

# Sardis

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[ 0 : 00 ] Now, continuing our studies in the messages of our Lord to the churches in Asia, the area which is now known as Western Turkey, we look tonight at the message of the Lord to the head or to the minister of the church in Sardis.

Now, Sardis was a place which was, at that time, known for its wealth.

The people there were known for their pride and their arrogance, and that probably stemmed from the geographical situation of the area.

They felt that the area was so impregnable, the situation was so impregnable, that they were safe from any attempts that surrounding enemies might make upon them.

And this gave them that air or spirit of supreme confidence, super confidence, for which they became known.

[ 1 : 23 ] Less than a hundred years ago, someone recorded that that very place was now a wretched village, inhabited only by a few shepherds and herdsmen.

In that place, Jesus, the great head of the church, had a witness, had a congregation. And to the congregation there, he sends this most solemn of messages, which we have in the first six, five verses of this chapter.

Now, as in all the other messages, our Lord designates himself here with a designation which has particular relevance to the situation that he obtained in the church at Sardis.

And in looking through this message with you very briefly tonight, we will just follow the same approach as on the past four occasions here. We look at the self-designation of our Lord in verse 1, the condition of the church also in verse 1, the counsel which he directs, which he gives to her in verse 2, the incentive that he gives her in verse 3, the warning that we have in verse 4, and the promise and the encouragement that we have in verses 4 and 5.

These are a few thoughts. First of all, then, Christ's self-designation. Now, remember that the way in which our Lord designates himself is understood, is to be understood in the light of the situation that existed in the church to which he sends this message.

[ 3 : 14 ] Now, what he says of himself here is interesting. He who hath the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. Now, as you know, as on previous occasions, we don't enter into any fanciful interpretation or spiritualizing of these terms.

We just stay with the things which are clearly revealed to us in the Word of God regarding our Lord's relationship to the Spirit, because there is no doubt that when the term of the seven spirits of God are used here is a reference to the Spirit of God and to Christ's relationship to the Spirit of God.

And then we are in no doubt that the stars were the angels or the messengers or the ministers of the churches to which the letters were written.

And as he had a relationship to the Spirit, so he had a relationship to the ministers or to the head, the heads of these various churches. The question which arises here is this, what is or what was and what is our Lord's relationship to the Spirit of God?

Well, there are some people who say, take the term the seven spirits and say that Christ had the Spirit in all his fullness, in all his perfection. No, that's very true.

[ 4 : 40 ] That is very true. He was full of the Spirit. And we also know that all that belongs to the Spirit, all that distinguishes the Spirit of God as the Spirit of God, all the properties of the Spirit are also properties which belong to Christ himself.

Those of you who know your shorter catechism will know that to be true. There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

But there is another aspect of the relationship of the Spirit to Christ that the Bible brings before us very clearly. And I think that this is really what we are to understand by it here.

You remember that Jesus, before he died, taught his disciples, particularly in John chapter 14 through to the end of chapter 16, taught his disciples that when he would go away, when he would ascend to the right hand of God the Father, after his death and his resurrection, he would send the Holy Spirit.

And he was going to ascend to the Holy Spirit for two main purposes. First of all, as a guide, as a comforter to those who are going out with the gospel, namely the disciples themselves, he will lead you into all the truth.

[ 6 : 13 ] He will tell you things concerning me. He will reveal to you my glory. He will remind you of my word, and so on.

He was going to be their helper, their comforter. But he was also going to be the reprover of the word. In other words, when they went out to preach the gospel in the name of Christ, they were to be dependent upon the Holy Spirit, who alone would convince the hearer of the truth of the gospel preached.

He will convince the world. He will bring a convincing, irrefutable evidence before their consciousness that what is being said is true.

And I think that this way we have to understand it here. Here is the Lord speaking to his church, and he says to the church, Look, I send the Spirit, the Spirit who alone quickens, who alone reveals, who alone can give you the Spirit of understanding, who alone can bring you to the knowledge of salvation.

I send the Spirit. It is my prerogative to send them to you. And in the same way, I have the seven stars.

[ 7 : 40 ] The ministers who minister the gospel to you are also in my hand. And they can only become effective in preaching the gospel as I enable them, as I empower them.

And both things have always to be remembered. The minister can only be used as God uses him.

It doesn't matter what he tries or how he says a thing, at the end of the day, the success, in inverted commas, lies in the hand of his Lord.

And similarly, a congregation's ability to receive the truth and to live by the truth and to abide in the truth rests with him who is sovereign Lord.

