

## ***Session 6 Jesus' Message to the Church of Sardis (Rev. 3:1-6)***

### **I. THE PRIMARY MESSAGE: THE CALL TO OVERCOME SPIRITUAL DEADNESS**

*Tonight I am giving my sixth session on the seven churches in the Book of Revelation. This is actually Jesus' statement to the end-time Church. He was talking to them historically two thousand years ago, but prophetically He was describing the things the Church would need to embrace, to be warned of, to be promised about for the end-time Church to walk through the Book-of-Revelation pressures and glory. And so this is a very relevant passage of scripture for the end-time Church.*

- A. The church in Sardis had a reputation for its dedication to Jesus, but had become spiritually dead. He gave five exhortations that would result in reviving them to live in the pleasures of loving God.

*This is the church of Sardis. They had a reputation of having great devotion to the Lord, but the truth of the matter was they were spiritually dead. This is a most disturbing and shocking reality: that believers and ministries can have confidence in their reputation, and people celebrate their big numbers and their famous events, etc., but the Lord says, "Spiritually, you are suffering." They are still born again, but He is saying that there is not a heartbeat in their ministry spiritually. This is in terms of the whole ministry because there were some really devoted believers individually.*

*The church of Sardis was founded about forty years earlier in the great revival that swept through Asia that we find in Acts 19. We know that the church of Sardis today would be in modern-day Turkey. As a matter of fact, all seven of these churches in Revelation 2 and 3 would be in modern-day Turkey today. I look at that as a down payment in early Church with seeds sown that are going to come to fullness before the Lord returns. I am expecting a mighty revival out of the seeds sown from these churches two thousand years ago in Turkey which will impact the Body of Christ across the earth.*

***<sup>1</sup>"To...the church in Sardis write, 'These things say He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars...you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. <sup>2</sup>Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain...<sup>3</sup>Remember...how you have received...hold fast and repent...<sup>5</sup>He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments...I will confess his name before My Father..."***  
***(Rev. 3:1-5)***

*Let's read this, verses 1 to 5. On the notes here I am giving just an abbreviated overview of what Jesus said so you can get the sense of it. We will break it down in more detail as we go through the notes here.*

*Revelation 3:1, "To the angel," or to the messenger—and it is the human messenger that Jesus is speaking to—"of the church in Sardis. I am the one who possesses the seven Spirits of God." That is, "I have authority over the ministry of the Holy Spirit. All that the Holy Spirit does in the Church is under My authority." That is a big statement.*

*He says, "I hold the seven stars in My hand." That is a statement from Revelation 1:16, "He is holding the seven stars," and then John tells us in Revelation 1:20 that those seven stars are the primary apostolic leaders over those churches. And so, in effect, "I hold these leaders in My hand." Though He identifies or focuses on the leaders in this, we know that whatever He does with the leaders He does with His people in general. He holds them in His own hand.*

*He says here in verse 1, "You have a reputation; you have a name that you are alive spiritually." They were probably thriving numerically, probably doing very good financially, and they had a reputation for many of*

their different ministries, but He said, "The truth is, you are spiritually dead." Not everybody in the church, but as a whole.

I have a prayer that I have prayed over the years. It is a serious prayer. It sounds like a joke, but it is a serious prayer. I say, "Lord, shock me now. Do not shock me then when I stand before You. If this is really how You feel about my life, anything like this, tell me now so I can change it." You see, it is so easy to be caught up in our name and our reputation. And the name of this church was associated with their actions. You are going to find four times in these six verses that Jesus says the words, "your name," and He associates it with their actions and their activities and their lifestyle. So their name and their lifestyle are almost synonymous.

Then He gives them five exhortations to come out of being spiritually dead or spiritually asleep really because He is not saying they are not born again. He is just saying, "You are not being moved and inspired by the Spirit. Your heart is not hungry for the Word like it used to be." He said, as it were, "But I will tell you five things that, if you do them, will change you and can transform you." Many born-again believers are living spiritually as though they are dead or spiritually asleep. You could use those terms interchangeably.

Again, don't get the wrong idea. They are in the Church, and they are born-again believers. However, many believers in the Western world would admit, "I am spiritually dull. I am spiritually bored. I do not hunger for the Word. I am stuck in an area of compromise. I do not feel His presence. I feel shame and fear captivating my emotions."

Jesus said in verse 2, "I will give you five ways to come out of this." Now, you will not change overnight usually, though sometimes that happens, but over time you will see this condition of being spiritually asleep, bored, dull, and stuck change and you will come alive. He says, in effect, "Number one: be watchful. Number two: strengthen the things that remain. Number three: take time to remember how God called you, how you heard the call—not just to salvation, that yes—but how God called you to be radical in your early days"—because they were radical in their early days for the Lord—"I want you to pause and remember how I called you and how you responded. Remember the tenderness of those early days. Then number four: I want you to hold fast to what you see when you are watchful, to what happens when you strengthen the things that remain and what you remember. I do not want it to just be a fleeting moment of inspiration. I want you to hang on to it, recall it over and over. Rehearse those three things of what you watch, what you remember, and how you strengthen yourself." And then He says, number five, which is very practical, "Repent." That is, change your lifestyle, change your schedule, change the way you spend time and money, and do practical actions that will uphold these commitments that you have made. These five exhortations are pastoral exhortations of how to wake up from spiritual slumber, how to move from being stuck to being vibrant in our spirit.

Now you could read verse 2 and say, "Oh, that is awesome!" but I am telling you the greatest Shepherd that ever walked the earth says, in effect, "These five things will lead to transformation if you take them seriously." And so do not look at verse 2 and just say, "Wow, amazing!" If you are a leader or a pastor and you are discipling people, look at these five things and say, "Spirit, give me more insight on these five things." As a pastor and a teacher, I want to stir people in these five things because I know from the very words of Jesus this is what will wake up believers who are spiritually dead, who used to be on fire but have lost the fire. I like the testimony! I wanted to get that fire going! I can tell you with the authority of Jesus' words that verse 2 is the way to do it.

He says, however, "I want to warn you that if you will not watch, if you will not do these five things, I am going to visit you like a thief. I am going to come suddenly and evaluate your life, and I am going to set things in motion that bring increase or decrease in your life. I am going to come to you. You will not know when, so I

want you to really pay attention to watching because, if you do the watching, you are in position to do the strengthening, the remembering, the holding fast and the repentance.”

