

Session 12: Why We Must Understand the Seven Churches of Revelation

Tonight, we are going to look at Revelation chapter two through three. This is a passage of Scripture that is often neglected, but we neglect it at great peril because it is what Jesus defines as necessary for His people to reach the highest ideals that are in His heart for the Church in this age.

REVIEW: MESSAGE OF THE BOOK OF REVEALTION

The book of Revelation, the theme of it, is the second coming of Christ. The second coming of Christ, in the most positive sense, truly is the perfect storm. It is not a storm against the righteous. The devil will strike the righteous, but he will not prevail. It is a storm against the Antichrist, and his worldwide empire. It is a perfect storm against Satan, his dominion on the earth, and his time on the earth.

God is raising up an arc. He is raising up a people all over the earth who dwell together in the secret place on His terms. It is a Psalm 21 arc. There will be safety for the people of God, spiritually and physically. There will be power, the miracles in the book of Acts, and the miracles in the book of Exodus. Now, think of Exodus with Moses. Think of the book of Acts with the twelve apostles. The miracles of Acts, the miracles of Exodus are going to be combined, and multiplied on a global level, and then, they will be loosed, and released through the end-time praying Church. That is what the Great Tribulation is. When I say, “the miracles released,” people normally think, “wow,” but they think of the miracles in a vacuum. The book of Revelation is mostly about the miracles of Moses and the miracles in the book of Acts multiplied striking the kingdom of darkness, loosed by the praying Church.

So the storm is mounting, as the prayer movement gets more mature, the storm will become more intense. The prayer movement is what is releasing the storm. The storm—the activity from heaven striking against the kingdom of darkness, and the prayer movement on the earth—are running parallel in connection, and in relationship with one another.

Revelation chapter two to three is the place, it is the human context, Jesus described it where the saints gather on His terms, according to His agenda, and they mature, so they can be entrusted with power to release the judgments in the book of Revelation, as well as the revival, and the book of Revelation. It is a twofold thing that is happening. So Revelation chapter two to three, I believe, is one of the key passages for the prayer movement, and the prophetic movement to mature.

What is happening all around the world is the prayer movement is trying to mature, and gain momentum, as is the prophetic movement separated from a context of a people who dwell according to Revelation chapter one, two and three. This is the hiding place. This is the ark. This is Noah's ark in the eschatological sense, or the end-time sense. This is where the shadow of the Lord, the hiding place of the Lord is—in this dwelling together near Him, in unity with Him, and unity with one another on His terms.

The prayer movement, and the prophetic movement ultimately will be one movement, but now they are typically very different personalities, and different ministries with different focus, but that is all going to come together. Rarely, do I find any of them focused on Revelation chapter two and three. That is the context for the maturity of these movements to take place. First, we will do a little review from the message earlier on Revelation chapter one, and the book of Revelation, I mean the message of it.

THE REVELATION OF JESUS—HIS HEART, POWER AND LEADERSHIP

Revelation 1:1, the whole book is called the unveiling of Jesus. The whole book, the twenty-two chapters is titled by the Holy Spirit, “The Revelation,” or the unveiling of this man's heart, this man's power, and this man's action plan to cleanse the planet of evil. That is what the book of Revelation is. It is insight into a man's heart. Now, this man is fully God, but He is also fully man.

The mystery of the two will be fully manifest like no time in history, or it will come to the highest manifestation up to that point in history, is a better way to say it in those final years before the Lord returns. Then, the Lord Himself is appearing, and then this book gives us insight into that man's mind. What His action plan is? Lord, how are You going to change the planet? What is this perfect storm going to be like? How are we going to be a part of releasing it? He says, “good. You want

to know My heart, My plans, you want to know My power, study it. I gave it to you personally. It is called the book of Revelation. It is the unveiling of Jesus.”

THE THEME OF REVELATION IS JESUS RETURNING TO TAKE LEADERSHIP

Revelation 1:7, the theme of the book is He is coming. He is coming. He is coming to take leadership of the planet. He is coming to drive all the evil government off the planet, and to establish love and righteousness through His power, through His grace, and that is what the Great Tribulation is about. That is what the end-time revival is about is the great transition to drive evil off the planet. The victory that Jesus won on the cross two thousand years ago over Satan, complete victory is going to be openly manifest on the earth, but it is going to be released through the praying Church.

It is not a strange idea that God’s power was released through Moses in prayer. That is a normal idea. It is not a strange idea that the book of Acts was the acts of the Holy Spirit released through men and women who prayed. It is a strange idea that the miracles of Acts, and the miracles of Exodus, which is the Book of Revelation, would be released in the same way that Acts and Exodus are released—through people under the leadership of Jesus crying out, and releasing the things that He wants released.

He is coming, and it is a perfect storm, but it is going to leave the world in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Jesus will only come. I want to say this strongly. He will only come in context to a prepared Bride. In Revelation 19:7, the Bride is prepared. We must understand the message to the seven churches in Revelation chapter two to three is because it is the safety place, it is the ark. It is the Noah’s Ark in the time of the storm. It is the place of power, the place of safety, the place of intimacy. We must be prepared. The Lord has done everything to give us insight, but we have to give ourselves to that which He has given us. We have to study this. We have to ask for insight. We have to give ourselves to these portions of the Scripture.

