

Rev 25-11-16b

We resume our study now, and if you haven't gleaned anything else, if we have not gleaned anything else from looking at these first six of the seven letters, it is this. So many people, when they think of the revelation, which is singular, you can see it here on my tie, misspelled because they put an S on the end, it says revelations. I usually tie it so that the S disappears up under the not so that I'm not advertising an error, but it is the revelation.

It is singular. It is a multifaceted yet single message. It's single in its purpose.

What is the purpose of this revelation of Jesus Christ? Why is it delivered specifically to the church in this sevenfold manner? It is not to draw our attention to the timing of the rapture. The most common mistake that is made when people think of revelation, they think of the tribulation and of all kinds of cosmic events and horrible judgments and the pouring out of the wrath of God and the trampling of the vintage and all the rest of it. And I want to be sure I'm not here for that.

I don't want my loved ones to be here for that. I don't want to essentially be subject to the judgments of God that are coming manifestly in that day. I want to be kept from that hour.

And so the focus becomes on, well, when is it going to happen? Should I sell my property and liquidate my debts and make some sort of provision? That is not the purpose of the revelation. As we have seen over these last many weeks and many sessions, the purpose of this letter is personal judgment. If we would judge ourselves, we will not be judged.

It is pertinent for every believer that was alive at the time that John set it down and it got delivered to these churches in Asia and to every believer that has had access to this revelation since. The purpose for which God gave this to the Lord Jesus to give to John, to give to us through messengers, is personal evaluation. Let me judge myself.

If I need to repent in these seven different areas of strength and weakness, if I need to do more of the good things, if I need to change my ways and do less or repent completely of the bad things, that's accomplishing the goal. How many times has Jesus said, I am coming? I am coming quickly. Am I going to need to move your lampstand out of its place because you did not hear and you did not heed? Will you repent and do the first works, those that are motivated by the foremost love, which is a two-sided coin of love for God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love for one another, love for those who are outside, love for neighbors, which is in between those two, and then love even for enemies.

Love is foremost. Read Corinthians. After many other temporary things have passed away, these three things will remain.

Three things will remain, faith, hope, and love. And what is the greatest? It's not faith. It's not doctrinal grasp.

It isn't how much knowledge do I have? Not even how much epinosis have I accrued? How much hope do I have? What is my confident expectation of the future? The greatest of these is love, love from a pure heart. We saw this in 1 Timothy 1, pure heart, genuine faith, clean conscience. I wash my robes regularly in the blood of the Lamb so that I am qualified, so that the Spirit can speak to me and guide me and prepare me for future service and function.

That's what is critical. That's what this is about. Revelation is not about here come the judgments or here comes the judge.

Some of you will remember where that comes from. That's not what revelation is for. It is a description.

It's like saying, what is the purpose of the Old Testament? It's for us to feel sorry for Israel getting judged or to be glad that we are not Israelites. It is written for our instruction, all these things, our lifetime. People say, I don't get these promises because that was just to the people in these cities and they needed to resist Rome and not be subsumed by empire.

They needed to be dissident disciples and this, that and the other. This promise to be kept from the hour of trial, well, that's only going to be for the generation that is alive when the rapture happens and then the tribulation starts. This hour of tribulation that is coming upon the whole earth, well, everybody for 2,000 years or more prior to that doesn't have to worry.

They don't have to claim that promise because that's not what this is about. This giant, metaphorical, symbolic set of visions is designed to motivate us in the here and now to stick with it, to persevere, even if there is hardship, Smyrna, even if there is opposition from the traditional religious establishment, synagogue of Satan in Smyrna and in Philadelphia. These people will be dealt with by the Lord.

Don't worry about them. Hold fast to his name, have a little strength and use that strength because we know whom we have believed and so on. Well, this brings us now in chapter three, verse 14 to what in my New King James is titled, the lukewarm church.

To the messenger of the church of the Laodiceans or in Laodicea is the better text. It doesn't really matter. To the messenger of the church in Laodicea write, these things says, the amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.

I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth.

Because you say I am rich, have become wealthy and have need of nothing. And do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire that you may be rich, white garments that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed.

And anoint your eyes with eyesalve that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.

Therefore be zealous and repent.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him and dine with him and he with me. To him who overcomes, I will grant to sit with me on my throne, as I also overcame and sat down with my father on his throne.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches. There are many things here. I'm just going to point out a few.