And so He goes back to the first one and says, “Do that one, and if you do not do it, if you hear My word and just forget it, I will visit you and there will be consequences which will cause a diminishing in your spiritual life. You do not want to do that. You really, really want to embrace My leadership right now because this is the way out of your problems.” This is one of the most practical passages in the Book of Revelation.

He says in verse 5, “If you do overcome, if you do watch, and you do strengthen the things that remain, and you remember how I called you and how you responded, if you do these things and you hold fast, and you stay with it—you stay with it, not a weekend, not a seminar, not a summer, but you stay with it; you hold fast—I have a great blessing coming to you. You are going to be clothed in white garments.” The word, “white,” here speaks of the bright and glorious garments in the resurrection. Now He is not talking about the standard gift that He gives every believer in the resurrection. He is talking about something more than that. He is going to give you garments that reflect the way you loved Him in this age. He is going to reward you in the age to come with bright and glorious garments. That is what the word, “white,” means here.

He said, and this is so remarkable, “I am going to confess you before the Father.” Now when Jesus confesses you before the Father, He does not say “Father, Brother Bill is saved, next...” That is not what it means. When Jesus confesses you before the Father, He tells the story of your devotion to the Father. He says, as it were, “Let Me tell You the way he loved Me.” It is much more than stamping your passport, “Okay, you are going to heaven... Next!” and then He says another name. No, no, He is going to tell the story of your devotion through your forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty years on the earth and how in the face of temptation and obstacles you were tempted to quit but you kept holding on and pressing through because you loved Him. Jesus said, in effect, “I am going to tell that story. It will never be forgotten ever. I will not tell it once. I will tell it many, many times.” And the reason I know He will tell it many times is because there is something that we love to do as humans: we love to tell the story of the nobility of the people we love. If we see nobility and heroic decisions a life story in a movie, or we read a book, or it is somebody in within our family or friends, we love to tell the story. We do not tell it once. We tell it over and over. The Lord could say, “I am more generous than you, I have a better memory, and I have forever to tell your story many, many times.”

Beloved, the point is the devil is a liar; he tells you that it is not worth it. Jesus says, “I will never, ever stop telling the story of the way you loved Me. We have billions of years.” Beloved, if you give a cup of cold water in His name, He says “Surely I will tell that on the last day and reward you,” for something as simple as a cup of cold water.

- B. This church had been founded about 40 years earlier (AD 52-55) in the revival that swept through Asia (Acts 19)—modern-day Turkey. Sadly, Jesus gave no affirmation for their faithfulness.

## II. JESUS' REVELATION OF HIMSELF

- A. Jesus is He who “has” the seven Spirits and “holds” the seven stars. He possesses authority over the ministry of the Spirit and, gives us power to be revived to walk in victory over spiritual deadness.

<sup>1</sup>“...These things say He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars...” (Rev. 3:1)

As with all seven churches, Jesus gives a revelation of Himself that He made known in chapter 1. For each of the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3, He identifies something about His majesty that He revealed in chapter 1 and applies it to the particular challenges and temptations of that church. He was saying, basically,

*"If you know these things about Me, it will be especially important for the things you are facing." And here what they were facing was being overcome with spiritual dullness, compromise, being spiritually asleep, spiritually dead, and He said, "I can tell you the way out of it."*

- B. **Jesus has the seven Spirits of God:** The seven Spirits of God speak of the diverse ministries of the Spirit to them. Jesus will release all seven aspects of the Spirit's ministry in His people.

***<sup>2</sup>The Spirit of the Lord shall rest on Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. (Isa. 11:2)***

*Number one, He says via the first description, in effect, "Understand," verse 1, "that I have the seven spirits. I have the full authority over the seven different ministries of the Holy Spirit, and I will engage with you if you will engage with Me. I have power behind Me. I sent the Spirit to you. He only speaks about Me. He follows My directives. If you will engage with Me, I will engage the Holy Spirit in your life in a new way, but you have to stay with it." Beloved, that is amazing! Jesus says, "If you will give yourself with Me and stay with it, you will be surprised how much I will cause the Spirit to touch you."*

- C. **Jesus holds the seven stars:** Jesus identified the stars in His hand as primary leaders of the seven churches (Rev. 1:20). He *holds* His leaders in His hands as He makes them bright stars (Rev. 2:1). To "hold" these stars means that He is deeply involved in their lives because they are dear to Him.

***<sup>1</sup>"... 'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand...'" (Rev. 2:1)***

*Then the second thing He says is, "I hold the seven stars." That was chapter 1:16, and then in chapter 1:20, He said, "Those stars are the seven leaders; I hold them in My hand," meaning "They are close to Me." You cannot hold something in your hand that is far away. "They are close, I am very attentive, and they are dear to Me. That is why I am holding them." And He might say, "If that is how I feel about that apostolic leader over the church of Sardis who is stumbling in darkness, that is how I feel about the whole church. You are near Me. I am attentive to you. You are dear to Me. I am holding you. I cherish you. If you know that I will release a greater measure of the Spirit, if you have confidence and believe Me, and you believe that you are dear to Me, then together we can walk out of this spiritual dullness and death." That is what He is saying here.*

### III. JESUS CORRECTED THEM FOR COMPROMISE

- A. They had a reputation of being spiritually alive because of their history of dedication to Jesus. He associated their "name" here and in 3:4 with their lifestyle and activities.

***<sup>1</sup>"I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead...<sup>2</sup>I have not found your works perfect [mature] before God." (Rev. 3:1-2)***

*He corrects them in Revelation 3:1, "I know your works, that you have a name"—you have a reputation—"that you are spiritually alive, but you are spiritually dead." Again, you could say spiritually asleep. They do not have hunger for the Word like they did in the early days. They do not have confidence in their walk with God. They are always overcome with fear and torment, shame and condemnation, and the Lord would say, "No, no! Believe Me! Take Me at My word! You can have confidence in what I tell you."*

*"I do not know. I am stuck. I am lost. I do not feel Your presence. I do not have hunger. I am stuck in compromise."*

*And He would say, "No, no, no! I can make you alive, but come to Me on My terms and believe Me about what I say about Myself and what I say about you."*

- B. **You are dead:** They were dead or asleep in their spiritual life. They lacked hunger for His Word and were weighed down with things like fear, shame, despair, depression, or compromise, etc.