JESUS WILL ONLY COME IN CONTEXT TO A PREPARED BRIDE

Anyway, the Lord is not coming any minute. I know many preachers say it. It is just absolutely not true. He is coming for a prepared Bride, and, beloved, it does not take much discernment at all to look at the Body of Christ, not just in the West,

but in the whole world, and say we are not a prepared Bride in sync with the Holy Spirit entrusted with “greater works than these” (Jn. 14:12).

So, Revelation chapter two through three is the place where the Lord connects us to His Word, to His character, to His heart, intimacy, righteousness, meekness and wisdom. It is the place that we get connected to Him. We get connected together. It is not a one-man show. It is the whole Body of Christ moving in the Psalm 91 anointing which is the Revelation chapter two through three context on the earth. It is critical. It is an issue of life and death to get this clearly. The anointing that He is going to release is the Matthew 18:19 binding and loosing. Whatever you bind, will be bound, whatever you loose, will be loosed. There is going to be an anointing to bring this to fullness. The anointing to bind and loose is the same thing as John 14:12, the “greater works than these.”

Now, we have prayed that prayer for years, two thousand years, the saints have said, “Lord what about this?” It is literal. It is real. We have had little tokens of it, important tokens through history, but, beloved, the “greater works than these” are really going to happen before the Lord returns (Jn. 14:12). It is the miracles of Acts, the miracles of Exodus as described in the Book of Revelation loosed through the praying Church. It is “greater works than these” (Jn. 14:12). It is the anointing to bind and loose. It is the Great Tribulation released by the praying Church who is a prepared Bride, who is doing it for all of the right reasons, doing it for love—that love would be established on the planet, and forever we will dwell in His presence. The end of the book of Revelation as we said last night is the Spirit and the Bride says “come” (Rev 22:17).

The Church is not just suddenly gone. The Church—Jesus comes in answer to global concerts of prayers—a global prayer movement. Jesus is not coming in a vacuum. He is coming in a continuum. He is coming in answer to a global cry by a prepared Bride that is on the earth.

There is a continuum. It is not a sudden vacuum. It is a building of a scenario, there is a crescendo that is building throughout the book of Revelation. It ends with the eye of the storm is the glory Himself, the man Christ Jesus, fully God and fully man. He is not coming until we know who He is: the Bridegroom King, until we know who we are: a prepared Bride, until we are in unity confronting darkness together because He does not want to come take over the planet as an end in itself, by Himself.

JESUS WANTS TO OPERATE WITH HIS PEOPLE, NOT IN SPITE OF HIS PEOPLE

He wants to do it as an expression of His Bride and Bridegroom relationship with the redeemed. He wants to do it with us like He did it with Moses, like He did it in the book of Acts with His people, not in spite of His people. The Lord says, “Come.”

We say, “Lord come.”

He says, “No. I cannot. You are not ready. I do not mean not ready to be raptured. You are not ready to be entrusted with the anointing to loose the judgments of the books of Exodus. You are not ready to loose the anointing in the Book of Acts. You are not ready to loose the Great Tribulation. You do not even know about it. You do not know why I want to do it. You do not know what I feel about it. You do not know how important it is. You do not know how essential humility, righteousness, and intimacy is to My heart. That is the only context in which I will release this and you are not ready. You are not ready to release the Great Tribulation upon the powers of darkness, and it must be according to My plan and a continuum, a purpose that is unfolding for 2000 years, even before, but it is building in a crescendo, in the final decades before I return.”

THE PRAYERS OF THE SAINTS ASCEND AND FIRE COMES TO THE EARTH

Look in Isaiah, Revelation 4, I mean Revelation 8:4: the prayers of the saints ascend, and what happens? The fire falls on the cities of the earth. Beloved, does the prayer movement release the fire, or stop the fire? As we said last night, it is both. Revelation 8:4, the prayers of the saints ascend, and the answer is the fire of God is released. It is the anointing to operate in binding, and loosing as well as, the greater works than these, at that level, at that place. It is expressed in the Great Tribulation judgments, and in the great harvest where they are coming from. All nations, tribes and tongues, they are coming in power to the Lamb of God. I am talking about in this age, they are coming in power, and the harvest is coming in before the second coming, but it is going to be the fruit of a praying, prophetic church.

Lord, entrust us with the greater works than these power. The Lord says, “If I trust you with that power, you would be able to call fire down from heaven, and when

James and John touched a little power, they went back in Luke 9:55, and they wanted to call fire down from heaven because they had a wrong spirit. If I give you that kind of anointing, and your spirit is wrong, you will use the power for all the wrong reasons. I am not going to do it.”

There is only one reason, or there is a primary reason is a better way to say it, that God is giving the Church this anointing, this Revelation chapter two to three Church. It is in order to establish meekness, righteousness, and truth on the earth. Psalm 45:3 talks about the Great Tribulation. Jesus goes forth to establish meekness, righteousness, and truth. In Psalm 45:3m it is called love. He looked at John in Luke 9:55, He said (paraphrased): “you do not know what kind of spirit you have. You want the power to loose fire, so you can establish your own agenda? No John.”

THE CHURCH JESUS IS RETURNING FOR

It is sixty years later, and John sees an anointing to release fire on the earth entrusted to the people of God, but the saints are dwelling together according to Revelation two to three. This is not the apostle giving teaching about the Church which is good. It is anointed. It is from the Holy Spirit. This is Jesus Himself describing the Church that He is coming back for.