This is perhaps the most well known of the letters. It fascinates me. And once again, this letter was meant to be viewed and studied in writing, as is the entire book.

Because when he says in verse 15, I know your works that you are neither cold nor hot, I could wish you were cold or hot. Cold or hot what? Water is not mentioned. Cold iron, hot iron, cold food, hot food.

We immediately, because we know this letter, assume that this is something to be consumed and that this is cold and hot water. Then you go to your isagogics, you go to your first century history and discover that there was water that was piped from cold springs that were at a distance. But by the time it got to Ephesus, it wasn't cold anymore.

And they had hot springs, but by the time you carry that water very far, of course it loses its heat. And either cold or hot has benefit. Hot water has many uses.

Cold water is refreshing. And being lukewarm or tepid is undesirable. But there is a pretty big reaction here on the part of the Lord.

If you're thirsty, thirsty enough, you don't care what temperature the water is. I'll drink it straight out of the tap. I'll get it out of a glass that's been sitting there for several hours.

I need the moisture. Our bodies are more than 90% water and we need it to survive. So I'll take whatever water I can get.

I don't want it to be salty. I don't want it to be bitter. I don't want it to be dirty.

I don't want to have things floating in it. But temperature is only one aspect of available water for drinking. Why is it temperature and not something in it? We have Old Testament examples, which we won't turn to, but you know that bitter water can be made sweet and foul water can be made drinkable and usable, whether for livestock or for prophets or whoever.

And we could go and visit those. But there is a specific reason why this is desirable. Jesus says, I could wish you were cold or hot.

So then because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out. Vomit you out is the word. This is a retching action.

It is so unpalatable that you get the idea that this is a pretty forceful spitting out of this water from dissatisfaction. Do you remember, and I'm cutting to the chase and not turning to many of these passages. You remember what happened when Jesus went to a tree looking for figs? It wasn't the season for figs, but he expected that particular fig tree, because of its location, because of its favored situation, that even though other trees might not be bearing fruit, this one should.

That's God's view of Israel. There may be many trees, but Israel is God's tree and he has favored it and he has blessed it so that it can bear fruit when no other nation can or could. And when Jesus comes to it and despite it being favored, it isn't bearing fruit, the tree is cursed.

Do you remember that the vineyard that is spoken of in the Old Testament, the owner says, I'm going to cut down this vineyard. I'm going to break down its walls. It's not productive.

And the vineyard keeper says, give me one more season. Let me cultivate it. Let me try one more time to get it to bear fruit.

And if not, then we'll displace it, cut it down. And this is an expectation. The Lord Jesus not only expects the water that he is sampling in his mouth, in this metaphor, to either be cold or hot, to be beneficial and pleasurable and useful for purpose.

But if it is not, it is going to be rejected. That's the figure here. And you don't really even need to appeal to the historical sources of water and all the rest of it in Laodicea.

Remember how Jesus has introduced himself. Thus, these things says the Amen, the faithful and true witness. Remember, he has described himself as true when he introduces himself to the church in Philadelphia prior.

These things says he who is holy, he who is true, because he himself is true. I am the way, the truth, John 14.6. He is true. He is the truth.

And he is a witness to the truth. There are many people expressing views. What is the truth? If you want truth, and not just scientific truth, not just historical truth, not just situational truth, truth that matters, truth that benefits, truth that can be imbibed for profitable use.

The Lord Jesus is witness to that. It goes back to chapter 1. John says he is on Patmos because of his witness, his testimony to the Lord Jesus. He is a faithful witness.

When something needs to be said, he says it. Many times, we would rather not get into something that really needs to be expressed. We don't want to address an issue that needs to be addressed.

It's an elephant in the room. It is an issue. And by not resolving it, by not expressing it, bad things continue.

The Lord Jesus has said some very harsh things to these churches, but he is a faithful witness.

He doesn't spare their feelings. He doesn't try to go along to get along.

He doesn't endure and bear with things that must be addressed, confronted, and judged. If your brother has ought against you, set down your sacrifice. You're on the way to worship God with a sacrifice.

Set your sacrifice down. Go and be reconciled. That issue needs to be addressed before you come to God.

