

02-11-13b Revelation

We're ready now to resume our study in Revelation chapter 3, verse 18, continuing to look at the letter to the Laodicean church, who assume that they are rich, that they have become wealthy, and they have need of nothing. This is a sense of spiritual complacency based on physical well-being. To make the unfounded deduction that because circumstances are good, spiritual life is healthy, is a very dangerous and disappointing avenue to take.

And the Lord Jesus, because He loves us, will not leave us unaware. He will send us the information, and we have the choice of whether or not to change our minds, to become zealous, as is the case here. I mentioned during the break, I was hoping I could remember to mention it during the lesson, that if you think back to the titles that were forecast or predicted, prophesied for the Lord Jesus, and it's a part of the great Handel's Messiah music, what is His name called? What's the very first name? And His name shall be called what? Wonderful Counselor.

That's a single title, by the way. It's not two names. Wonderful Counselor is the first title in that list.

The Mighty God. The Lord Jesus is called the Everlasting Father, which is quite interesting, as well as the Prince of Peace. And to what is He the Father of? It's similar to what is at the beginning of this letter.

He is the beginning, or the architect, and the archetype, if you will, the first in the creation of God, the first of the creation, the origin, and the originator. And in that sense, a father. If you are the father of lies, you're the originator of lies.

That's the title of Satan. But the Lord Jesus is the Everlasting Father. He is the originator of everlasting life for us.

In that sense, He's the Father of everlasting life. You don't often find that appellation attached to the Lord Jesus because we have God the Father, who we learn a lot about through that name. But He is the Wonderful Counselor.

Not just a counselor, but a wonderful counselor, a great counselor. He counseled His own people. He counseled His generation when He came to this earth.

He counseled the nation of Israel. Here He is counseling, advising the Laodicean church, and by extension, counseling us. We've noted before, and I will say it again, that the letters here are not different aspects of history to be attached to a chronology or a time frame of different episodes or different phases in the early church or the middle church or the Reformation church, and that Laodicea is very often attached.

I was going to try to bring a printout. I've mentioned that many times, and I've never actually told

you what the standard understanding is of which church represents what era in history. If I can find it here, I'll read it to you.

I've purposely not ever committed it to memory because I don't think it's valid. But the idea of it being chronological goes back to the earliest days, and I'm scanning down through this, and I still can't figure it out. I can't even read it, much less remember it.

But you can find books. Most commentaries will say that each church is an early, intermediate, and final phase and that we're in the Laodicean age, but these churches describe aspects. There could be one area of our life where we're like the church at Philadelphia.

There could be another area of our life where we're like the church at Smyrna where we're hanging on for dear life and we have oppression. There could be other areas where we're very self-satisfied like the Laodicean church, and that's why he that has an ear hears what the Spirit says to the churches, plural. Why would we listen to all of the letters unless they all had merit and value and applicability, unless they all contained counsel that is beneficial for us? Each of these letters edifies.

Each of these letters wakes us up out of lethargy or sleep. Each of these letters addresses potentials for failure and the possibilities of success and encourages us to bear fruit and to be faithful and to persevere and to keep our eyes on the rewards and the blessings and the opportunities represented by that refined gold that will be ours in the Millennial Kingdom and in the Eternal Kingdom of the Father if we recognize and seize and lay hold of the grace of God now. That is the counsel that the wonderful Counselor, the faithful witness, offers.

So we've talked about the complacency and the false estimation, the false estimate that we make of ourselves. We've talked about the ignorance of the fact that in fact we are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire.

False confidence in riches is a very common theme in Scripture, isn't it? We saw this back in Luke chapter 12. Turn with me quickly to Luke chapter 12. Jesus, in teaching and addressing the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, those who speak against the Son of Man, in verse 13 of Luke 12, someone in the crowd said to Him, Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.

They're quibbling over goods. He said, Man, who appointed me a judge or arbitrator over you? He said to them, Beware and be on your guard against every form of greed, for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions. I think that New American Standard translation of that is a good rendition.

In the New King James it says, Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses. We can all say, Life is more than what you have. But Jesus is talking in spiritual terms as well.

We have to be careful about saying, I must not be doing anything wrong because I don't feel any falling of the hammer of divine discipline. I don't really feel the need to analyze myself or look at myself because things are going well. How would you like to be a parent and have a child who just without thought went and said and did anything they wanted to as long as they didn't hear a word of rebuke or didn't get called in for discipline by the parent? Do you want an unthinking child who says, Well, unless I'm being rebuked and yelled at or spanked or denied privileges or something, what I'm doing must be okay.