I tell you I love these chapters. I do not get them. I mean I stare at them. I say, “Lord I only get whispers.”

He says, “Stay with it. You will get more, stay with it.”

I am not doing it. I mean a little bit. I am reaching for it, stay with it. I mean IHOP we are not very far, stay with it. Stay locked in. “This is the Church after My heart I am after, Revelation chapters two through three. It is the one I described. It is the one where the people will be safe, Psalm 91, in the ark like Noah, in the time of the storm. It is the place where I can entrust power to them, and they will not use it in the wrong spirit.”

REVELATION ONE IS THE CLEAREST PICTURE OF HIS MAJESTY

Revelation chapter one, Jesus gives the clearest picture of who He is in the whole Bible. There is no chapter of the Bible where He says more with greater depth, clarity, and precision about Himself than Revelation chapters one, two and three. He gives the clearest picture of what He wants, of the preparation necessary to operate in the anointing to bind and loose the Great Tribulation, and the great

revival. That is the place that describes. I mean this is the chapter that describes what He wants. It is the clearest description.

REVELATION CHAPTER TWO TO THREE: PICTURE OF THE CHURCH

The letter to the seven churches— it is magnificent what is in Revelation chapter two through three— about what is on God’s heart, what is His intention to build the Church as the preparation, and the context to loose the “greater works than these” anointing (Jn, 14:12). Again, bind and loose: He is loosing—the end-time Church will loose the revival, bind darkness, loose the judgment, and bind the plans of the evil one. So, we are binding and loosing on both sides.

I want to encourage you to dive into Revelation chapter two to three. I am at the beginning of the beginning, but I am exhilarated in my spirit over where this is going in Jesus’ mind. I read it, and I say, “Lord, You have a lot more thoughts about these chapters.”

He responds, “Yes I do.” I did not hear the conversation, but I imagine it was: “Yes, a lot more thoughts. I gave you hints. If you have a hungry heart, you follow these passages, I will speak to you, and I will unfold what is in My heart in these two chapters.”

Again, I call the book of Revelation, the eschatological book of Acts.

Eschatological means the end-times, the study of the end-times. Moses had his book of Acts in Exodus. The apostles had their book of Acts. There is another book of Acts that is in God’s plan before the second coming that is going to combine the miracles of Moses and the apostles on a global level, multiplied, and combined on a global level. These seven letters show what kind of Church, Jesus is building. They show what His agenda is. They show how He defines love. They show what He calls a relevant ministry, and a relevant church. I am not trying to be mean, or arrogant, or have a wrong spirit, but there is this tremendous preoccupation with relevance.

I mean we want to be preoccupied with being relevant, but, beloved, being relevant is a whole lot more than cool technology, having coffee in your church services, and kind of having open dialogue about anything you think, and everybody accepts everybody. There is a whole lot more about being relevant than people getting together, and doing what comes to their mind. Revelation chapter two to three is

the clearest description of what relevance is in ministry. It is not really popular, but it is going to release the power of God. It is going to be in the place of safety, provision, and it is going to have the Lord's pleasure on it. The Lord is going to visit it in power, and I do not care how long it takes.

I have set my heart, and I challenge you to do the same. I am going to be with the people building a Church according to Revelation chapter two to three, a people dwelling in that—in those realities together. We are clearly not there, but we are aiming for it. That is all that we can do is aim, and pursue it. We have not grown very much, but we are going after it hard. When I look at the prayer movement and the prophetic movement today, I talk to leaders all around different places, as they come and go. We visit and just what I hear is being said, it is not just what is said. It is what is not said. The prayer movement though it is sincere, and very dear to God, it is so young. We are so young. It is the three-year old driving the tricycle, asking if they can run the government.

The Lord says, “No. Not yet.”

We think, “Do You not love me?”

God says, “Yes.”

We wonder, “then, we can use government terminology?”

God says, “No. Not yet. Not yet.” The prayer movement, the prophetic movement, the relevance movement, all the movements are mostly preoccupied with getting more money, having more influence in the ministry, or having life be more comfortable. That is mostly where the movements are going in different terminology. How to get more money, how to have a little more influence in your ministry, or your market place endeavor, and how to be more comfortable in the process.

When I read the book of Revelation, those are not the primary themes on God's heart. Those are in the Bible, but, beloved, we are entering a season of history where the Spirit is speaking to the Church to get the Church ready. What is relevant is Revelation chapters two and three. That is the gathering place that the Lord is going to visit. “I want a seeker sensitive church, I want a church that the Holy Spirit is seeking, the Father is seeking it, the Trinity seeks it, they visit it, and

they stay there. That is the kind of church I am looking for. I am looking for the Trinity, the Church that they want to be a part of in power.”

So people ask me, “What do you think about the seeker sensitive movement?” I totally appreciate figuring out ways to communicate better. I like that. I respond, “I am seeker sensitive. I am aiming at the Trinity to show up, and camp here long term, but I am serious. I am aiming for what the Lord said to Moses in Exodus 33:3. After the fire on the mountain, and the glory of God, Moses said, “I want You to go up with me. I will not go up if You do not go up.” We all know the passage, and the Lord said a very unusual thing. It is true today as it was then.

He said, “No, Moses I will not go up. I will send an angel.”

Moses said, “No. I want You to go up. I want You to go up.”