*Being spiritually dead, what a horrible evaluation! It is one thing to feel stuck, dull, and bored spiritually and to know it. I mean, that is half the problem—that you know it—but a whole other thing are the people who are spiritually dead, uninspired, and do not feel His presence, but they do not even know it because they are captured by the reputation that they have or that their ministry has because of what happened in the past. They are captured by it. The Lord would say, "Do not believe that story! That is not true of how you are relating to Me now. Let Me talk to you."*

*Again, a lot of folks say, "I already know that I am stuck!" and the Lord would say, "Well, you are halfway there! Blessed are those who mourn...blessed are those who are poor in spirit; they already know they are in great need."*

- C. **I have not found your works perfect:** They were born again but lacked their former dedication and devotion to Jesus. Jesus called His people to be perfect (Mt. 5:48)—to seek to walk in *all the light* that the Spirit gives in each season. Jesus did not find an appropriate response to His leadership.

*He said, "I have not found your works"—or your responses to Me which would be works, so put that word there—"I have not found your response to My leadership perfect." Perfect means complete or mature. The other translations are, "I have not found your response to Me to be mature." Or complete is another way of saying it. He is not talking about perfection in the absolute sense.*

*Jesus in His earthly ministry called His people to be perfect. He was not talking about the idealism of total perfection in this age. To be perfect means you set your heart to walk in all the light the Spirit is giving you in that season. A new believer, three months old in the Lord, only has a little bit of light, but they can be perfect. They are setting their heart to walk in all the light that they have; that is all that He asks of us. In every season He will give more light. You know Psalm 36:9, "In His light we see light." When He gives us light, and we respond to it, then He gives us more light.*

*"However," He said, "You did not respond to Me rightly. Your response was not complete. You were not responding to the light you had." You were thinking, 'Well, that was back a few years ago. I do not know. I am just stuck right now. I am just in a mess.'"* And the Lord went on, as it were, *"Wait, stop! Go back and respond to Me like you did before. I want your works, your response, to be perfect. Respond to the light you have." He is putting His finger on issues: our attitudes, our speech, our money, our schedules. He says, as it were, "Obey Me in those issues, not because I am trying to bully you. I am trying to liberate you. When I highlight an issue, I am not just proving I am your boss, I am showing you I am your liberator. So I want your works, your response to My leadership, to be wholehearted no matter what measure of light you have." A little bit of light? Obey with all of your heart. When you get a little bit more light, you obey with all of your heart.*

#### IV. JESUS GAVE THEM FIVE PASTORAL EXHORTATIONS WITH A WARNING

- A. Jesus gave them five exhortations that would result in restoring their spiritual passion and vitality.

*So now He is going to give the five pastoral exhortations. I am only going to spend a minute or two on each one. They are not complicated, but they have to be done. It is not enough to know them; we have to actually do*

them. But He has the seven spirits and says, "I will anoint you to do it. I will help you if you set your heart. I have the authority over the Spirit's ministry. He will help you. You engage with Me, and He will engage with you. I promise you that." So these are not complicated, but they are necessary. A lot of believers feel stuck, condemned. They are in a compromise they cannot get free of. They do not hunger for the Word, or they do not enjoy His presence like they used to. To them the Lord says, "I really, really will deliver you. Here they are—five things."

So as you are listening, say, "Holy Spirit, mark us with these five things in our own lives." These are for me personally, but as a shepherd these are five things I want to bring others into.

***<sup>2</sup>"Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die...<sup>3</sup>Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore, if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you."***  
***(Rev. 3:2-3)***

He said, "Be watchful. Strengthen the things that remain which are ready to die." That is, "There are things that I have given you by the Spirit that have grown in your ministry over the years, but those Holy-Spirit-initiated things which have grown, starting in your early days, are about to be completely gone. That heart for My presence, that call to prayer, that heart for evangelism, that conviction to move in the power of God which was really in you and growing, it is drifting and diminishing. It is about to be gone in your life."

Or He is talking to the corporate church and its ministry, and He says, in effect, "Do not imagine that it will strengthen itself. You have to be conscious and intentional about strengthening those things that you have enjoyed in past years. This grace is about to be gone in your life. It is not My will that this grace is lifted, but this grace will be gone if you do not engage with it." Because, you see, grace that is refused has a consequence on our heart; our heart becomes more dull and more hardened.

He gives the third thing in verse 3, "Remember how you received the call of God and remember how you heard it. Remember those early days when you were tender, and I responded and convinced you to be wholehearted. Remember how I convinced you to engage in these various things." All of us can look back a year ago, or ten years ago, or forty years ago, and remember, but the enemy does not want you to remember. He wants you to forget, and he wants you to believe his lies.

Then He says "When you have watched, strengthened the things, and remembered, hold fast and stay with it. Stay with it over and over."

Again, it is not a short season. It is not a summer, or a semester at Bible school. This has to be something you take hold of again and again, and again.

"Well, Lord, I did that."

"No, no, no, go back and watch, strengthen and remember. Stay with it. Stay with it. Stay with it. Stay with it. And, practically, repent: change your schedule, change the way you are using your money, change some of the relationships you are in, change some of the ways you are talking, change some of the places you are going, make some practical lifestyle changes so those decisions you made in watching, strengthening and remembering will bear fruit over time." Because, if you watch, strengthen, and remember, but do not change your lifestyle, they will just be momentary inspirations that will fade away. You have to make lifestyle choices. And then those seeds will re-bud again, those flowers, and they will blossom again in the days to come.

"If you do not do these things, I am going to come upon you like a thief. And you will not know what hour I am visiting you." The idea is that in every believer's life—let's just say over fifty years of walking with the Lord—

*there are several seasons in a generation of walking with the Lord, very specific seasons, where the Lord comes to you. A number of His parables highlight that idea. He comes to you. I am not talking about physical death, but He comes to evaluate, to measure your life, either to give a promotion and increase in the Spirit or to prune you, which is actually positive, or to discipline you.*

*He does not do that every day. He comes in seasons. He takes stock. That is how He describes it in the parables, and He says, as it were, "I increase or decrease. I discipline or I show favor. Then I will come again some years later in another season of evaluation. However, you will not know when I am coming, but I am coming, and I am going to see your life." Now, of course He knows everything, and He is always watching. However, in His leadership He has strategic times in a believer's life that are key moments which determine whether we go forward or backward in the things of the Spirit. He would say, "I am watching your responses."*