Do you think that God is looking for believers to run in a direction until God has to whop them upside the head? That's not the goal. We're supposed to think. We're supposed to guide ourselves and lay a straight course by the word of truth.

Be guided by the light of God's word that is a lamp to our feet and a light unto our path. Hide it in our hearts so that we don't sin. It's not the discipline of God.

Thy discipline have I received on my backside that I might not sin against thee. That's not what the psalm says. It says, Thy word have I hid in my heart so that I will not sin.

We have to use the standard in the light of God's word and not wait for discipline. But if we often sort of revert or unconsciously assume that if we're not suffering in some fashion, then everything we're doing is okay and we don't really stop and judge ourselves and analyze ourselves. That was the problem in Laodicea.

You assume that you are rich. You say, I'm wealthy. I don't need anything.

And in the physical realm that might be true, but spiritually, much different. He said, Take heed and beware of latching on to things. One's life does not consist in the abundance of things he possesses.

He talks about the ground of a rich man yielding plentifully. He thought within himself saying, What shall I do since I have no room to store my crops? So he said, I will do this. I will pull down my barns and build greater.

And there I will store all my crops and my goods. I cannot help pointing out the very close similarity to this pattern to what often takes place in the modern church. I have a crop of people in the congregation and we're exceeding the bounds of our building.

So let's tear it down and build a bigger one. Let's add on. And the measure of success is, Look how well we're doing.

Look how many are attending. Look how well our books are selling or our radio ministry is thriving or our television or whatever it may be. There's nothing intrinsically wrong.

God bless radio and God bless television and God bless big buildings full of people who can

come and learn the Word of God. I'm not saying that those are intrinsically evil. What I am saying and what the Word of God is saying is, if that becomes a measure of success, if you say we must be a good church, look how big we are.

We must be a thriving, growing church before God because look at our annual budget. Look how much money we run through our coffers each year, which many churches do. This is the parable that puts the lie to that approach.

The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. You could just as easily say the programs of a certain rich church yielded plentifully. You could just as easily say, to put it at a personal level, the plans and purposes of a certain believer yielded plentifully.

Went out to start a family and had a big family. Went out to grow a business and had a thriving business. Went out to have a happy home and had a wonderfully happy home.

None of those are in and of themselves the measure of where we stand in spiritual terms. And it is a danger to use a false measure, to use a false scale to evaluate, and to say, well, since this measure tells me I'm exceeding all bounds, he determines his future course of action. Measuring potential and success and future priorities based on this false standard.

Not only has he done that up to this point, he's going to continue. I will do this. I'll pull down my Barnes and Bill Grater.

I will say to my soul, soul, you have many goods laid up for many years. Take your ease. Eat, drink, and be merry.

Not only is my present circumstance good, but I'm set for the future. And what happens when you decide that the future is all taken care of? You relax and take your ease and enjoy what you have in the present. This is exactly what happened in Laodicea.

The future is secure. Don't have to worry about the future. What has happened in modern theological interpretation of the Bible? Huge masses of modern Christians believe that the future is secure.

Everybody will be happy over there. We're all overcomers. Doesn't John say, this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith? Hanukkah, we're all Hanukkah.

We are all the overcomers. All of these blessings are ours. And so we say, the future is secure.

So let's avail ourselves of the happiness and the joy and the peace that is ours now and hope the expectation of future things defined by and revealed by the word of God fizzles in the face of this opaque cloud of fantasy that is encouraged and spoken of between believers. How many believers talk about heaven and can't give you a single verse about heaven? I'm going to heaven when I die. Show me the scripture.

Show me one scripture that says, I'm going to heaven when I die. 99% of believers on the face of this earth can't give you a verse, and yet it's a big part of their theology and a big part of whatever spiritual thinking they do. Somebody dies, oh well, they're in heaven.

Show me the scripture. I'm not saying it isn't there. I'm saying, do you know where it is? What is the basis of your belief? What is the basis of your hope? What have we done? As a Christian community, as a body of Christ in this generation on this earth, we have put ourselves in a room and painted scenery on the walls making us think that we're in a wonderful fruitful pasture full of wheat and full of harvest and full of the glory of God, and it's a paste up.

It's paper mache. It's false. Marie Osmond had that song, Paper Roses.

Oh, how real those roses seem to me, but they're only imitation, like your imitation love for me. Well, that's what a lot of believers have. We've got a paper mache fantasy of where we stand before God, and the Lord Jesus is the faithful and true.