The Lord said “No. If I go up (Exodus 33:33), I will destroy a nation because if I go up with you, I come as Myself. I come in power, and I am zealous for righteousness. I am zealous for humility.” Our God is a humble God. His humility is eternal and infinite. He dwells in humility, and righteousness. He says, “If I come in your midst, I will be Myself. I will send an angel.”

Moses said “No.” You hear the verse quoted a lot, “Come up. Come up” (Rev. 4:1). When the Lord showed up a little bit in Acts chapter two, when they lied at the communion table, they were struck dead, Ananias and Sapphira. The reason the glory is not greater is because too much of the leadership, seriously, would be struck dead. In His mercy, He says, “You do not know who I am. I am not religious rhetoric. I am not a cool banner. I am not a title of a conference. I am God. I am serious about Myself. If I come up, you can have all the religious, Bible rhetoric, all that you want, but if He comes, probably a lot of us in this room would be in serious trouble. It would be trouble, if He came for us.”

He is saying, “You do not really want Me. You want things to be exciting. You want your ministry bigger. You want some more money. You want things to be more comfortable. You do not really want Me. You do not know Me.”

REVELATION ONE IS THE CLEAREST DESCRIPTION OF HIS MAJESTY

He gives us a sneak peek of who He is in Revelation chapter one. Then, He gives us a hint of what He wants—the dwelling that is a safe to dwell with; it is Revelation chapter two through three. That is the place where He dwells in safety with His people without consuming them. It is the place where He can release “the greater works than these” anointing, the binding and loosing anointing, the power of the end-time revival, and the Great Tribulation in the hands of the praying Church (Jn. 14:12).

He says, “You want Me? You really do?”

“Yes,” we respond. And we do. I love Him. He loves me, but I want to tell you this. He terrifies me. He might say, “You do not know the half of it young man.” He terrifies me. Oh, I feel His presence, and I get tender. I love Him, and He loves me. I love Him, and He loves me. Then, I remember it, and I say, “yes. Yes. Yes. Oh, I love You. Oh, I love You. But, You terrify me.”

THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE ONLY PLACE OF SAFETY

It is called the fear of the Lord. It is the only place that love is safe. My point is not to break down these two chapters. It is to give you a forty-five to fifty minute snapshot, so that you are hungry for these chapters. Again, I am not trying to sell a product. That is not what is on my mind. This is what this is about, stirring your interest to go after these two chapters. Okay, five ways to apply these seven letters.

HOW TO APPLY THE SEVEN LETTERS: FIVE WAYS INDIVIDUALLY

Number one: individually, obviously. There is a lot to say about each one of these.

CORPORATELY

Number two: corporately. The most power is in corporate gatherings with people who dwell together with the Lord on His terms. Psalm 132 describes “the dwelling place of the Lord.” The psalmist talks about the place where God dwells openly, in Psalm 132. In Psalm 133, it is the place where the commanded blessing is of unity. Psalm 132 and 133, it is the dwelling place of the Lord, but it is where the commanded blessing is. Beloved, there is a commanded blessing which is the “greater works than these” anointing, or the binding and loosing anointing (Jn 14:12). I am saying the same thing in different ways. That is the commanded blessing. If we live together in the Body of Christ on God’s terms, with His agenda

long term, I tell you there is a corporate, commanded blessing, and this is what we are going for.

Then, you have got to plug your ears up because there is a lot of noisy, clanging cymbals.

There is a lot of gonging sounds in the charismatic church that is totally other than the book of Revelation Jesus, the book of Revelation Church of Revelation chapters 2-3, and the book of Revelation version of the acts of the apostles, and prophets of the end-times.

You want to put your finger in your ear of all the gonging, clanging noises that are taking people off the message of what is on the Holy Spirit's mind. You kind of get if you are not careful, you think, "Well, I must be off because all the big guys are saying that it is about having more money, more influence, bigger ministry, so I must be off."

No. You are not off. Go for the book of Revelation. It is a whole lot more on God's heart. What I am hearing is just filling the atmosphere of the Body of Christ, the airwaves and the churches.

I say, "Lord, my ears are hurting."

He says, "You do not know half of what I feel. When I looked at the Laodicean Church which is the church in America, My stomach was so sick, I wanted to vomit them out of My mouth.

They are not repulsive to Me, as people. I love them, but they hurt My stomach, when I look at them because I have passion for them. I have so much potential I have called them to. I am committed to them. I have given all the resource, and they cannot keep a sustained gaze in My direction. It hurts My stomach. Revelation 3, that is called I will vomit them out of My mouth."

If you read Revelation chapter three wrongly, you might think He is repulsed at them. He is not. He is in pain over the lost opportunity of relationship, power, and impact on His terms. So I look at my little bit of pain, and the Lord says, "You do not have half the knowledge of what I feel when I look at the church in America. I love the Church in America, but let me say this, the Church in America is profoundly off the mark of the message of what the Holy Spirit is saying, profoundly." Not a little bit, profoundly. There are exceptions. Maybe there are a couple thousand ministries out there, I do not know. There are four hundred

thousand churches. There could be a couple thousand. There may be ten or twenty thousand that are on message. I do not know. The Lord does not tell me that kind of stuff, but I know that the vast majority is profoundly off the message of the Holy Spirit, and the Charismatic Church is leading the way of the confusion, and the clanging, gonging cymbals that they are calling love.