And here he brings before the church, again as he does right throughout this book, the evidence, the proof of his sovereignty as the Lord who reigns in heaven above in the interest of his church.

[ 9 : 02 ] And the one who goes on to say, I know thy works that thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead.

And we look now, secondly, at this condition of the church brought before her by her Lord. And what a shock this must have been to her system.

You remember that the message was delivered to these churches. He told John, I want you to send a message to the seven churches in Asia. And you just think of the situation there one day as a church gathers in Sardis, maybe for public worship on the Lord's Day.

And a message comes to them from John in the Isle of Patmos that he had received a vision of the Lord and that he had a message for these people from the Lord. And this is the message.

You have a name that you live and yet you are dead. Now what does this mean? Well, notice what he says to all the churches.

[ 10 : 07 ] I know thy works. And we've seen in the past that this means not just what the church does, but he knows why she does a thing.

He knows the outward life and the inner life. He knows her inner motives. He knows her desires in doing what she does.

works. Everything that goes in the formation of a person's character and of a church's character. The outward life and the inner activity.

He knows it all. He is omniscient. And what does he see in this church? Well, two things. You have a name that you live and yet you are dead.

Now, a name really means a reputation. Take two examples of this. You know many people in the world in history who have acquired a name.

[ 11 : 12 ] and they have acquired a name because they have done something which has lifted them out of the ordinary. Churchill, for example, Winston Churchill was a great leader of a nation at a particular time.

He was an extraordinary man. Lifted him above the ordinary in that particular situation at that particular time and he has consequently obtained a name, a reputation.

The apostle Paul writing of Jesus in Philippians says the same thing. He speaks of Jesus and he speaks of what he did. He was in the form of God. He took upon him another form.

He came in the form of a servant. In that form he was obedient to death. He was buried. He rose again and God has given him a name. that is above every other name.

No man has ever done what he did. It has lifted him above the ordinary. No person has ever done this. And he has acquired, been given a name, a reputation which is justified.

[ 12 : 26 ] Now he says, you and Sardis, you have a name. You have acquired a reputation. And what gives a person a name or a reputation is that people look at him and they come to their assessment and they say of him that he is above the ordinary.

And their name was this, that they lived. You have a name or a reputation that thou livest. You are alive. Now to understand this, you really look at this in the light of the New Testament and you know that spiritually, this of course is the Lord speaking spiritually.

When the New Testament, when the Bible looks at a man or a woman, a boy or a girl and looks at a spiritual condition, the Bible comes to one of two conclusions concerning that person.

He is either dead or alive. And you know that throughout the New Testament, for example, let me just quote you in the letter to the Ephesians. The Lord says, or Paul rather, through Spirit, says of the church in Ephesus, you are dead, the Christians in Ephesus, you are dead, but God has quickened you to life.

And here this church had a reputation that she was spiritually aligned. That means that she had faith, without faith, you're dead. That she loved the Lord, that she acted in a spirit of a zealous reverence in the service of our Lord, that her profession was that there was her attachment to Christ was undoubted, and that in a world which was generally religious and ungodly, here was a church which was godly and religious and alive.

[ 14 : 24 ] and consequently an object of envy amongst the other churches. It's a great thing to have a good reputation. A good name, says the Old Testament, is better than precious ointment.

It would be good for us all to be known here, to be recognized as those who are spiritually alive. That would be nothing to be ashamed of. It would be something to covet, for someone to say of you, oh yes, that person's a believer, he's a Christian, he's alive.

But what was the reality? The reality was far from that. You're dead. You have a reputation that you're alive, but you're dead.

The reality did not correspond at all to the reputation. What the Lord says of the churches, that there was an absence of living faith, the very thing that made, that constituted, a live person was missing.

There was no burning love in the heart for the Lord. There was no living service. The spirit of prayer was absent. There was no brotherly love in evidence.

[ 15 : 41 ] A church which for all its reputation was really dying on its feet. Now the problem here was this. there was as far as we can judge from the message of our Lord to the church, there was, as we saw in other churches here, there was no error in evidence within a bound, within a border.

There was no wrong doctrine creeping in and finding a foothold and working its own insidious influence from within the church. church. She was free from the defects in administration of discipline that other churches were not free from.

Didn't seem to be any of that going on in Sardis. There were no professing believers seemingly who needed to be disciplined whose outward life was wrong. And also she was free from all the crosses and all the trials and all the difficulties that other churches were exposed to.

There was no seat of Satan in Sardis. There were no Nicolaitan Errorists or Balaamites in Sardis. There was no one thrubbing the church from where it was.