- B. **Things ready to die:** "Things" that the Spirit initiated and blessed in this church were in jeopardy of dying. Things like having a heart for His Presence, prayer, evangelism, and loving and serving people. Grace that we refuse to respond to eventually diminishes in us. A ministry can thrive numerically, financially, and in ministry activity, and even be famous, yet be spiritually dead.
- C. **Be watchful:** Jesus called them to cultivate a lifestyle of prayer, obedience, and encountering Him. The primary exhortation that Jesus gave when teaching on the end times was "to watch and pray" (Mt. 24:42-43; 25:13; 26:38-41; 27:36; Mk. 13:9, 33, 34, 35, 37; Lk. 12:38-39; 21:36; Rev. 16:15).  
<sup>33</sup>**Watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is...**<sup>35</sup>**Watch...for you do not know when the master of the house is coming...**<sup>37</sup>**What I say to you, I say to all: Watch!**" (Mk. 13:33-37)

*Be watchful. That is the one He started off with. This is a really interesting one: be watchful. When we think about being watchful, well, like I have asked people over the years here and there. "What do you think that means, you know, be watchful?"*

*Think about it. Here is a remarkable reality. To me it is remarkable that when Jesus taught on the end times the number one exhortation He gave was, "Be watchful and pray."*

*When I read that years ago, I thought, "Be watchful? Why not store food? You know, hide some guns, but don't tell anybody. Or find a secret tunnel, get water, store up some batteries or something! I do not know what, but something!"*

*He said, "No, just be watchful." Like, what? He might have said, "If you are watchful, you will be in a position with Me so I can give you details of what to do in that moment of crisis. However, if you are not watchful, you will not have a clue with all of your human ideas how to navigate that crisis that is coming. Just be watchful."*

*I said, "Lord, be practical!"*

*"I am. You be watchful and pray, and you will be in a position with a community of people and will make right choices in that hour. I will give you the wisdom together in that hour."*

*It is remarkable that He uses this, "Be watchful and pray" as the primary exhortation He gives when human history is in the greatest crisis in all of history. I mean, when the human race is in the crisis that is greater than any other time in human history, He says, "Be watchful and pray."*

*Like, I used to read that and say, "Come on, Lord! Give me a little bit of something! What city should I go hide in or something, anything?"*

*"Mike, be watchful and pray."*

1. **Watch:** This exhortation focuses on the *mind*—to grow in understanding of what is happening in the culture in light of what the Word says as “anointed observers” of what is happening. Cultural norms that rooted in darkness are applauded by many powerful leaders of society; thus, some believers are seduced by the momentum resulting from these leaders.

*Number one: When you are watchful, that is an exhortation which informs your mind. To pray is an exhortation which focuses on the heart. When He says to be watchful, what He is telling us to do is to be anointed observers—catch this now—be anointed observers of what is happening in the culture compared to what the word of God says. The word of God says this, but the culture is doing that.*

*Here is why: the cultural norm is that which is popular and applauded by “the rich and the famous,” not all of the rich and famous. However, the powerful people applaud the cultural norms. A lot of believers get swept in and seduced by the momentum of the powerful, the rich, the famous, the multitude, and they all say, “Well, I don’t know what the Bible says!” Yes, we do know what the Bible says. We do know. “Yeah, but everybody else in all of those big churches are following what they are doing in the culture.” No! And all of the big churches are not doing that, by the way.*

*However, sometimes we get seduced by the cultural norms that are popular, and the Lord says, as it were, “Look at the Bible. See what is happening within the culture. Compare the two and do not be seduced by it. Be an anointed observer of what is happening in your generation. Watch!”*

*Watch means open your eyes and watch it. See the Bible, watch the cultural norms that are against what the Bible says, and do not be seduced by them no matter who is applauding them and how many big ministries are moving in that false direction. Pray! That is strengthening and connecting your heart. Many of you could talk hours on that.*

2. **Pray:** This exhortation focuses on the *heart*—to grow in strength from connecting with Jesus. Prayer strengthens our heart and releases His resources. (Prayers to Strengthen Our Inner Man: [https://mikebickle.org/watch/?guid=2015\\_03\\_06\\_1900\\_FCF\\_MB](https://mikebickle.org/watch/?guid=2015_03_06_1900_FCF_MB)).

- D. **Strengthen the things that remain:** Jesus was addressing the primary pastor and his leadership team. They had to be intentional about strengthening those things that they practiced in past years.

*Let’s look at “Strengthen the things that remain.” He is talking to the primary apostolic leader of the church of Sardis and, of course, He is also talking to the whole eldership, all of the leadership team. You may not be an elder in a church, though you might be, but you may have leadership in a ministry, maybe a home group or an outreach ministry. There are many different kinds of ministries. This is what I believe He is telling leaders to do, that this is how you strengthen things, the things that He has given you which grew a little bit, as there was a little evidence of life.*

1. **Say it regularly:** Leaders are to speak the vision and values often to those in their ministry.

*Here is how you strengthen them: get your team together or the people you are ministering to and, number one, say the vision and values regularly. Say it. Here at IHOPKC we are at our twentieth year, and there are a number of people, maybe forty or fifty, who have been here the entire twenty years. Some of them smile because I am going to tell the vision again the one hundredth time. I say, “I do not care how many times you have heard it. I am going to keep lining up our ministry with the vision and values, over and over again.” That is one way you strengthen it: by saying it regularly. You might be over ten people. You may have a ministry that is smaller or bigger, but I tell you that you strengthen it by saying it. Are you saying the vision and values, the promises?*

2. **Model it consistently:** Leader are to walk out their values in their personal life consistently.

*However, it is not enough to say it. You have to model it, because what the leaders proclaim does not work if they do not model it. It will not strengthen that spiritual activity, virtue, or value in that spiritual community. The people follow the leadership. The leadership sets the culture for a ministry. There can be a leadership team that is carnal and there could still be some really radical people within the ministry, or the other way around. There can be really on-fire leaders and there still be some really carnal people within the ministry. It is not one hundred percent. However, leaders do set the culture.*

*I remember one leader said, "The people will not do what the leaders do not do. That is not right. The people will only do what the leaders do recently."*

*"Only what leaders have been doing recently" will the people within their ministry be inspired by. If the leaders quit praying and quit reading the Word, quit responding in humility, quit pressing to see the power of God touch other lives, the people will. So we have to say it, and the leaders have to model it, but there is more than that.*

3. **Establish it organizationally:** Leaders set the spiritual culture of a ministry. They should only set other leaders into place who embrace the vision and values of that ministry.

