly on the Church of Laodicea, bearing in mind this 19th verse, I want to highlight, first of all, this Church of Laodicea as a church described, because the Lord loves her, but he wants her to repent.

He describes her from verses 15 onwards. Secondly, it's a church that he counsels. I counsel you to buy of me gold tried in the fire and so on.

And thirdly, she's a church visited by him. It looks as if she has not responded to his counsel to come to him and buy and be furnished with all that she needs.

It's as if she seems to have turned away. But the Lord has followed her home. He comes and knocks at her door. Behold, I stand at your door and knock.

[5 : 48] And if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I am ready to come in with you and sup with you and you with me. And I think that's a wonderful saviour brought before us at that very point.

Not only is he inviting her to come to him that she might be filled with all that she needs, but he follows her home and he knocks at her door and still makes himself available as the one who is able to help her in her hour of need.

Well, firstly then, we find here that this church of Laodicea, she's described. But the description given would mean very little if we didn't know who was giving us the description of the church. And we see here that the one who's giving the description of the church in verse 14 of chapter 3 is the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation.

He is the dependable witness. He is the Amen. His is the true word and the last word in his assessment of this church.

[7 : 08] It's as if every other statement concerning her means nothing at all apart from what he says. And he, of course, is the saviour himself who knows her how she is.

and knows her where she is. Just like he knows us where we are and how we are and what's in our life. And he says the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation.

It is with him we deal. He is the one to whom we must come. He is the one who examines us through and through. Just like the psalmist in Psalm 139 found out for himself every word in my heart, in my mind, before I speak it, you know it.

You know where I go. If I go up to the heavens, you are there. If I go down to the depths, you are there. If I say that the night will cover me from you, even the night will become as broad daylight because you see all things.

You see me where I am. So that is the Lord we are dealing with. And that is the Lord before whom we live from day to day. And he goes on to describe her.

[8 : 28] And he says, I know your works. He knows what she does. He knows why she fails. He knows what she doesn't do.

He knows all things concerning her. But he is going to focus on this particular issue regarding her Christian character. He says, you are neither cold nor hot.

Would that you were either cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spit you out of my mouth. A lukewarm church.

An unenthusiastic church. A church lacking in fervor. A church lacking in commitment. A church lacking in zeal.

She is neither cold nor hot. Evidently, there were hot springs in the vicinity of Laodicea. And people could see the connection between what the Lord is here saying and the springs of hot water out there on the fields.

[9 : 41] Nobody would think of going to the hot springs and have a drink of water on a hot day. It wouldn't be refreshing at all. And that's what the Lord here is highlighting.

It's just as if you are like these hot springs that really nobody appreciates because they don't bring relief from thirst, they don't bring any kind of relief at all in the experience of those who are traveling in the hot weather.

And how are we going to apply this in a spiritual sense? The Lord says, you're neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot?

Because you're lukewarm, I will spit you out of my mouth. It's as if you are no real good to anyone, the way you are. If you look at some of the comments that the Apostle Paul makes regarding some of the friends and associates he had in the gospel work, you realize what he says about some of them.

See, for example, what he says in 1 Corinthians 16. He talks about Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, but they arrived and they refreshed my spirit.

[11 : 08] They brought something into the experience of the Apostle. They refreshed his spirit. They encouraged him in the way.

And then, of course, in 2 Timothy 1.16, the same kind of thing, may the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. He refreshed the Apostle. He wasn't a lukewarm Christian. They were full of love for one another. And they saw opportunities and sought opportunities to bring encouragement to one another. The church in Laodicea was not like that.

They weren't refreshing in their Christian lives at all. It is one thing to refresh somebody in the heat of the day.

[12:16] But I'm going to highlight something else. That this church, she was neither cold nor hot. she couldn't warm anybody up. And my mind went to what we have in 2 Kings chapter 4 and verse 34 and around there.

When Elisha was told about the death of the young boy, of the woman of Shunem. he went all the way to the house.

And see what it says, when Elisha came into the house he saw the child lying dead on his bed. So he went in and shut the door behind the two of them and prayed to the Lord. Then he went up and lay on the child, putting his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, his hands on his hands, and as he stretched himself upon him, the flesh of the child became warm.

Then he got up again and walked, once back and forth in the house, and went up and stretched himself upon him. And the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.