He is the counselor. He is the faithful witness, and he tells us, you'd better wake up and look at things in real terms or you're going to end up naked and ashamed on the day of judgment. Nobody likes to be surprised in a state of undress.

I surprised a lady today unexpectedly. She was about to feed her baby. I didn't mean to.

I just walked around the corner and there was a flurry of activity there. People feeding babies. They think nobody's there and somebody's there.

Well, nobody wants to be found in a state of undress. It's embarrassing. It's awkward for everybody.

Well, how much more awkward when it is the most important thing in your existence, when it is your relationship with God, it's your standing before God. Do you really want to stand before God and before the angels and before the saints in glory, unclothed? You think about standing up right now, right where you are, and just having your clothes disintegrate. How much fun would that be? That pales into insignificance to being poor and wretched and blind and naked in the presence of Almighty God.

There are people who are going to flee the return of the Lord Jesus Christ who ought to be welcoming Him. There will be people who fear Him who ought to be rushing toward Him in love and recognition. Why? Because they fool themselves in what they believe now.

They fool themselves with a false estimation. We don't want to make that mistake. We want to hear the counsel, the wonderful counsel, the counsel that is delivered in love.

You remember the outcome of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. I'm sorry, the rich man here building his barns. Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years.

Take your ease. Eat, drink, and be merry. God said to him, You fool.

This night your soul will be required of you. Then whose will those things be which you have provided? So is he who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God. When you lay up treasure for yourself, you've decided what's best.

You've decided what's valuable. You bend your efforts and you make your evaluations based on what is in the temporary world of the present rather than the permanent, eternal world of the future. So is he who lays up treasure for himself.

So Jesus goes on in Luke 12, 22, Therefore I say to you, Do not worry about your life, what you will eat, nor about the body, what you will put on. Life is more than food and the body is more than clothing. Now obviously, we have to provide ourselves with food.

We just talked about providing ourselves with clothing. But what does he say? He doesn't say, Do not eat or do not clothe yourself. He says, Do not worry.

Don't make that the driving compulsion, the motivation, the criteria for how you order your priorities. Well, it all depends on my possessions. It all depends on my acquisitions.

It all depends on my appearance before people. He says, Do not worry about these things. This is the Greek verb, Merimnao.

And it has the idea of undue concern, of fretting, of this consuming your mind. This fills your mental landscape. Life is more than food.

The body is more than clothing. He goes on to talk about the ravens, worrying, can you change your stature? If you then are not able to do the least, why are you anxious about the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow. They neither toil nor spin.

Yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If God can clothe the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown in the oven, how much more will he clothe you? Actually, it doesn't even say, will he clothe? It just says, how much more you? O you of little faith. You may remember our study about, O you of little faith.

Do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink. Do not have an anxious mind. All these things, the nations of the world seek after.

Your Father knows that you need these things. This is a very practical piece of counsel from the Lord Jesus. We sometimes make decisions about where we will live or what job we will take and we base it almost exclusively on what it will provide for us by way of remuneration, what it will provide for us by way of benefits.

And what we don't realize is that the Lord Jesus says, don't make that your criteria. God can

bless, God can compensate in invisible, immaterial ways. You may take a job or you may live in circumstances that are much more humble than what's available and yet your life will be richer, your time will be available to you to invest in eternal things.

In my experience, this is apropos of nothing, I don't know anybody here that's job hunting at the moment, but there's a relationship, especially when you start getting up in high ranges of salary, to how much you get paid and how much blood you're expected to spill for the company and how much time you're expected to spend and how much inconvenience you're supposed to put up with. And it is almost a slavery in the sense that you have an obligation when you're making lots and lots and lots of money that the company feels like they own you and you should be there at any time at the drop of a hat for any reason. And many times people say, well, I want to get the job with the highest possible salary.

This is what Jesus is talking about. Think about your priorities. There is a balance point.

There's a place where God will provide for your needs and compensate you in invisible ways, in ways that partake of the eternal, in ways that allow you to invest in the future. Do not seek. Notice the words here.

What is it you worry about? What is it that you look for and actively seek when evaluating a set of options? What are you really wanting to get out of this? It's kind of like the old gospel song. What about your heart? Where is your heart? Because where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. All these things the nations of the world seek.

Seek the kingdom of God. All these things will be added to you. And all these things are talking about provisions.