*Number three, they have to establish it in the organization. I have been in leadership for over forty years and some of you have been in leadership for a long time, so you will know this temptation. It is very tempting to put in position a leader who has great gifts when they have not quite embraced the vision and values. That will cause the culture to get off. Only set leaders in place who embrace the values. Sometimes the more gifted leader will not stay but move on, and the less gifted leader will be more faithful. The Lord would say, "Organizationally, put them in place. Establish that value and those activities in your ministry organization."*

- E. **Remember:** They were to recall *how* and *why* God called them to be wholehearted and *what* He promised to do and to remember *how* they once responded in tender love with dedication (Acts 19). Our tendency is to forget, so we must be intentional about remembering the divine storyline. The enemy doesn't want us to remember God's narrative of our life and ministry.

*"Remember." They were to recall how God called them. I want you to stop for a second: how did God call you? Not just your salvation—that too, and that is awesome—how did He call you to be wholehearted? Some of you will go back five years ago, some ten, twenty, thirty, forty years. He visited you. Not necessarily by an angel or the audible voice, but He convinced you. And you said, "Yes, I was really convinced."*

*He would say, "Remember how you responded. You had a dedication. You did not care what it cost. You did not care about the risk. You did not care who was mad or glad. You said 'Yes.' I want you to remember that tender response. I want you to remember what I have promised you."*

*"Yeah, but, Lord, Your promises—sometimes there are such long delays."*

*Yes, that is why you need to remember—because there are delays in His leadership. But you have to remember, because if you do not remember, Satan will fill in the void of the narrative in the gaps. Satan will fill the gaps in with lies about how your life is wasted, about how God does not care and that it does not matter anyway.*

*You see, they were born in the great revival in Acts 19, which is actually the greatest revival in the Book of Acts. Some of us would think Jerusalem in Acts 1-6 was the big one, and it was a very big one; it was glorious. However, what happened in Ephesus, which is modern-day Turkey, had a far greater scope of impact and numbers of people in Acts 19 and 20. There is nothing greater in impact than what happened in Acts 19 and 20 in the city of Ephesus, which was a major city in Asia; it spread throughout all of Asia. They were on fire for God. He says here, "I want you to remember back in those days."*

*"Yeah, well, things have changed, and the money did not come through, and I did not end up as anointed as I thought, and leaders in the Church disappointed me, and I was mistreated..."*

*And that is how the Church is. Beloved, I want to tip you off as a pastor for forty years: that is how the Church is, so get over it. I gave up demanding to be treated right a long time ago because we are always going to have believers who will do something negative to us. So do not worry about it. Just say, "Okay! That is just how it is!" Get locked into His eyes and His testimony about your life. There are so many believers who say, "Yeah, but the Church..."*

*I say, "Get over that! It is going to get worse! There is going to be more betrayal, even when there is a greater revival."*

*Jesus said, "They will betray one another. They will be offended with one another. They will hate one another." That is not just the society. That will be those numbered among the faith, and some will fall away. Who knows?*

*I do not decide how on-fire I am going to be depending on how the ministry has treated me the last month, or two, or three, or four. I said, "Lord, I want to stand before You. They do not get any vote on what happens to me when I stand before You. You are the only one who has an opinion that will matter at that time." Now I care about what people think. I am not saying that I do not care what people think. It is just that I cannot live by their narrative. I have been betrayed, mistreated, lied to, manipulated, and those other tens words—put them on the list—and you have all had the same things—over and over again in forty years of ministry. I say, "I am not even, from the beginning, going to draw my narrative from that. I am drawing my narrative by remembering how You called me—what You said, what we are doing together—no matter how many setbacks there are in my life."*

1. The call to "remember" is one of the most emphasized exhortations in the Scripture with over 80 references—over 60 in the Old Testament and over 20 in the New Testament.

*Number one: The call to remember. This was surprising to me when I first saw this: it is one of the most emphasized exhortations in the whole of the Bible, over eighty times. There are not many things that we are commanded to do repeated eighty times in the Bible to do the same thing. It is to remember, to remember, to remember, because it is the tendency of our human frame to forget, even the most godly men and women. Our tendency is to forget. We have to remember on purpose. We have to stop, wait, talk to friends, rehearse the story again, say it again to God and to the people that you are close to over and over again, because if you do not remember God's narrative, the devil has a narrative to sell you. He will say, "Your life does not matter. It is not going anywhere; everyone treats you badly anyway; you are not making any impact; the Lord has already disregarded you and dismissed you." Those are lies! He has not!*

2. When we "remember," then it makes sense to walk out our kingdom commitments. When we "forget," then we lose sight of many things, become discouraged, and lose motivation.

*Number two: This is really practical. I will talk about this one personally. When I remember what He said, how He called me, and how I responded, it makes sense to be committed today. When I forget, it does not make sense to be committed today, so I get discouraged. I lose motivation. And I know how to get the motivation back: by remembering. I say, "Jesus, You are amazing! That is amazing insight!"*

*He could say, "Thank you. It will work."*

- F. **Hold fast:** To hold fast is to persevere long term in the lifestyle changes that we committed to as a result of watching, strengthening things, and remembering God's love and call on our life. We must hold fast in the face of overcoming stumbling blocks such as not being offended by God's delayed promises and provision, the mundaneness of the work, and being mistreated by people, etc.

*He says, "Now hold fast." Hold fast to what you see when you are watchful. Hold fast to what you strengthen as a leader by saying it, modeling it, and establishing it within your ministry. Those are the three things I said ten minutes ago. Stay with it! Do not quit! Keep the course. Don't do it for a year or two and give up – do it for ten years before you even reevaluate it.*

*I tell young people "Just go hard for ten years and do not figure out at year three that 'Well, I am not anointed yet.' Just stay with it!" Our culture is filled with these wrong ideas and un-renewed thinking. Just stay with what the word of God says and hold fast to it. And hold fast to remembering. Don't do it one weekend. Don't do it one summer at one retreat. Hold fast, and stay with it!*

- G. **Repent:** We make practical lifestyle changes in attitudes, speech, actions, and relationships—in the way and place that we spend our time and money—so that we follow through on our commitments. As we make these lifestyle choices, the seeds (our new decisions) will blossom in the coming days.

*I have already said this five times: make practical lifestyle changes so you can follow-through. Change some of the ways you spend time. Really change your schedule: these several hours a week we are going to shift those. The way I am spending ten or fifteen percent of my money, I am going to shift that. Some of the ways I am talking, some of the relationships I am in, I am going to shift one or two of those. I might readjust those. Some of the places I go—I am going to get rid of one or two of those. Make some lifestyle changes so that the decisions of watching, strengthening, and remembering what you are holding on to will take root and bud and blossom over time.*

- H. **I will come upon you:** Jesus comes to His people three ways—1) He comes to rapture His people when He returns to earth. 2) He sends angels to come for us at the time of our death. 3) He comes to us during this life at strategic times to evaluate our lives and ministries in a way that has real consequences—He comes at key seasons to promote, prune, or discipline us (Rev. 2:5, 16, 25).