You've got to fix the love one another before expressing love the Lord your God. These are the words of this same Lord Jesus. We need to be a faithful witness.

We have to say things that need to be said, and we start with ourselves. We have to confront ourselves and say, I am wrong here. Homologeo, to acknowledge or confess our sins, that's a faithful witness.

I witnessed myself sinning, and I am witnessing that. I am confessing that to God. Truth needs to be confessed.

Truth needs to be expressed. Truth should define us. We don't dissemble.

We don't prevaricate. We don't shade. We don't twist.

We don't hide. Speaking the truth to one another in love. Remember, whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth.

The Lord Jesus says here, verse 19, as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. It's an expression of love to point out where something is wrong and needs to be fixed, where a change of mind is needed, a shift in perspective, a more biblical attitude and approach, using divine power to handle, work through hardship. He is a faithful witness.

This is why we have been dwelling at length on these letters. This is the red ink witness of the Lord Jesus Christ specifically to the church through these seven representatives addressing areas of strength and areas of weakness, each of which we need to apply to ourselves. You remember my mnemonic, my memory aid for remembering these churches.

Every smiling person, thy sorrow fills loudly. Figure out your own way of memorizing them, but then work through. Every, that's Ephesus.

What did the Lord Jesus say to Ephesus? Smiling, Smyrna. What was going on in Smyrna? Person, Pergamos. What did the Lord say to Pergamos? Thy, Thyatira, longest central letter in the chiasm.

Satan imbuing that first half to a great extent. Sorrow, Sardis, the dead church. You have a name that you're alive, but you're dead.

Name figures over and over again. You can visit these churches and what Jesus says to them every day, and you'll never exhaust the pertinence and the application and the need to search ourselves out and to judge ourselves so that the Lord Jesus with the eyes of fire and the shining bronze feet doesn't have to come and do the judging for us. Phil, Philadelphia.

We just finished. Fills loudly, Laodicea. That's how I remember them.

And I run these through my mind. I can be driving. I can be waiting.

I can be doing a mundane repetitive task. I can be tuning a piano. I've done so many pianos now that I just go on autopilot and it's profitable time to think.

And I just force myself to think and to remember. It's great mental exercise as well. Exercise your memory.

How many things can I remember? How did Jesus introduce himself to each of those churches? What was his commendation, if any, to those churches? What was his criticism, if any, to those churches? How would those commendations and criticisms apply to me? Is there an area where I need to repent and change my mind so that I can shift from the criticism side to the commendation side? That's what this set of letters is for. That's what this book is for. Forget the timing of the rapture.

We know when the rapture is going to happen. I can tell you exactly to the second when the rapture is going to happen. It's going to happen when we die.

Absolutely and certainly. If we are one of those who are alive and remain to the coming, we are still dying to this age. We will be transformed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

Well, that's all the same as dying. Either way, you don't know the day or the hour. When Jesus said, no man knows the day, that means even as you watch the sky and observe the signs of the times, there can be long periods where these truths apply, pertain, and should be respected and implemented in our lives.

But if we don't know the day or the hour, that tells you that even though things may line up and we think we see an Antichrist figure or we think we see a confederation of 10 nations that are the revived Roman Empire, even though we think we see the means of technology and helicopters or the scorpions with stings in their tails and credit cards or some implant that they come up with, digital ID that they're already doing in Britain, that's going to be the mark of the beast, fine. But these things can continue to exist. We've had helicopters since the 1950s and scorpions with stings in their tail are not inflicting judgment on humanity yet, and that's 75 years ago.

We've had some form of digital control over purchases for decades. It's getting more and more easy to see how this will be implemented as is described during the season of the first and second beasts. But Jesus didn't deliver this for us to start getting our adrenaline pumping about

timing.

It is about purpose. It is about custodial care and stewardship of our soul and our life, our daily opportunities to listen to the word of the Lord and wash our robes. Be those who are repentant.

Be those who are qualified to receive these blessings. They are absolutely, definitely coming. I promise you the rapture will not be one second later than our death or the appearance of the Lord in the sky.

And it isn't, well, I knew when it was coming. It is, am I ready? Professor can tell you the exam is coming at nine o'clock on Friday, and you can know that. But if you don't do something to prepare for it, what's the use of knowing when it's coming? The whole reason of anticipating it is preparation and practice.