The logistical grace, it's been called. The supply that takes care of our basic needs. Seek the kingdom of God and at the very point that you stop worrying about your basic provision, the supply train is going to pull up and unload in abundance.

Do not fear, little flock. It is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell what you have and give alms.

Provide yourself money bags which do not grow old. A treasure in the heavens that does not fail. Where no thief approaches, no moth destroys.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. People like to take 33 literally. There is nothing wrong with selling what you have and giving alms.

But this is all in the metaphorical sense. He's saying, if you are emotionally invested in your possessions, get rid of that investment. Your attachment and your devotion and your clinging grasp, if there's anything that they have to pry your cold dead fingers off of, that's something you ought to divest yourself of, at least in the mental sense.

Not necessarily physically, but sometimes that's also necessary. You just need to get it clear out of the house if it becomes a distraction. It's like if your eye offends you, cut it off.

If your hand offends you, cut it off. Sometimes, something is such a trap and such a snare and a besetting sin that we have to just get rid of the whole thing. There are people who do need to throw their television out of the house or throw their computer out of the house because it interferes with their ability to live a Christian life.

For most of us, it's a matter of reordering our priorities and our values and our goals and not investing our time and our energy and our mental attention in things. So, how many of us have a membership in the Laodicean Church? Probably all of us in one or another area of our life. If we sit and examine ourselves, we will find that somewhere, it's like old Alan Funt used to say on Candid Camera, you know, sometimes somewhere, someplace, when you least expect it, someone is going to leap out and say to you, smile, you're in the Laodicean Church.

You've got an area where we all fight the temptation to cling, to be too much in this world, to love the things in the world when we are commanded to love not the things which are in this world, to be in the world but not of it. And there will be some area, some place where we become of the world. We just get too soaked up in the present.

The wonderful counselor comes to us and says, listen, I'm standing at the door and knocking. If you return back to Revelation 3.20, I have a whole other list of passages we don't have time to go to, but in Revelation 3, he says, I love you, that's why I'm counseling you, verse 19. If you weren't, you know, parents often find themselves expressing this sentiment, I wouldn't buy I wouldn't bother, I wouldn't put myself through the hassle of watching you and evaluating you and spanking you and guiding you and disciplining you and taking away your privileges and going through all of the agony of trying to get you to do the right thing if I didn't love you.

If I didn't love you, I would just let you grow up like a weed and become a hapless villager, running amok. But I, as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Jesus is not so much softening the blow here as reminding us the Laodicean church.

He takes nothing away from what he has said earlier, but what he does say is this is my expression of love for you. Do you think that Jesus loved the people in Smyrna and the people in Thyatira and the ones that he commended? He did, and he expressed his love in saying, you have a few who have not soiled their garments, you have a few that have done these good things. Here, Jesus says, you Laodiceans, I love you, and the sign of my love is this stinging rebuke that you are getting, this painful drawing up short, this cold water dashed in your face, if you will.

That is a good use for cold water or hot water. It makes a lot more of an impression than being hit in the face with tepid water. Therefore, since the Lord Jesus is expressing his love in this rebuke

and chastening, he says, be zealous, and that is a virtual transliteration here, it is zelue, from zeleo, or zeluo, which means be zealous, have zeal, get fired up, get motivated, and metaneo, metaneooson is the form here, change your mind.

It requires a change of mind. Our mind tells us that everything is okay. Our mind tells us that we are rich.

Our mind tells us that we don't need anything. You can often find this when you hear a particularly good point made out of the word of God, or you read something, or you hear something on the radio, or a great illustration, something comes in email, I love it when things come in email and somebody says, oh, I know just the person that needs to hear this, I know just the person that needs to see this. And see, people that are close to me don't ever send me anything because they know this is one of my peeves.

We should stop and look at what we see and what we hear and say, does this apply to me? If we say I have need of nothing, then we don't listen. We don't let the word of rebuke penetrate our defenses. We find a way to deflect it or to not listen to it.

We deafen our ear. We say, oh, you know, I'm going to get that tape and give it to so-and-so. I'm going to write down that poem and give it to so-and-so.

And we're anxious to pass something on. That's what you do. That's what they teach you in self-defense.

If something sharp comes your way, you deflect it. You change its direction. Let it go somewhere else.

Be zealous and change your mind. We cannot see clearly. We can't put the medicine on our eyes unless we change our minds and decide we need it.

Nobody likes particularly putting eye drops in their eye. It's kind of a dismal thing to do. But we do it because we know we need it.

But we have to recognize that we need it. We have to recognize we need the medicine. Change your mind.