I think there is a spiritual lesson there that we need to take on board, that there may be people in our communities who are cold in relation to the gospel, or who have may become cold, and we need to embrace them in our prayers.

[13:48] Just like Elisha embraced this young lad who was lying dead upon his bed, he prayed over him, he stretched himself on him, as it were, making this child the object of his love and devotion, and the child walks warm.

God . The church in Laodicea wasn't doing that. I hope the church here is doing that.

I hope I'm doing that. And if I'm not doing it the way I ought to, I pray the Lord give me grace and strength to do it, to embrace those who are around us, who may still be in the far country, cold, sub-zero in their attitude to the gospel, that we embrace them in our prayers, that we petition heaven on their behalf, and not give the Lord rest until he established Jerusalem and make it a praise in the earth.

So she was a lukewarm church. She wasn't refreshing, she wasn't warming. But then it says something else about her.

she was opinionated in verse 17. You say, I am rich, I have prospered, I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

[15:26] You see what she says? I am rich, I have prospered, I need nothing. will they tell us that there was a lot of industry in this particular part, and people became very rich because they were producing a lot of black wool and woolen garments.

There was a strong banking, banking, it was a strong banking centre, and people became very rich because of this particular industry. And that kind of thing infiltrated the church and the thinking of the Christian community in Laodicea, because they had a lot of money in the bank, because they had a lot of property, and large properties.

they thought everything was fine. Well, in the scales of eternity, it wasn't fine.

And if that's the kind of riches I'm looking for, I'm miserably poor, if that's the only riches I have. The Lord says to her, despite the riches you think you have, I am saying to you that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

Just like a beggar, poorly clad, diseased in body, blind, with no sight, having no prospects, really at all, but depending on what other people may do for him or for her.

[17:08] A terribly depressing picture, it's as if she has hit rock bottom.

It is a church of Christ and the Lord loves her and because he loves her, he rebukes her and he chastens her.

The word chasten here we have in verse 19 discipline. It's a family word, what a father does to a child to correct the child in his behavior.

And this is what the Lord is doing with this church. He loves her. He has called her to himself, but she's not following him the way she ought.

she has taken on some worldly baggage that really is not at all good for her. And the Lord paints a very dismal picture of her.

[18:15] You say, I am rich, but I say to you, you are wretched and pitiable and poor and blind and naked. you know, it's to see ourselves as the Lord sees us.

And you only come to see yourself as the Lord sees you when you immerse yourself in his word and you take his words, judgment upon you, his words, statements concerning you.

Ask the Lord to open your mind and open your heart that you might receive what the Lord is saying about you. And that you might believe it and apply to him for correction and instruction in righteousness.

So the Lord has painted this picture of this church. And it's not at all a picture of encouragement. Secondly, having painted this dismal picture, he hasn't left her, but he begins to counsel her. He begins to counsel her. Verse 18, I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire so that you may be rich, white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.

[19 : 47] the Lord sees her need. He has identified her need, and he says, I am able to supply your need. Every area in which you are lacking, I am able to supply every aspect of your need.

Isn't that an amazing thing? Even those who are without God and without hope in the world, he says, look unto me and be saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else. Here he says to his people, I counsel you to buy from me gold tried in the fire. I wonder what these articles really mean.

Well, firstly, how can she buy anything of him? If she is as poor as he has said, because he said that she was poor and blind and naked, how can she afford to buy anything?

What kind of transaction is the Lord here encouraging? Buy from me gold tried in the fire. Well, the first step in making this transaction or buying this gold is that she come to realise her need of it.

[21 : 03] And that she come and step towards the one who is freely offering it. I mean freely offering because she has got nothing to give. but herself.

Herself. That's what she's got to give. Herself in her poverty. Herself in her lukewarmness. Herself with all the shortcomings that the Lord has described here.

Bring them all to him. As the hymn writer said, nothing in my hands I bring. Simply to thy cross I claim. Because the Lord says come.

She should come. Just the way she is. And that's the way it is for me and for you. Just because the Lord says come.

We should come as you are without one plea. Accept that your blood was shed for me. And we see here buy from me.

[22 : 07] gold refined by fire that you may be rich. What kind of statement is this? I believe he's talking about a heavenly currency.