<sup>5</sup>*...repent...or else **I will come to you quickly** [Ephesus] and **remove your lampstand**... (Rev. 2:5)*

<sup>16</sup>*Repent, or else **I will come to you quickly** [Pergamos] and will fight against **them**... (Rev. 2:16)*

<sup>24</sup>*Now to you...and to the rest in **Thyatira**...<sup>25</sup>**Hold fast what you have till I come**. (Rev. 2:24-25)*

*He says, "I am going to come to you." Biblically, the Lord comes to His people in three ways, and He is talking about the third way. He comes to us at the Second Coming, obviously, but that is not what He means right here. He comes to us in a sense the day we die. I mean, we do go to Him, but the point is we come together: I have come to you as in, the angels under His leadership have brought you home. He has come to you; the Lord has come to take you home.*

*That is not what He is talking about. He is talking about the third one: He comes to us during our life in those strategic seasons. One of the main parables on this would be in Luke 12:43-48 where He says, "When the master of the house comes at an hour you do not know." Then He assigns the leaders that are doing wrong to one thing, and He blesses the leaders that are doing what is right. He comes at key moments in our life, again, maybe every two, three, four or five years, ten years. I do not know. There is no time set; however, it is not every day or every week that He is talking about. He draws near to evaluate. Now, God sees everything.*

However He says through the scriptures a number of times, "I am coming near to you to see what you are doing."

"Well, Lord, You already see it. What do you mean?" It is a figure of speech that He is talking about coming to evaluate.

And what He does when He comes is that He is going to promote in that season. That does not necessarily mean you are going to become rich and famous, but He is going to promote you in the Spirit. That does not always mean people can tell. Some people say, "Promote! Oh!" thinking more people applaud. Well, you might end up in jail, but you will be more anointed and more obedient. You might be martyred, but you got promoted. And so I am not saying that your life will be easier when you are promoted, though it might be. I do not know, but your life in the Spirit will be stronger.

Or you will be pruned. Pruned is not bad. Pruned is not the same as disciplined. In John 15:2, Jesus said, "Every tree that bears fruit," meaning they are doing good, "the Father prunes it." Meaning He removes things to focus that tree so that it bears more fruit. Pruning is good. We do not like it in the flesh, but it is not divine discipline. It is not negative. The Lord has times where He prunes us. He removes things which we do not have the insight or resolve to remove ourselves, but if we do not remove them we will not have more fruit. And the Lord says, "I love you. Fruit is bursting forth. I am going to take some things away. Just trust Me. We are on the same team. I love you! I am not disciplining you. I am pruning you because I want much more fruit coming." However, in the Western culture we just think that everything is about growth, more money, more fame, more ease, more friends, more, more, more, more! And the Lord says "No, more obedience, larger response from your heart, more encounter with Me—that is what I am after and those other things will have their place."

- I. **As a thief:** Jesus is not a thief but compared His coming to His people as being "as a thief." This is a proverbial expression that indicates He comes at *unexpected times* and in ways that may result in *suffering loss that could have avoided* by those cultivating a lifestyle of watching.

<sup>3</sup>"...**if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.**" (Rev. 3:3)

This is interesting. He says "I am going to come like a thief." We find that analogy several times in the New Testament, that Jesus "comes like a thief." Jesus is not a thief, but He compares His coming to a thief, and there are two ways, maybe more, that He comes like a thief. This is a proverbial expression, a proverb, of sorts; when He comes like a thief, He comes unexpectedly. Some of you in this room undoubtedly—I am not speaking prophetically knowingly; I might be but I do not know I am—you are in a season where He is coming to you right now. He has been for the last few months, evaluating whether to promote you, prune you, or discipline you. A number of you are not in that season right now, but you will be in a year or two or five or who knows. He says, "I am going to come unexpectedly. You will not know when."

And number two, He comes in a way—catch this—He comes in a way that will result in suffering loss, a loss that could have been avoided if you had been watching. He might say, "Sometimes when I come there are setbacks, but those setbacks did not need to happen if you had been watching. Now even under My leadership they are going to happen. It is not what I wanted, but if you were watching, that setback would not have happened."

- J. The thief metaphor is used often in relationship to Jesus' second coming or His coming to evaluate our lives (Mt. 24:43; Lk. 12:39; 1 Thes. 5:2, 4; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3; 16:14-15).

1. A thief can be stopped from robbing simply by watching. The lack of watching is what allows a thief to bring loss to one's life because the thief comes unannounced.

*A thief can be stopped simply by watching. If the head of the house is watching, the thief says, "No, I am not going there. I am going to the other place." Watching stops the thief. Lack of watching spiritually speaking puts us into a position where we are open to suffering loss spiritually. He says, in effect, "I do not want to come to you and initiate setback. That is not why I want to come, but I will do it that way because I am not going to force you to respond to Me." Now this is not really popular preaching, but it is biblical preaching.*

2. The Lord is always present and watching. However, He does not want us to know when He comes to evaluate—to promote, prune, or discipline us—because He wants us to cultivate a lifestyle of responding to Him in love and staying engaged with Him with holy anticipation.

*Why does He come to evaluate in these key moments and seasons? Again, He is always watching, but every so many years—I do not know it is not the same for any one person—He comes. He evaluates others maybe more regularly, I do not know. I am talking about evaluating in order to make major, consequential results because of that season of evaluation where your life changes. You look back ten years later, and that was a cross or a V in the road where you went this way or that way. And you can say, "Wow, a lot of things changed back then, okay!"*

*It is those seasons, I ask Him "Lord, why won't You just tell us when?" I mean, this is my version. He wants us to cultivate a lifestyle of responding to Him in love.*

*He might say, "I want you engaged with Me with holy anticipation. You don't know when I am going to come in that season. Stay engaged in love and with holy anticipation, and you will not go wrong."*

*"Yeah, well, if I am just lazy for a few years, then the month before You come, why don't You just stir me up so that I will get going hard again?"*

*"No, no, no, we are not doing it that way. I am doing it without telling you because I want you engaged in love with Me. I want the anticipation it might be anytime." So you do not know when those seasons of promotion or discipline or pruning come.*

- K. He associated their *name* with their actions (3:1, 4) giving insight into how He used "name" in 3:5.