Verse 20. He says, We say this in English. Look.

And we precede something important. We say, look. That's exactly what behold means in Greek.

Idu. If you were walking around in Rome or ancient Asia Minor someplace and somebody came up and said, Idu. They're saying, hey, wake up.

Pay attention. I'm about to tell you something important. Idu.

Look. I am standing at the door and knocking. You might be tempted to think that that's the original Greek here.

When you look at the English translation it says, behold, I stand at the door. But this is the first person singular perfect, active, indicative. Estaca.

We get the word stasis for something that stands. But this literally translated says, I have stood. This is a perfect.

It's a perfect active indicative. I have stood at the door. So it's not like Jesus just walked up.

This is perfect. This is completed action in past time. He says, look, I have stood at the door, the Thuran, T-H-U-R-A-N, and am knocking.

Knocking is a present active indicative. One of John's favorite verb tenses in his epistles. First John is all in the present active indicative virtually.

I have stood at the door, and I am knocking. I continue to knock. If someone will hear, this is an aorist subjunctive.

Aorist has the idea of looking at something as a whole, not keep on hearing. There is a point of change of mind. You don't keep on listening to Jesus knock at the door.

You hear him knock, and you respond at a point. This is a point of commitment. This is a point of change of mind so that Jesus doesn't keep having to stand at the door and keep on knocking.

Now, at the risk of being a master of the obvious, the Lord Jesus is supposed to be with us. We are supposed to be walking in the light as he is in the light. We each have fellowship with the other.

His blood cleanses us from all sin. In some of these other churches, you get the idea that Jesus is near. He is walking among the lampstands.

He is close at hand. Here, Jesus is outside the door. If they will hear his voice and open the door, he will come in and have fellowship.

You get the idea that there are believers that have Jesus as a regular guest at the table. He is an inhabitant of the house. He dwells there.

He is a permanent guest there. He is always welcome. His presence is normal.

Here, in Laodicea, he is outside the door. He has stood outside the door for some time. What does a door do? A door separates.

Look a few verses ahead in chapter 4 of Revelation. After these things I looked and behold, a

door opened in heaven. Normally, you don't see into heaven.

You don't partake of heavenly goings-on and observe them. But a door opens in the normal thing that separates, the normal barrier between man and God, between heaven and earth. A voice speaks like a trumpet saying, come up here and I will show you things which must take place after this.

Immediately, John is in the spirit and he goes through that door. What does 320 tell you? Something is separating and this is not an unbeliever with the wall of sin, the barrier of sin. This is a believer who has become estranged from Christ.

To fool ourselves into a false confidence and a false richness and a false idea that we need nothing is to be separated from Christ. The presence of Christ, communion with Christ is lost. You can lose, in effect, the indwelling of Christ.

Or you can experience the indwelling of Christ. Many a theologian teaches that the indwelling of Christ is an automatic part of being a Christian and it is not. Remember John 14 and 15, that wonderful upper room discussion where Jesus says, the one who has my words and keeps them, he is the one that loves me and I and my father will come to him and we will make our abode, our home with him.

That is a post salvation experience of intimacy with Christ, effectively the indwelling of Christ. The Galatians, Paul tells them, if you go back into legalism and into spirituality by works and righteousness by works of the law, you will be cut off from Christ. You will have fallen from grace.

What does Paul say? Christ in you is the hope of glory. Guess what? Believers that don't have a hope of glory, don't have Christ in them. Christ in you is the hope of glory.

Those in just the preceding letter that we looked at in Philadelphia, where he says, hold fast to what you have so that no one takes your crown. You get the idea that the Lord Jesus is present with them and they do have that hope of glory. They have got the crown in their grasp.

He says, hold fast. Don't let go of it. Don't let Christ walk out the door and close the door behind him and he's on the outside knocking.

Behold, look, I have stood at the door and I am knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him and he with me. What does it mean to hear his voice? What does it mean to hear his voice? Can you think of a scripture where the Lord Jesus talks about his voice? My sheep, hear my voice and follow.

It tells them the right way to go. How does a counselor counsel? He speaks. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord.

God sent that voice to Israel. A voice communicates a voice. A voice communicates a message.

A voice communicates content. He doesn't sing a song. He doesn't create an ambiance.

He doesn't light a stick of incense and give someone a feeling. He speaks. He has something to say.

If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in. There are some doors that God opens and shuts. That door in chapter 4 verse 1 is a door that God opens and says, John, come on up.