THE LETTERS WHO US THE KIND OF CHURCH JESUS IS BUILDING

The Lord wants it on His terms in His way corporately is the way to apply it. Historically, there really were seven churches, two thousand years ago. It was written to them universally. The Church—this message—seven message have been applied for two thousand years to every single church that will take it, but eschatologically, again that means the end-times, that is the primary thing on His heart when He gave this message. Yes. He loved all the other groups through history, but beloved there are clearly not, I do not know the number, but clearly less than one hundred thousand believers among those seven churches. There is a, they say, a billion believers, and I believe another billion coming into harvest. We are approaching the time with the greatest numbers, and the greatest crisis of history, and Jesus is preparing His people to dwell together with Him, and with one another in safety, in the joy of the Holy Spirit, and in power to loose His purposes, to bind and loose them.

This—these two chapters are for the Church in this hour. I have no confusion about it. It was for us. It was meant for us. Yes. It was meant for all of those other arenas too, but He was thinking of the billion each step of the way that He was speaking this. John might not have understood it, but He did. Jesus did. He was thinking of us, and our children, and grandchildren. Studying the seven letters, there are common elements as we go through the different commentators approach, it mostly the same way. They use different terminology, but it is mostly the same kind of approach, as again we have covered this in twelve sessions. In each one, we looked at the historical context. We looked at the city itself, and the Church.

HISTORICALLY

What was happening in that city just in the natural is because we want to know the challenges they were facing politically, economically, spiritually. When we understand the challenges they were facing, you can be sure those same challenges are happening in various parts around the Body of Christ. The Lord strategically selected these seven because He was prophetically putting His light on these seven to give a prophetic picture of what it means to be prepared. He is describing all that

was on His heart for the Church, and the events of the book of Revelation which would happen in their lifetime. It was not the Church of two thousand years ago. It is the Church of the days to come.

Jesus gave an affirmation to the churches. He told them what He valued in their progress. He told them what they were doing that touched His heart in a positive sense. He affirmed them. Then, He rebuked them. Beloved, correction is not rejection. I get corrected by the Lord regularly. I mean more than I am counting on you know. I am saying, “Ah. Ouch. I was not expecting that Lord.” It does not always come from the Holy Spirit. It comes often through His people, but it is true. It is true words, but correction is not rejection. The Lord says, “I am correcting you because I am committed to you.”

Beloved, we are in trouble when He stops correcting us. He tells them what they must not do. The main compromises that He pointed out, there were three main compromises. There are more, but three main ones, and they are all over the Church across the nations, and certainly in our America—in our nation.

Passivity is compromise number one. The neglect of the first commandment: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart.” Beloved, the Holy Spirit is going to restore the first commandment to first place in a prepared Bride. The reason that “the greater works than these anointing” can be released to the Bride is because the Bride loves Jesus more than she loves power and influence (Jn 14:12). So she is safe with power.

UNIVERSALLY

The first commandment is the safety of the end-time Church. It will be restored to first place, but the Lord told three of the churches you are passive. You have lost your love. You are dead. You are spiritually lethargic. That is very, very prevalent in the Church in America. Number two compromise was immorality. That is very prevalent. Number three was idolatry which is very prevalent because there are two different streams of thought about idolatry in the Bible. One says that it is witchcraft. It is demon worship that is going to emerge in a global way through the Antichrist system. Satan worship is going to grow so fast. We are going to be unmoved. We are going to be unmoved by it. Paul said it several times that idolatry is covetousness. He said it several times in the book of Ephesians and the book of Colossians. Covetousness is stifling the Church in America.

When I look at the Church in America, I look at passivity. The first commandment is way down the list. It is not first. Immorality is rife everywhere, and covetousness is probably the primary stronghold in the Church in America. Beloved, you can be poor, and be covetous. Covetousness is when our money is our primary concern, or right at the top of our list of concerns, and the dream of our heart is our money. It is the main dream of our heart, or right at the top. Some rich people are not covetous, and a lot of poor people are covetous. Those, the three problems that He addressed, He did more besides those. Those are the three to lock into. He says you have got to confront those.

So as we build our community, here those are three things. We spend a lot of time trying to get the first commandment first, confronting immorality, and talking openly about this issue called covetousness. Jesus wants these things out of the way in His relationship with His people. That is the only place there is safety.

Then, the next category of thoughts, a way to study these seven chapters, or these seven messages. He exhorts them to respond. He tells them what He wants. He says, “This is what I want you to do. I want you to do more of this. I am warning you do not let go of this and that.” The next thing He does, each of the seven churches He gives them a promise of eternal rewards. It is an incentive. Now, they are not all for the age to come. Some of the promises had to do with this age. Most of them were anchored in the age to come. Beloved, the theology, the doctrine, the reality of eternal rewards is not high in the sky. It is very important to Jesus in His teaching to the seven churches. As a matter of fact, the two places in the Bible where eternal rewards are taught, not just the most is Revelation chapter two through three. I have never calculated the numbers, so what I am saying might be off, but I would say ten times more than any other place is Matthew chapter five through seven, and Revelation chapter two through three, where Jesus is talking about the Church after His own heart, and of course, the Sermon on the Mount where He talks about the constitution of the kingdom. In both of those passages, the issue of eternal rewards is spoken over and over. I believe those two passages together probably are ten times the amount of any other teaching on eternal rewards.