***4"You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments..." (Rev. 3:4)***

*This is interesting. He says, "You have a few names in Sardis who have not defiled their garments." The point I want make here—there are a number of points but I am just going to make one or two—is there can be a carnal ministry or a spiritually dull ministry with some really on-fire people that the Lord put in their midst. Sometimes God causes these burning coals to be in the midst of sleepy ministries; that is His leadership and His business.*

*However, here is a point I want you to see in Revelation 3:1 and here again in verse 4. He said, "You have a name that you are alive, but you are not." In other words, He associated their name with their actions and their activities and their lifestyle. Here in verse 4 He does the same thing, "Your name is such," associating it with their activities and their lifestyle.*

*The reason it matters is because in verse 5 He is going to talk about their name. He said, "I am going to confess your name," but remember chapter 3:1 and 4 where He associated a person's name with their lifestyle, their activities, their choices. So when He says, "I am going to speak your name," He is going to talk about your activities, your lifestyle, your choices. He is not going to just read off a list of names. To tell someone's name is to talk about their activities, their attitudes and their lifestyle. Jesus made that clear in verse 1 and verse 4 so*

that when we read about our name being declared before God in verse 5 we know that it is more than Jesus just reading down a list of names. He is telling the story of their activities, lifestyle, and choices. That is the point I wanted to make here in verse 1 and verse 4 about the name.

## V. PROMISE FOR OVERCOMERS: THREE PROMISES

Now He gives three promises. We are going to spend just a couple minutes on this, and then we are going to pray for our Brazilian family. We are going to have them come up here so we can get around them and pray in the Spirit over them and love on them. We are so grateful they are here!

- A. Jesus promised three rewards for any would overcome spiritual deadness by sustaining a life of watching— i.e., our clothing and how our name reflects our obedience in this life.

<sup>5</sup>***“He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father and...His angels.” (Rev. 3:5)***

Verse 5, He says, “If you will overcome”—meaning if you will watch, strengthen, remember, and hold fast to it, if you stick with it, and you repent and change your lifestyle—those are the five things from verse 2—if you will do those five things, in time that lethargy, that spiritual dullness, that spiritual deadness will lift, I promise you. —“I am going to give you three things in the age to come.” Now each of these three has some application in this age—at least I am assuming that most of them do; I do not know about all—most of the eternal rewards in the age to come have some application in our spiritual life in this age in a partial way. He says, number one, “I am going to clothe you in white garments.” Number two, “I am not going to blot out your name,” and He is talking much more than taking your name off the list. He says, number three, “And I am going to talk about your name. That is, I am going to tell your story to the Father and the angels.”

- B. ***He who overcomes***: Jesus highlighted three eternal rewards for those who overcome being spiritually dead or asleep by watching, strengthening, remembering, holding fast, and repenting.

- C. ***Clothed in white garments***: These garments are not the same as the free gift of righteousness. Justification is a gift based on Jesus' worthiness, not ours, and is received by faith (Eph. 2:8-9). Our garments in the age to come are related to godly choices in this age (Rev. 19:8). Scripture mentions garments in the age to come (Rev. 3:4-5, 18; 16:15; 19:7-8; cf. 1 Jn. 2:28; 2 Jn. 7-8).

<sup>8</sup>***And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen [worn at the Marriage Supper] is the righteous acts of the saints. (Rev. 19:8)***

The white garments here are not the same as the free gift of righteousness that every believer has been given. These garments are for people who overcome these things. These people that He is correcting were not unbelievers. They were true believers, but they were spiritually asleep and dull, and it is not good. They do have the free gift that is the robe of righteousness.

I believe there are many different garments. Now, this may be a new idea to you. There are many different garments in my strong opinion, and I have taught a session or two on this. There is more about garments in the age to come than you might imagine in the Bible. Some people imagine that, when we get saved, everybody for billions of years wears the same white t-shirt gown their whole life, billions of years. Jesus has this celestial city of diamonds, and the water of life flowing out of the throne, and the tree of life. Everything is magnificent, but He forgot the clothing thing. No, He did not. You will have a wardrobe that will blow your mind. You are going to have more than the standard white t-shirt gown I promise you. However, your garments will reflect your

choices in this age, like right here in Revelation 19. When you make choices, even if nobody knows about them, where you have resisted temptation, and the biggest temptation in my opinion in the Body of Christ is the temptation to quit pressing into God wholeheartedly. It is not immorality. It is not money. It is not bitterness. Those are real temptations, but the temptation to draw back from pressing in wholeheartedly is the number one temptation. If you resist that, you will wear your love forever; your garments will reflect it. We will all have different garments.

1. The word, *white*, speaks of the brightness of their heavenly garments (Mt. 17:2; Rev. 15:6).

***<sup>6</sup>Clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands. (Rev. 15:6)***

*I already mentioned the word used here for white means bright and shining, and there are more verses that say this using the same word for white. These are supernatural, heavenly garments that He is talking about.*

2. I believe that there are many different heavenly garments. Our garments will be as diverse as the occasions in which we participate. Each occasion requires appropriate garments. For example, a king wears different clothing depending on the occasion—such as official state banquets, military functions, weddings, funerals, at home, when hunting, etc.

*I believe our garments will be as diverse as every occasion is, just like on the earth. Like on the earth, for example, a king or a president will wear one set of clothing at home or one type of clothing. They will wear another type of clothing at a state banquet. They will wear another type of clothing at a military function where they might wear their war medals. They will wear another type when they are dressing casually for recreation. They will wear another set of clothing when they go to a funeral or a wedding.*

*Every occasion has a different dress code, and in the age to come, given the diversity and creativity of Jesus, there will be so many garments. My idea is that the design, the fabric, the coloring, the fragrance of the garments will all be different, all diverse. And the Lord will say, as it were, “You are wearing the way that you loved Me, and what you are wearing is Me showing you how I felt about the way you loved Me in this age.”*

*Beloved, I have one thing to say: it is worth it to go all of the way! If the money breakthrough does not come like we thought or the power breakthrough, the ministry breakthrough, the relationship breakthrough, the healing breakthrough—there are twenty breakthroughs that I want in many areas—but if they do not come, I am not negotiating my response to Jesus based on those breakthroughs. I want those breakthroughs, but I am not renegotiating whether I am in all the way if you treat me rightly.*

3. The priestly garments give insight into how God values garments and how they speak of spiritual things. God designed garments *to manifest His glory and beauty* (Ex. 28:2, 40). There were many different garments—robes, tunics, turbans, sashes, hats, etc. (Ex. 28:1-43).