It was not, as someone has put it, opposition or persecution that this church had to overcome. But apathy, indifference, self-satisfaction, she had to be shaken out of her self-complicity.

[ 17 : 17 ] I wonder how many of us here tonight need this message, need to be shaken out of our own apathy and of our own complacency and out of our own indifference.

I wonder, and this is a very solemn thought, I wonder how many of us may have a reputation that we are alive, but if people saw us as God sees us, maybe they too would know that we are not alive but dead.

what counsel does he give this church? Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die, for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

God. Now, this has special relevance and significance for Sardis, be watchful. You see, remember I said to you it was a situation geographically that seemed to be impregnable and they were saved from the attack of their enemies and yet in history on at least two occasions they had been found wanting, they had been overtaken and overcome by their enemies just because they hadn't been watchful.

So what he says here to churches, wake up, take stock of the situation, consider your condition.

[ 18 : 50 ] Now, that's a very simple message, but a very effective one as it comes to us as well tonight. And don't try to opt out of this. You may say to you, well, I'm not making any profession of religion.

This is only for those who are members of the church in Stornoway. Oh, no, my friend, it's for us all. Because what the Lord says to you, what he said to Sardis, is surely applicable to you.

You can't opt out of this. Wake up. Take stock of your situation spiritually. Have a look at yourself. And find out if you come into this category.

What does he say to her? Strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die. Now, I think that what you have here is a picture of a church or an individual, who has a glimmer of spiritual life, a person in whom there is so much evidence of a piety or of a religion.

and what needs to be done is that work has to be put into the smouldering embers. It's like so you came down in the morning. You'd left the fire on at night and day.

[ 20 : 02 ] When you came down in the morning, you discovered, well, you saw a spark. It's not out altogether. I must rather than go through all the chores having to empty the pan and set the fire again.

why not try and work at this and smoulder these embers into a flame? Well, this is what he means here, spiritually. Look at your life. And if there are evidences in life, in your life, things that are almost extinguished, spiritually speaking, these things have almost gone out, like the lamp, the church's lamp was burning very, very dimly, almost ready to be extinguished.

Get to work on what can be found into a flame. What are these things? Well, how goes it, for example, with your own conscience tonight?

Do you have some uneasiness of conscience in the presence of God? Is there some sense or feeling of guilt as you think of yourself tonight before him?

Is there some feeling of shame in your life that, well, I really, I am not what I ought to be? Is there, you hope, maybe a little evidence of faith?

[ 21 : 36 ] Some faint desire to pray? Some knowledge in your heart, some awareness that, oh, yes, I really ought to read my Bible.

I ought to be more careful about these things. Well, he says, strengthen these things, cultivate them, encourage them, get to work at these things. Put more time into prayer, more time into reading your Bible, put more into this relationship that you have with the Lord and with sin.

Distance yourself from sin and try and get nearer to the Lord because I haven't found your works perfect before God. God. Now, notice this.

This church wasn't without works as we've seen. Works as the form of religion, the form of godliness, the form of piety, the thing that you and I have.

You've got a Bible. You're able to bend the knee in prayer. You can walk down the road to church on Sabbath. You've got time to come to prayer meeting through the week.

[ 22 : 47 ] You have all these ceremonies that they have, all these customs and all these services and all these traditions which are worth having. When we talk about these things, don't be so silly as to think you can throw all these things out the window.

There are some things which are very, very well worth having. But the problem is this, you can have these things without having the essence life that you need with them.

You can have the exterior, the visible, the external, the observable. I have not found your works perfect before God. Oh yes, they were there before men.

As Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, not everyone that say to me, Lord, Lord, shall be saved. And he spoke about the day of judgment and he said, some people come to me and they will say to me, Lord, we preached in your name.

And I will say to them, depart from me, I never knew you. It is possible to have an outward life upon which a reputation can be built. But before God, the inner life, the motives, the desires are missing.

[ 24 : 03 ] You can go through all the motions, motivated by principles other than faith and love. God, you can do things just to be seen of people.

And maybe you will do things because you dare not reveal that your heart is not in what you are doing. I have not found the works perfect before God. It doesn't mean at all that the works should be sinless.

But what he means is that the works were coming short in one particular area. There was something missing. The works were there, but there was something wrong in the heart.

I wonder how many of us this could be true. You read your Bible. You come to church. You pray. You listen to the gospel.

Do you have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you love the Lord? Is there zeal in your heart for the things of God?