Not just the money they had in the bank. That's not what he's talking about. He's talking at another level altogether. You've got some money in the bank, he said, well that really doesn't take you very far at all.

on your spiritual journey. I know that there are uses to which money can be put to further the cause of Christ. I know that. But that's not what the Lord is here saying.

If you want to be enriched, he said, you have to avail yourself of the heavenly currency that I am offering. And what offering?

What is he offering? He's offering his own grace. the blessings that he has procured through his finished work.

[23 : 15] Ask of me, he said. He's got all that we stand in need of. It doesn't matter what grace you need, whether it is the grace of patience, or the grace of insight.

You can name all the graces that you stand in need of. he has them in ample supply, and he is able to supply all your need out of his glorious riches.

What grace do you feel you need this evening? The grace of faith? Ask him. The grace of love? Ask him. The grace of hope?

Ask him. The grace of patience? Ask him. It doesn't matter what grace you stand in need of. This heavenly currency never devalues.

It is appropriate for every step of your wilderness journey, enabling you to do what the Lord asks of you. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, particularly the fire that Christ our Savior endured as he gave himself as a ransom for us on the cross of Calvary.

[24 : 32] And that fire of God's wrath, he satisfied by his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross. And that gold is gloriously precious.

Ask the Lord to give you of that heavenly gold that will enrich you, not only for time, but enrich you as you journey into eternity.

And also I counsel you to buy white garments that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen.

Some say that this points us and points her to the righteousness of Christ. Well, certainly that is the best of all garments to wear.

We need to come to Christ that we might be justified and have his righteousness clothe us. Just as the prodigal son came home and he started explaining to his father, I have sinned against heaven and before you.

[25 : 41] I'm no more worthy to be called your son. Make me as one of your servants. But the father said, no, get the best robe and put it on him. I ring on his hand and shoes upon his feet and slay the fated calf.

Let us eat and rejoice because my son who was dead is alive. He was lost and is found. That's a picture of the righteousness of Christ.

This garment, the best of all garments. But this church, she needed to have a righteousness of life also, a holiness of life, which seems to have not been so visible.

You see, those who are clothed in the righteousness of Christ, justification is a judicial act of God and it's a particular status that the Christian is afforded in the eyes of God to be justified.

But those who are justified need to have a righteousness of life. In other words, that they live a holy, consecrated lifestyle in this world, which this church was not living because she was clothing herself with dark garments afforded from the industry in that particular area.

[27 : 09] And she felt because she was covered and clothed with these things that she was clothed well enough. Well, she wasn't. she didn't have the righteousness of life, the holiness of life, the dedication of life, the consecration to God that God required.

And he asks her to come that she might be clothed with that holiness of life, that he would work in her by his Holy Spirit to sanctify her more and more as she went on.

And then salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. The commentators say that there was a discovery made in that particular area of Laodicea, particularly effective eye ointment that helped people who had eye problems and eyes salve.

And that the Lord is using that in a spiritual sense. It's as if she has lost her perception, lost her focus, and he says, you need to come to me that you might have spiritual focus enhanced.

The world has taken away your focus regarding spiritual things. And he says, come to me and I will give you salve so that you may anoint your eyes and that you may see.

[28 : 52] Well, I wonder what spiritual message that is. Well, I believe that the spiritual message at least could be illustrated by this that the Lord says that the entrance of his words gives light.

As if he is saying to her, expose yourself more and more to the word of God, that the word of God entering into your mind, entering into your heart, will do its own work.

It will redress all that has gone out of kilter, all that has gone out of sync in your life. The word of God brings light. You see in yourself for what you are and you see Christ more clearly.

We need to be at the word of God more often. I'm not sure if I mentioned this, I said it somewhere else. I read fairly recently that a person who listens to a sermon must have been in the olden days, a sermon that lasts for an hour, should go home and meditate for an hour on the sermon that he had heard.

Meditate on what we hear so that the word of God will really penetrate and saturate our hearts and lives so that we might see more clearly enabling us to walk more nearly to Christ Jesus and love him more and more dearly as we go on.

[30 : 43] The word of God contained in the scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments is the only rule given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him and make use of the word of God.

make use of it because it's available to us now in so many different forms. Mentioned in the morning with the kids that they have a number of versions of the Bible on my Kindle.

That's an amazing resource. You can open it anywhere and there it is. So this is what the Lord is here saying. That you might see but you might see and then he reminds her in verse 19 those whom I love I reprove and discipline so be zealous and repent.