***<sup>2</sup>You shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty...***

***<sup>4</sup>And these are the garments...a breastplate, an ephod, a robe, a skillfully woven tunic, a turban, and a sash...<sup>40</sup>make hats...for glory and beauty... (Ex. 28:2-4, 40)***

*Go into the Old Testament and look at Exodus 28 on your own. God said, as it were, “I designed garments for the priests,” and we are all going to be priests in the age to come. Well, we are priests now actually as born-again believers. Look what it says in Exodus 28:2: He designed garments “for glory and beauty.” That is in this age! How much more for the priests in the age to come? Then He repeats it again in verse 40. He gives all of these different types of garments and different elements of clothing and says that it is all for beauty and to manifest the glory of God through you.*

*Beloved, I cannot imagine what Jesus means by the "white garment," the supernatural, bright garments, many styles, types. You cannot even imagine! Just go all of the way, and you will not be disappointed with the garments that you get.*

4. I believe each believer will have a different measure of God's glory in their clothing, along with unique designs, fabrics, coloring, and fragrance to reflect their obedience in this age.

***<sup>41</sup>There is one glory of the sun...another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory. <sup>42</sup>So also is the resurrection of the dead. (1 Cor. 15:40-42)***

- D. ***I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life:*** A person's name before God is associated with their actions and honor. Most cities at that time had a city registrar which included a record of the conduct of its citizens—it included paying taxes, noble accomplishments, crimes committed, etc. The books in heaven contain vast information about our lives, including our words and deeds (Dan. 7:10; cf. Lk. 10:20; Phil. 4:3; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27).

*Jesus said, "I am not going to blot your name out." Again, a person's name is associate with their actions and honors. We saw that in verses 1 and 4 where Jesus said, "Your name," and then He described their actions and their lifestyle choices. This was a very familiar idea. Most cities in the ancient world had a city registrar where they had a complete record of the conduct of their citizens. They recorded how much you paid in taxes, how much money you made, your noble accomplishments, crimes committed. They were in the city register, and this was a very well-known idea. Jesus is saying, "We have those books in heaven, far more detailed than the ones you are familiar with here in Sardis."*

*In Malachi 3:16, we learn there are books of remembrance written capturing our conversations about the Lord! When you are sharing with people, and you are inspiring one another, the angels write down the conversations in the book! Like, what? Some of you are going to have recall of conversations you had twenty years ago when you were encouraging somebody, speaking the Lord's heart. I do not mean just some awesome prophetic moment, but when you were just speaking to them about going hard for God. That is going to be recorded.*

1. ***Principle:*** Ezekiel taught that God "forgets" the good that one does if they turn from Him (Ezek. 3:20; 18:24; 33:13, 20). Jesus promised not to blot out the "record of remembrance" of their righteous deeds if they repent from their spiritual deadness and walk in diligence.

***<sup>24</sup>When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity...all the righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered... (Ezek. 18:24)***

*Three times in Ezekiel it says this, and there are a number of other places, too. However this is a new idea to some believers. He says in Ezekiel 18:24, "When a righteous man"—who has been walking with God for some years—"turns from his righteousness," and he decides the next ten years, which are the final ten years of his life, to live in compromise, God says, in effect, "All the righteousness he did before then, I will not remember it. I will release it."*

*We think, "What? What?" I am not talking about a guy who stumbles in an area. I am talking about many believers who go hard ten or twenty years, and then the final ten or twenty years they think, "You know what? That did not get me anywhere really, and I do not really feel His presence, and the Church is pretty boring. I do not know..." and they drift. Now drifting is one thing, but here in Ezekiel he is talking about a little bit more than that. They just settle into a lifestyle of disobedience, and the Lord says, "I will forget. I will blot out of the book all that you did." That is what I believe He is talking about. I do not think He is talking about people's*

names in heaven or in hell. He is saying, "I am going to forget the memory of what you did, what your name represents, your deeds."

2. Eternal rewards, crowns, and potential full rewards can be lost.

**<sup>11</sup>I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. (Rev. 3:11)**

*This is an idea that some are not familiar with, but it is from the lips of Jesus and Paul and John the apostle. Did you know that eternal rewards can be lost? Jesus said, "Hold fast so nobody steals your crown." Did you know that people can steal your crown? Do you know how this guy can steal your crown? He seduces you with lies, and you buy into the lifestyle that he is promoting, and he will steal your crown from you. Pay attention to whom you are listening to on the internet, because if they are not speaking the truth, and you get emboldened in that area and you follow it, and it is not true, you will lose your crown. He says, "You can lose your crown." These are the words of Jesus.*

**<sup>15</sup>If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he will be saved... (1 Cor. 3:14-15)**

*Paul talked about it in 1 Corinthians 3:15. He said that you can suffer loss on the last day. This is loss of rewards that would have been yours if you had stayed steady. Look what John says, "Watch out that you do not lose what you worked for, but that you may end up with full reward." You can lose what you have worked for in the sense of walking for years in obedience, but then in those final five, ten or fifteen years, you can lose them.*

*People ask, "Well, where is that in the Bible?" Okay, Revelation 3:11. I am quoting it right here, but there are other passages like it. This is real. This is really about a relationship with a real Bridegroom King who really cares about us responding to Him. He is not stamping our name on a passport: "In heaven! In hell! Stamp!" He would say, "No, this is relational to the end, and then forever it is relational."*

- E. ***I will confess his name before My Father:*** This is not a reference to being saved but to the reward of Jesus telling the story of your love and dedication to the Father many times throughout eternity.

*When He says He will confess their name before His Father, He is saying, "I will tell your story before the Father. Your name—I will tell the story of your devotion to Me." And He will do it over and over and over. When He says, "Well done," it is not like the one time you will have one moment with Jesus, and you lived fifty years for the Lord, and He is going to say, "Bill, well done! Next!" No, Jesus is the most generous, articulate, informed human being that ever walked the earth. He is gushing with love. He is not going to say, "Well done, next!" He is going to say, "Ohhhh, Father," and the Father is going to say, "I know. Just tell me. I love it when You tell Me about Bill"*

*"Father, when he was sixteen years old...and when he was twenty-four...and then when he was thirty, he almost quit he had so many setbacks, but he would not quit because he loved Me!"*

*"Tell Me again about Bill."*

*And Bill is saying "Gee, I did not even know that You knew that, Lord!"*

*Amen, let's stand.*

*Lord here we are before You; we love You. We love You Lord.*