ESCHATOLOGICALLY

In the “Sermon on the Mount,” Jesus’ eternal rewards are front and center. The Church that is going to release the power and the judgments, that is going to be a

prepared Bride is focused on eternal rewards. Much of the Church, again I am not saying this to be mean. I am saying it to stir you up. Most people I talk to have almost zero awareness of anything about eternal rewards, about the city, Revelation 21.

We are in the city, it is going to be awesome. You know gold, the pearls, stuff like that. You got anything else to say? No. It is going to be awesome. Beloved, Jesus gave profound detail, and the Body of Christ, I am talking about our nation right now. I am sure it is true around the world is almost totally illiterate about what Jesus said about these subjects. So do we just throw our hands up and quit?

No. I do not know much about those subjects, but I decided a little while back, I said “I am going to start learning if this is what You think is important, I do not get it, but if You think it is important, I am going to commit to get it.”

STUDYING THE SEVEN LETTERS: THE COMMON ELEMENTS IN THE LETTERS

Then in each of these, He gave revelation of Himself in a very specific way that would meet the need of the challenge of that Church. In Revelation chapters two through three, Jesus gave sixteen specific descriptions of His heart, and His glory, sixteen. He gave eighteen in Revelation chapter one, and He gave sixteen in Revelation chapter two.

A lot of them overlap. Ten of them overlap. I do not want to go through that right now. My real point is not to try to break it down because I do not know that much about them, but I tell you one thing. I am staring at them. Sometimes, like the deer in the headlights, I am staring, and I do not know that much about them, but I am committed to learn these things. I have got the eighteen, and the sixteen listed. I have got a few ideas, and a few Bible verses, got the throne of grace, and the Holy Spirit. I say, “Will You teach me Holy Spirit?”

The Holy Spirit’s answer would be “If you are interested for real, I will.” Without these descriptions, without revelation of this Jesus, we are going to end up getting off course. This is the Jesus who will motivate us, energize us, and direct us. Beloved, again, when I look at the Church in our nation, the eighteen descriptions of Revelation chapter one, the sixteen descriptions of Revelation chapter two through three: again, ten of them are combined together, here are twenty-four

distinct descriptions you hear about half of them in the Church, and half of them are almost entirely ignored.

But, we have got to encounter this Jesus for our heart to be enthralled in intimacy, to be protected, to be directed into truth, and to be energized in righteousness. This is the Jesus we need to encounter. I have just said, “Lord I do not know much, but I am going after it. Holy Spirit, will You give this to me?”

Again, I did not hear Him, but I know what He would say. It would be something like, “If you really want it, I will give you. I will break these down for you. I will give you more than you can handle, but it is going to take time. You are going to have to turn a few things off. You are going to have to dial a few things down for the Holy Spirit to talk to you about Jesus”.

The most neglected reality in the kingdom of God is God. If you were not really catching what was going on, you would think it was money, honor and comfort was the most important thing in the kingdom. It is righteousness, peace and joy. When I hear, I mean just all over everywhere through the, I check in here and there. The message being preached is about more comfort, more comfort, more honor, more money, more comfort, feel good while you are sinning. Feel good while you are sinning. Do not worry about it. You deserve a good day. Money, comfort everything bad will turn good. I promise you. Sow into this ministry. Comfort, money, money, comfort, honor, you, you, you, you. You hear almost everything in the Body of Christ, in the kingdom of God except for God.

THE MOST MISSING ELEMENT IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS GOD

The most missing element in the Charismatic Church is God not things, not cool meetings, not exciting stories. I am talking about God encountering the human heart, and us coming into agreement with Him. Now, again a few thousand groups out there, maybe ten or twenty thousand (I do not know) that are really locked in though there are a couple hundred thousand that are not. It is really none of my business to know who is, and who is not. All I know is I am not very impressed with where I am at, but I am troubled. I think if I am true shepherd, I should trouble you with what is troubling me about my life. I am troubling you because I care about you. I am not troubling you with that which you ought to be doing. I am troubling you with that which I ought to be doing. I am finding a hard time getting it, but I am going for it. I want you troubled as well. I am contending for your

greatness. If we get troubled about the right things, we end up great in God's sight, on His terms maybe not in man's sight.

HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR: FIVE IMPLICATIONS

This very powerful statement: "He who has an ear, let him hear"—five implications (Rev. 2:7). I am sure there are more, but these are just five that I think of. Now, first thing Jesus is the only One in the New Testament who said this, and gave this exhortation. That is the first thing. The second thing: it is the exhortation He gave the most. When you meet Jesus, if you get a chance to ask Him this question say, "Lord, what was the number one teaching You gave in the Bible, I mean with Your own lips?"

He would tell you, "I have the data. It is just simple math. He who has ears, let him hear, that is the teaching I emphasize the most." What does it mean? It means first it is an extremely important subject to His heart. Next, He is saying: "There is more than meets the eye.

I have only whispered. I have given you an acorn. I have given you a seed. There is a tree behind this truth if you want it. There is more than meets the eye. Next, it will take the help of the Holy Spirit to get it."

When He says, "He who has an ear, let him hear," He says, "you better cry out for help, as you will not get this on your own." It is interesting that in the book of Revelation, He says it eight- times, and in the gospels, He says it eight times, eight each time. Each of the eight times in the book of Revelation, each of them it is tied to eternity in eternal destiny. I mean it is an amazing thing. He says, "if you want to catch something, you really need to catch it, this realm of eternity. Study My eternal rewards every time." He gave one of the eternal rewards, He said, "there is more than meets the eye. It will take the Holy Spirit to get it. It is more important to Me, and to you than you might think it is."