Which is a picture of course of the rapture of the church. There will be a trump of God. There will be a shout, the voice of the archangel, the trump of God, the dead in Christ, we who are alive and remain all go up and we essentially go through a door that God opens into a completely different realm, the place that Christ has prepared for us.

There are other doors that we operate. Jesus told the parable we saw it in Luke not long ago about the householder who rises up and shuts the door and the people who open the door. The people who arrive late or who arrive without knowing the host don't get in.

Those are doors that God controls, that God opens and shuts. Some believers are going to be pillars in the temple and they are going to define the doors. But here, this is a door of the heart and this is not a door that God operates.

This is a door that we are responsible for. Jesus doesn't say, I stand at the door and I beat it down and walk in. If we don't do that, it wouldn't be such a thing as getting up and opening the door for the Lord.

The Lord would just walk right through the door. He says, I have stood at the door and I am knocking. We have to hear his voice and respond.

A response is required. There is a call. There is a message.

There is counsel. And we are required to respond. If we fail to respond, the Lord Jesus does not come in.

He does not sup with us. This is a picture of loss, both in the present, in the sense of the presence of Christ, intimacy with Christ, He and the Father making their abode within us, and it is also a picture of future loss. We will be out there in the Pharisee club, watching others go in and enjoy the light and the blessings of Christ's immediate presence.

He who overcomes I will grant to him to sit down with me on my throne. I wish I could talk about some of the Greek here which reflects Hebraisms, Aramaisms. I will give to him to sit is the literal Greek here.

I will give to him to sit. That is a Greek translation of an Aramaic or a Hebrew idiom. This is from

the Hebrew verb natan.

The prophet Nathan took his name from this verb to give. It means I will allow him or I will grant the privilege of. I will give to him to sit down with me on my throne just as I also overcame and sat down with my father on his throne.

In a nutshell, if you become Christ-like here, you will be Christ-like there. If any man will come after me, Jesus said, let him take up his cross, deny himself, and I will give to him follow me. The Lord Jesus heard a voice from heaven.

This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. The voice from heaven spoke again. It said, this is my beloved son.

Hear ye him. The Lord Jesus heard the voice of his father. He was about his father's business.

He fulfilled the will of the father in every detail as it was communicated to him. Now he communicates to us. The glory that God the father bestowed on the Lord Jesus Christ is going to be mirrored and reflected in the glory that the Lord Jesus Christ is going to bestow on those who follow his example and follow his pattern.

I will grant him to sit down with me on my throne. Why does he include the second half of verse 21? Just as I also overcame and sat down with my father on his throne. What is Jesus saying? When you counsel someone, you try to make something real.

You try to get it across in terms that have impact and that make sense and that communicate. Jesus says, look at my example. How did I overcome? How did the Lord Jesus Christ overcome? What was his motivation? That's what the actors always say.

What's my motivation? What does the Lord Jesus tell us was his motivation? Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross and despised the shame? Didn't give the shame any account in his thinking. He says, you can overcome in the same way that I overcame. So we ask ourselves, how did the Lord Jesus overcome? Not by bread alone.

Not by the things of this world. Not by the power sources, the energy sources of this world. By every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

How did he cope with the temptations in the wilderness? How did he cope with the daily trials of moving about in Israel and being rejected and put to scorn? By every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. He was ministered to by God the Holy Spirit. He was faithful to his calling.

He never lost sight of his Father and of his need to please the Father. For the joy that was set before him, hope was his motivation. Faith was his modus operandi.

Love was the outgrowth and the fruit and the result. Just as I also overcame, he says, we as

believers can overcome. And ruling authority, participation in the coming kingdom is the reward.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Each of these letters speaks to an area of our existence. Our daily walk through life.

And each gives us encouragement, gives us insight, gives us counsel. Like we said last time, you can have a terrain map that just shows you the physical features, the lay of the land, and that's what we see with our eyes. But when we have the counsel, the information from the divine point of view that shows us the path, what to avoid, what to follow, how to navigate the terrain, we can overcome.

If we heed that, if we look at it and heed it, all things are ours. We have treasure in heavenly places. It goes beyond imagination.

It goes beyond communication. We just have to listen to the faithful and true witness. We just have to receive what the wonderful counselor has to say to us by his words and by his example.

And we have to be teachable. We can't tell ourselves, I have need of nothing. We have to let the word of God penetrate and dissolve the hard places in our souls so that the seed of God's word can grow and bear fruit.

Well, next time we are going to sum up our study of the seven churches and see in our conclusions the...