[ 25 : 09 ] Do you desire to know more of God? Is there a living contact between you and God? Do you have in all your religious activity that spontaneity of love from a heart that is alive to the things of God?

Or are you, as someone put it, with a nice, cold heart laying hold upon the things of God?

Strength in the things that remain that are ready to die, for I have not found thy works perfect before God. And then he goes on to give her this incentive in verse three.

Therefore, remember how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent. you know that those of you who are preachers here tonight and who may be fond of preaching sermons maybe on a theme or perhaps even on a word, this is one of the most important words in the Old Testament, in the whole Bible, full of significance, it's the word remember.

I think it would make a real basis for a good sermon that one word, remember. I just want to draw your attention to one or two places in which it is of particular significance.

[ 26 : 38 ] You know that people like to go to a hospital and you're speaking to your friends or relatives and you go away and you say to them, very often you probably say to them, try and remember me.

It's great to be remembered by people in prayer. And then of course maybe the most important aspect of all this activity of the faculty of the memory is the Lord's Supper when Jesus says to us as we sit at his table and take bread and wine, this do in remembrance of me.

You and I should never forget our Lord, always remember him. So you see the importance of this faculty of memory.

Well here's an incentive to someone whose spiritual life tonight may not be what it ought to be. What he says to the church is this, recollect the way you reacted to my word.

Remember how you received and how you heard and hold fast and repent. Now recollection stimulates to action.

[ 27 : 56 ] This is the kind of recollection that he wants. The recollection that stimulates to action, not the resurrection, the recollection that paralyzes into inactivity. You know the kind of thing I mean.

You and I are very fond of doing this kind of thing. We live in 1989 and the Christian church in Lewis is not what it was in 1939.

And we go back 50 years and we're here, 60 years some here tonight were present then. Some of us only know this from hearing yourselves speaking about it.

And you talked to us about the way the church used to be, how alive the church was. And that's true. And we would awe that it were as alive tonight.

But very often you see that kind of recollection paralyzes people into inactivity. They talk about the things they used to do. But it doesn't stimulate them into doing the same things now.

[ 28 : 56 ] And this is why he asks the church in Sardis to remember. So that they will get back into that kind of activity again.

Remember what? Remember your attitude to the gospel. How you heard it. And how you received it and heard it rather. What does this mean?

Well it means the way that people react when they are spiritually alive to the gospel. They're glad to get to hear the gospel. I joyed when to the house of God.

Go up they said to me. Did you find it difficult to get dressed tonight to come out of the church? Well that in itself may indicate your spiritual condition.

Remember the day when you longed for the hands of the clock to go round to the hour of public worship. there was a glad response in your heart to the word of God.

[ 29 : 53 ] A glad anticipation for the things of God. You were emotionally involved in the presentation and the reading and the understanding of the truth.

You loved what you heard and you looked forward to hearing more. There was an order in your heart. You clung to the message and to the Christ who was at the heart of the message.

You loved to hear defined the terms upon which God would save your soul. There was an obedience in the truth, an understanding of it, a thirst for it, an interest in it.

And that's what he says to the church, review your past history. And maybe there's a message here for you and for me tonight. get back to basics.

What is your attitude tonight? To the truth. Oh, not to me as a messenger of the truth, and not to any other messenger. That's immaterial. It's the truth.

[ 31 : 01 ] Do you love it the way you used to? Do you look forward to it the way you used to? Do you delight in it the way you used to?

Does it satisfy you the way it used to? Or may it be that you've lost your taste for the things of God?

Have you lost your appetite? Well, he says, remember and repent and hold fast. Repent. Turn away from whatever has come in between you and the things of God and grasp all tightly of that which he has given to you.

Hold on to it and love it. If not, and he addresses this warning, if not, I will come on the thief, and I shall not know what are I will come upon thee.

Now, you all know what this means. Well, you do. Fortunately, some of us, some don't know, but others do know what it's like to be burgled, for example. Their home to be burgled.

[ 32 : 12 ] It's an awful experience. It's the sheer unexpectedness of it. It comes without warning. And you're so unprepared for the thing.

It's so sudden. And this is what he says. Now, of course, you know that Jesus often speaks of a second coming like this. He is going to come like a thief in the night. But I don't think it's a reference to the second coming at all.

This is a reference to the Lord's chastisement of his people and the Lord's judgment upon his own church. He's going to come to shatter their ease and their dreams and their hopes and their joys.