So I look at these eternal rewards, there are twenty-two of them in Revelation chapter two to three, twenty-two distinct ones. I say, "Okay, he who has ears to hear." There is more than meets the eye. This is an acorn. There is a tree behind this. Yes. Okay. Okay. It is only a sentence. "I whispered, but there is a shout behind the whisper come after Me. Ask for help, stay with it. It is a truth that you will not naturally take hold of without help."

Beloved, I want to encourage you to take these eight statements in the book of Revelation, and the eight in the Gospels, and give yourselves to those statements. The end-time Church that operates in the greater works anointing, the prepared Bride that is binding and loosing the things that are on God's heart which is the great revival and the Great Tribulation. Those are the two things that He is releasing because, believe it or not, they are the same subject. They are two sides to one coin. It is called the great and the terrible day of the Lord. One side is great, one side is terrible, but it is the one day of the Lord. It is one subject. I say, "Lord I want to get locked into this stuff."

He responds, "Okay. You got a Bible, you got the Holy Spirit, you got the throne of grace come after Me. You have got twenty-four hours a day, go for it." We think, "Well, I have got a lot of things I do." You know the Body of Christ in America they just play so much, just preoccupied with playing and resting so afraid of burn out, just live continually in stress and strife in the fear of being burned out some day. Just throw away the fear. Just get rid of half the entertainment, maybe way more than half of the recreation, or the right to play. Give yourself to fasting and prayer, sustained hours in His presence.

God might say, "You could do it at least ten years before you come up for air, and you will figure out you had a lot more energy than you ever had being captured with your right to play." Well, that is how He talks to me. Again I am just telling you what He tells me. I am really that is how. I am not telling you how to do it. I am telling you about my anguish, and my affliction but my sustained hope to go in this direction. I am going for this with a company of people.

ONLY ONE VOTE COUNTS: GO AFTER THE MAN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD

A lot of folks will be mad, glad, and sad, but there is only One Man whose vote counts at the end of the day, and He is at the right hand of the Father right now. I really mean that. A lot of guys will get disturbed by this, but nobody gets to vote on where you are going, but One Man. I would be doing everything to live in His favor no matter who gets mad, and how big their database is and how much they say about you. Just go for the Man at the right hand of the Father.

THE ANGEL TO THE CHURCH: APOSTOLIC LEADERSHIP

He talks about the angel to the Church, which is very significant. The angel to the Church: the word "angel" is the word "messenger." In the Bible, many times Old

and New Testament, it is either an angelic messenger, or a human messenger, and I am convinced He is talking about a human messenger here. I can give you the reasons but we are not going to do that tonight.

So he is talking to the apostolic leader. He is, John, is giving the message, and here is what this apostolic leader, the apostolic leadership team, this is their mandate: to guard the message that is given to them.

Beloved, the way we guard the message is by proclaiming it—regularly, consistently and fearlessly—tenderly, yes, but, consistently, and fearlessly. We do not have to bolster up our courage to be bold, so we have to be mean along it to give ourselves courage to be bold. We can be tender and bold and consistent. This apostolic leader, their responsibility was not to allow the message to get distorted, or to get lost. I look at these seven messages, and I am saying “Lord I am a leader of a ministry.”

My mandate is to make sure the seven messages are proclaimed regularly, boldly, tenderly, and they are not diluted. I hear the sound across the nation, the whisper. I mean guys and girls really do it with all their heart. I means it is a shout to them, but I am saying it is not much. In terms of the whole Body of Christ, the numbers are small—some thousands. I do not know, but there is tens of thousands who are not going this direction. My point is not to figure out who is and who is not. That is a complete distraction. My point of even saying the small number, or a small percent is so you are not dismayed when people are mad at you—that is the only reason I am saying it.

My goal is not to get a little martyr complex team, and think, “hey, we have got the truth nobody else does. Let’s huddle in together and just kind of glory in being misunderstood.” No. I am only talking about what is not happening out there, so that you are bolstered up in your resolve to not get off course, and off message when the response comes back that you are off the wall. You say, “Well, I knew that. I knew that is what people think. That is okay. I am ready. I am girded for that. The apostolic messengers, their mandate is from heaven, so they cannot let their message get lost.

THE MESSENGERS ARE RESONSIBLE TO GUARD THEIR MESSAGE

Do not let the message get lost. A number of you are leaders. Others of you are going to be leaders. I tell you bury yourselves in Revelation chapter one, two and three. Proclaim it. Proclaim it. Proclaim it. Proclaim it. Be a faithful messenger.

Again, I look across America I rarely hear a hint of anything in the book of Revelation chapters one, two, and three coming from the pulpits. I do not have access to that many pulpits but I do hear a bunch of them, small percent but still a large number just a real small percent.

I say, “Lord, if this is even a token of where our nation is at, we are in big trouble.” I believe that we are without a turnaround, but there is a perfect storm being planned in heaven to invade darkness. Beloved, wherever darkness is in the church that storm is going to shake the church because the storm has come against darkness, and if it is in our midst, that storm will hit our midst to wake us up.