She's not zealous. She is very sort of couldn't care less almost about her Christian commitment and he says you need to sharpen up.

be zealous and show your real zeal by turning away from all of these things that you have held on so dear. Have held on to your money.

[32 : 03] You have held on to your reputation. All of these things he says turn away from them in true repentance and give the place to the Lord in your life that the Lord requires.

he requires to be king on the throne of my heart and life and that's what he's asking of her. So that's a church counseled and may the Lord give us wisdom and grace to hear the counsel of the Lord and act upon it.

But thirdly and finally we see the church visited in verse 20. Behold he says I stand at the door and knock.

Those who who talk about him following her home like this are basing this view on the kind of language he uses in the previous verses I counsel you to buy of me to buy of me it's as if it's a marketplace address.

It's as if he's addressing people from a stall and he's got all of these wonderful things the Lord is addressing her and he says you need these things come and buy them from me but it's just as if she has passed by the stall in the marketplace and kept on her path home.

[33 : 40] well may it never be so because the gospel is being preached don't go home and forget it but here the Lord loves this church and he says behold I stand at the door and knock he's followed her home and the word behold is a command the same word as used by John the Baptist when he says of Christ behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world Jesus here says behold take note I am outside of your door and I am standing there and I am knocking we see the same picture in the song of Solomon and we see the same kind of picture the church is inside and she has gone to bed and she has put off her shoes and everything is so comfortable but he's at the door knocking seeking to come in and he says to her my hair is wet with the dew of the night why would you leave the gracious saviour outside of your door and his head getting wet with the dew of the night and you are in your comfort zone doing your own thing just like the church was there in the song of Solomon why would you do that with such as a gracious saviour having followed you home despite your refusal to buy from him on the previous occasion and he's knocking at the door wonder which door is he knocking at well maybe he's knocking at the door of her memory reminding her of better days in her life when the

Lord was wonderfully close to her and she embraced him but then he knocks at the door of her conscience and he reminds her well although these days were blessed days away back then he reminds her there were other days when you turned away from me and you embraced the world and the things of the world seemed to please you and you gave yourself to them and that brought a rot into your spiritual life so that now you are uncommitted and lukewarm you're not good really for encouraging the saints you're not good for praying for the church or for those who are unconverted still he knocks at the door of her conscience and convicts her and he says if anyone hears my voice and opens the door this is the promise

I will come in to him and eat with him and he with me well that's some promise isn't it and the eating that he's talking about here is the main meal of the day the feast that they would have in the evening the Lord was promising if you open the door I will come in and you have a meal with me the best of all meals the best of all fellowship remember the two on the road to Emmaus as they drew near the place to which they were going the Lord Jesus was explaining to them from the scriptures the things concerning himself and they said did not our heart burn within us as he spoke with us by the way and opened to us the scriptures and when they reached their destination the Lord made us if he would have gone further but they said no that can't be we have enjoyed your company so much we want to hold on to you please come in with us it's towards evening and the days far spent and he went in with them and they knew him in the breaking of the bread oh if you open the door of your heart and life this evening who knows what the

Lord will do in your life who knows what sights and experiences you will have in his fellowship he will show you more of himself he will know more of his love more of his peace more of the joy of the Lord and you will know more usefulness in his cause also because those who have been in the presence of the Lord like that they will be like Moses their face will shine they will be like the disciples when they came from the bosom of Christ and everybody knew that they had been with Jesus because there was such an aura of heavenliness about them about the way they spoke about the way they lived and that's the way we would want to be is it not in the presence of Christ receiving his blessing is the lock on your door so tightly locked that you cannot open it well the Lord is able to give you grace to respond to his word so that you will not only hear but also obey ask him for grace to receive himself into your heart and life and if you receive him into your life in this

way he surely will come in and you will feed with him and he with you as many as I love I reprove and discipline so be zealous and repent he loved them as a loving husband he was seeking to correct them having described the poverty to which sin had brought them and then having commended himself as the supplier of all of their needs gold garments

[41 : 21] I save everything that they needed and at the end a feast in his own presence will you not come this evening if you haven't come already to know this wonderful saviour if you haven't come now may he follow you home and knock at the door of your conscience and knock at the door of your will that you will be made willing in a day of his power to open your door and that you might be able to say for to me to live is Christ and to die is gain let us pray