Oh, it's happened often. It's happened in the old world of Noah's day. Didn't expect this judgment, but it came. It happened in the time of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Didn't expect it, but it came. They never thought it would, but it did. And you know, when you and I become spiritually dead, we don't really think that God will come like that, in judgment upon our sins, in chastisement upon our passions.

[ 33 : 30 ] I read words the other day which I want to bring before you in this connection, which I think a terror be solemn, is that I hear it, he said, in this condition, sunk down in spiritual sloth.

Well, he said, could the veil be lifted that conceals the preparation that are going on at the moment for your chastisement of signal punishment?

your face would gather blackness and your soul sink in dismay, but you cannot see them, yet they are there behind that impenetrable veil where God hides his coming providences, just as certainly as if we saw them.

You know, I don't know if there's anyone here tonight in our back-sitting state. Maybe there are, but I would say this to you. You were going and you'll know what it's, you'll know all about coming back or being brought back to the God whom you have left.

Repent or else, he says, I will come upon thee as a thief and thou shalt not know what I will come upon thee.

[ 34 : 55 ] But finally, there was this promise and the encouragement. There were a few in Sardis who had not defied their garments. They shall walk with me in white, he says, for they are worthy.

Now, as you know, this is really symbolic language. There are a few names in Sardis which have not defied their garments. In other words, there were some professing Christians in Sardis who hadn't really degenerated into that spiritual slothfulness.

They hadn't defied their garments, that is, their profession. They hadn't marred their profession. It was obvious that spiritual deadness in that church had resulted in indifference to moral evil.

Many of them had besmirched themselves in the mire of the sin that was prevalent in Sardis.

But there were some, he says, who were not living like that. They weren't defiling their profession. They weren't besmirching their profession like that. Of course, it is impossible for a Christian, it is impossible for anyone who loves the Lord to be part and part of this world as he must be without being defiled.

[ 36 : 14 ] You come into the world every day of your life. Jesus taught this to the disciples in that most wonderful way in John chapter 13 when he took that basin of water and he started to wash the disciples feet.

And Peter said, Lord, you're never going to wash my feet. And Jesus said to him, if I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Oh, well, in that case he said, wash me from my head down.

And Jesus said to him, only you will, if you have been washed once, he says, you will only have your feet washed. Now, what he was really saying is this, this is the teaching of Jesus in John 13, that every Christian comes into contact with defilement every moment of his life, and consequently comes for forgiveness and cleansing through the blood of Jesus every day of his life.

Are you surprised at this? When a person comes to the Lord, all his sins are forgiven, but every day of his life he comes in contact with sin, and he feels defiled, and he comes so that Jesus may cleanse him from his sin.



Hence the significance of these well-known words of the angel, thou shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.

[ 37 : 45 ] Now what he says is this, there are Christians and Sardis who have not fallen into sin, they are in contact with sin, and they are coming to me for forgiveness every day, they are living the way they ought to be in dependence upon me, and they shall walk with me in white, he speaks of the walk of Christian fellowship, the believer walking with his Lord, and step with his Lord, walking with the joy and the gladness of Christian fellowship, that's what he's saying of those people who don't fall into sin, they shall walk with me, as those who come for daily cleansing, they will be in my company, they will rejoice in my presence, they will know my peace, they will have my joy in their heart, they will be content with me, for they are worthy, ah, you see, is it true, that there are people who are passionately worthy, no, it is not, we are all unworthy, there is no one who is worthy of the least of the mercies of God in himself, what does it mean then, it means this, that they have an entitlement to the blessings that God gives them through faith in

Christ, they have a right to these blessings, a right which is used not from themselves but from him, a right which comes to them by the grace of God, and therefore all boasting is excluded, by faith in Christ they are entitled to the blessing of forgiveness and cleansing, I have a few says in Sardis who are like that, and this is the promise that I give to them he says and the encouragement that I leave with them, he that overcomes, he who perseveres unto the end, he who keeps going, in the face of the many difficulties that confront him, and the suggestions that are made, to give up that you don't need to be, as careful as that as a Christian, he who keeps going, the same shall be clothed, in white garments, or in white raiment,

I think it's a reference to the blessing that is going to be enjoyed in heaven by those who ultimately overcome, the blessing of complete sanctification, the blessing of perfect purity, they are imperfect today, and it is because they are imperfect that they come to Christ for forgiveness, but if they keep on like that, the day will come when they will be made perfect, who are these?