PROMISES TO OVERCOMERS: ETERNAL REWARDS

The issue of the promises, the eternal rewards: we cannot get ready for the end-time purposes of God without our hearts anchored in eternity. It is impossible. You think, “Well, how do I do it because there is hardly a whisper about eternity anywhere. How am I going to do it?” Well, we just have to figure out how to do it. The Holy Spirit will show us. Beloved, without being anchored in an eternal perspective, I mean with—I do not mean just a kind of “pie in the sky” eternity is the big time. I am talking about finding out what the Bible says about it in concrete material, detailed ways and feeding your spirit on it. Not just a vague sense of eternity is important because, beloved, if you do not think rightly of heaven, you will not think of heaven. There is enough in the Bible, but people do not spend time chewing on it, and feeding their spirit on it, but we have got to do that because we will never become “Sermon on the Mount” people, or the book of Revelation chapters two through three churches.

We will not have the courage, and the resolve to stay the course in meekness, and in righteousness without eternal perspective. We will not be able to bear persecution without eternal perspective. We will not understand the judgments of God without eternal perspective.

We have to understand them because we have got to make sense of them to the nations. If we are offended when we talk about them, the people will be offended too. We have got to make sense of where the judgments of God are removing everything that hinders love. His judgments and His love are one subject. His judgments are to remove everything that has hindered love, but you cannot get to that conviction without your feet anchored in the age to come.

WE MUST BE ANCHORED IN THE AGE TO COME

If you are anchored in this age, it does not make sense. It does not seem like love. You get your feet anchored in the age to come from the Bible. Again, I am not talking about just kind of a general “pie in the sky” thinking that it is going to be neat one day when it is all over. No. It is never going to be all over. It is just beginning. Beloved, you will hear the guys on the television. They interview them, and they say “Uh, the end of the world.” No. The end of the world will never happen. We believe in the end of the age, which the end of the age is an administration of how the earth is governed, it is going to change. There is a new age. We do not believe in the end of the world. So one guy asked me, he said, “Are you not really into the end of the world?”

I responded, “No, absolutely not. We are just six thousand years into it.” We have billions and billions of years. We are still at the basement levels of human history. We have not even gotten to four yet. We do not even have a million years behind us yet of human history. We have billions to go. No. The world is going to go on. We do not believe in the end of the world.

We believe in the end of the age, which means the administration of how the earth is governed. We have got to get anchored as to what is going to be happening in our real lives on the earth with physical, material bodies, resurrected. Resurrected, but beloved, you read John 21 when Jesus came in a resurrected body, He ate fish, they hugged Him, and they touched Him. We will have physical, material, resurrected, glorious bodies on a material, physical earth with the glory of God living forever with ministries, jobs and government.

We have got to get our feet anchored in that, and then we can bear all kinds of things in this administration in this age. It is not a small thing that Jesus emphasized eternity so many times.

The twenty-two eternal rewards, and again, I am not trying to draw attention to my stuff. Get it anywhere you can. I do not care where you get it, just get it.

MINISTRY TIME

Let us just end with that. Let us stand.

Lord, here we are. Here we are in Your presence. Here we are in Your presence. Lord, I want to be a people, I want to be among a people who are building a church after Your heart. Encountering You in Your glory (Rev. 1). I want to be a people

who are committed with understanding and discernment to Your plan to cleanse the planet in the book of Revelation.

Lord, I am in. In my weakness, in brokenness I am in. I am in. Help me. Be tender. Be nice, but I say “yes.” The Lord says “I will be tender. I will forgive you day by day. My tender mercies will be on you. I will help you, but you have to go after this. Some of you the Lord is calling you to be messengers of this kind of reality.” It is called the Word of God, but not the American culture Word of God. I am talking about the Bible Word of God, not the American culture version.

If you are saying in your heart, “I think I am called to this. I think I am called to really lock into this. Intimacy with God, Sermon on the Mount, Book of Revelation, getting the church prepared as a Bride: I want to be one of those messengers who guards this message. I do not lose it, through neglect, or water it down.

If you have a leadership calling on you, whether it is in the worship team, or children’s church, in the market place, it does not matter where the calling is. You are saying, “I want to make this a primary focus in my life in the next decade or all the rest of my life. You are saying it is a new thing, but I am going for it. I am going for it. If it is new to you in the last few months or so, I want you to come forward. Stand before the Lord and say, “Lord this is new but I am going for it.”

You are saying even now: “I know I am called to leadership somewhere in the market place or education, media, house of prayer whatever. This is new.” The last few months maybe it has been stirring or maybe just since you have been here. But you are talking to Him. I tell you. You make these decisions. You may not feel a lot right now when you make these decisions. You do not have to feel a lot right now. When you make these decisions, they will change the course of the next two or three decades of your life. They will change what you study, what you do with your free time, what you do with your fasting days, it will change what you do with your money, it will change the people you hang out with, the books you read, the prayer meetings you go to.

This decision will change your life massively whether you feel anything while you are making it. Now Holy Spirit, I ask You right now: Seal the heart. Seal the heart. We want to be Revelation chapter two to three church builders. We want to be church builders after Your own heart. We want to be church builders—apostolic,

eschatological, church builders, building churches according to the end-time pattern. We want to have a prayer movement, a prophetic movement. Lord, we want to be a part of the eschatological book of Acts. We want to see the Moses Book of Acts joined, but multiplied on a global level. We want to loose it in the prayer ministry, and in prophecy together with the whole Body of Christ in the earth.

Lord we want to do it.