Our age in white robes, he says in chapter seven, these are they who have come through gay tribulation, washed the robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb, they will one day overcome, and they will be clothed with holiness, and they will stand victorious before the Lord in a life free from pollution, bright with celestial gladness, and crowned with final victory, and I will not blot out their name out of the book of life, I haven't got time to deal with this, you know that surely this is a reference to the, to the, to the, what happened was that the idea here is the idea of our register of names, and you know that even in the church and perhaps in school and in many other institutions, where you have a roll call, the name is written in there, but there are times when that person breaks the rules by which he is associated with that particular institution, and his name is erased, his name is blotted out of the book of that register, and what the

Lord here says, he that overcomes, I will not blot out his name, out of the book of life, the assurance that you have tonight, that you are in the book of life, is the assurance that by the grace of God, you are continuing in the life of faith, and that's the only assurance you will ever have, the assurance that day by day, you live with him, in dependence upon him, and that you keep on going until the end of the day.

[ 42 : 49 ] there are some people who have this kind of false assurance, an unbiblical assurance, oh yes, I was converted 20 years ago, the Lord told me that my sins are forgiven, he freed me, therefore I can do what I like tonight, because I have forgiveness in Christ, you cannot live like that, that is not overcoming, that is succumbing to your own use, to overcome is to live in dependence upon his grace, to look by faith to him who lived, and who died for you, and who is alive at the right hand of God, and to the day come when you will overcome sin finally, and then you will enter into all the privileges of those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life, you will inherit all the privileges that belong to these people on that day, you have the privileges today as you live by faith, you have the privilege then in all its blessed fullness, and I will confess his name before my father, and before his angels.

Now, we write something of this in the passage we write in Matthew's gospel here tonight. Maybe there's a reference here to the fact that there were many people in Sardis, and this is the problem you see, when people don't live the way they ought to as Christians, the problem that they don't own Christ, they don't confess him, they don't acknowledge him in the world, and therefore if you want to live an easy Christian life with the word Christian in verse, the best thing to do is associate yourself with the world, get enmeshed in it, come down to the standards of the world, and then you don't need to bother about confessing Christ.

You can hold on to the form of godliness on Sunday, perhaps, someday through the week, read your Bible at the end of the day, say a few words of prayer before you go to work, or maybe before you go to bed, that's all.

Ah, yes, my friend, but that's not owning Christ, it costs to own your Lord. He that confesseth not my name, I will not confess his name, said Jesus, before my father, or he that denies me, I will deny him before my father.

And when you own Christ, it brings upon you the reproach and the ridicule of the world. You will be despised by the world.

[ 45 : 34 ] But what is that? As long as you are owned by Christ. And owned by Christ, not just in the day of judgment, but today. Christ owns, he acknowledges, he mentions his own people before his father in eternity.

There is never a moment in which they are not owned by him, mentioned and petitioned for in the presence of the father, embraced in the intercession of Jesus Christ in heaven tonight.

And that's the greatest honour that you and I could have. You know, that your name could be mentioned. You think of a person, for example, applying for a job. And perhaps they want someone to pull some strings for them.

Someone who's got authority or someone who's got some kind of sway or influence with the people who are going to make the appointment. And perhaps that person who's applied for the job would feel rather encouraged if he thought so-and-so was going to mention his name in the places that matter.

Ah, well, my friend, as you and I live here tonight, the place that really matters is heaven above where Christ is at the right hand of God the Father.

[ 47 : 05 ] I wonder if you're being prayed for tonight as he says, Father, I pray for them whom thou hast given me, not that thou dost take them out of the world, but that thou dost keep them in the world.

Oh, what an assurance that would be to your heart and to mine tonight to know that we are being owned by Christ in the presence of his Father. And then to know that when the great day of judgment comes, that we will be owned as those who have continued with him and overcome through faith in him all the opposition and all the obstacles that are placed in our path in this world even tonight.

Heath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. Where are you now spiritually tonight?

What reputation do you have in the town of Stornoway or wherever you come from? Are you known as a Christian?

See that you are inwardly what you are outwardly known to be. And I miss this to you. Maybe you have a reputation as well in Stornoway or elsewhere.

[ 48 : 46 ] And the reputation is this that you are not a Christian. You are proving by your outward life that whoever you are related to, you are not related to Jesus Christ.

You may pride yourself in that reputation. Well, my friend, let me say this to you. It's a reputation you have nothing to be proud of.

that which will be the greatest honor tonight would be for you to own the Lord and for the Lord to own you.

Let us pray. Oh, do thou bless us and do thou help us and do thou keep us, O God, in thy fear.

Enable us to put our trust and our confidence in thyself and bless us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly saint Christ and the praise should be thine forever in him.