Be ready so that when these future opportunities come, if we do have the wonderful privilege of walking with the Lord Jesus in white, ruling with him on his throne, dwelling as memorials with his name and the name of the city and the name of his God on us, how can I qualify for that? I want to invest the time now. That's the purpose. So we come to Laodicea.

These things says the amen, the faithful and true witness. What language does amen come from? That's Hebrew, right? Amen. That's Hebrew.

He is the amen. He is the faithful and true witness. The beginning of the creation.

You see the little bracket here. It's almost like a mini chiasm. He's amen.

He is the beginning of the creation of God. Creation of God goes back to Genesis chapter one. What is being suggested here to the church at Laodicea? You should have learned some things from the Old Testament.

Israel found themselves fat and sassy and ignored their covenant relationship with God. Eve was dwelling in the perfection of the garden and got seduced away by a false promise fulfilled through disobedience. She told herself that this would be fine.

The fruit is good to look upon and desirable to make one wise. It's all good. Sin, the peccadillo of transgressing God's command to not eat of the tree, well, that's minor.

Look at all the benefits. God will overlook that when he sees how smart I get and how much fun it is to eat this fruit. The amen, the beginning of the creation of God.

And notice the Lord Jesus in his humanity is a creation. God prophetically says, thou art my son. This day I have begotten you.

I have created you. The Lord Jesus dwelt as a divine member of the Trinity in the past. He eternally combined himself with humanity.

God the Father didn't say to any of the angels, sit at my right hand. He said that to the Lord Jesus, who is fully human as well as fully divine. He is the firstborn.

That's what John 3.16 says. God so loved the world that he gave his uniquely born son. That's one way to translate first born.

It's unique. He's one of a kind. The faithful and true witness.

He is faithful to communicate and what he communicates is true. This should be us. We should be faithful to say what needs to be said and it needs to be true.

Speak the truth to one another in love. That's what Jesus is doing. That's why he says in 19, as many as I love, I rebuke.

I tell the truth. I don't spare your feelings. I don't let you think that things are good.

I don't let you think that you are wealthy and have need of nothing. And you do not know these things. Look at what they do not know in verse 17.

You do not know that you are wretched. You are miserable. You are poor.

You are blind and naked. Such a contrast with Smyrna. They are poor, but they are rich.

It's the opposite in Laodicea. They think they're rich and they are wretched. They're miserable.

They are poor. They are blind and they are naked. They can't see what they need to see.

So Jesus is going to be a faithful and true witness and tell them. Now, our final point here, pay attention. There's so much you can say about these.

So much emerges the longer you look at these and the more you compare messages and church with church. You do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. Look at verse 18.

I counsel you. What a wonderful expression of concern. Jesus doesn't say, I command you.

I direct you. I threaten you. I counsel you.

I have told you what your actual status is. You don't think this is the status, but it is. You say, I am rich.

I have become wealthy and I have need of nothing. How many times have we reviewed this? We begin to change our mind, to claim the grace and provision of God by recognizing our need. Nobody gets something that they don't need.

The encyclopedia salesman comes to the door. You've already got a set of encyclopedias. I'm talking, you know, 60 years ago when the Fuller Brush man or the encyclopedia salesman or

somebody else would come to the door hawking wares, cut co-cutlery or a vacuum cleaner, whatever it might be.

And you've already got a great set of knives. You've already got a brand new vacuum cleaner. You've already got that.

And I don't have need of what you're selling, what you're offering. I don't care how good the deal is. I've already got that.

I don't need it. If you are required to take a class and maybe you've already taken it, but they didn't give you credit, it's information you already know, you end up sleeping through the class. You don't pay attention.

You don't even consider that there might be an opportunity to hear it from a different perspective or to learn something that wasn't included the last time you covered the material. Maybe there's an update, but you assume, I don't need this class and blow it off. Jesus says, I love you.

I am a faithful and true witness. And I am telling you, you have a need. Do you believe me or do you not? If you don't believe the faithful and true witness, you're in trouble.

Who are you going to believe? The serpent coiled around the branches of the tree? Maybe he wasn't coiled at that time. Might've been perched on the legs that he had before he lost them. But as a result of feeling no sense of need, Jesus says, you're not cold or hot.

And I will reject you forcefully, spit you out. Instead of savoring you, instead of enjoying you, instead of having you fit for purpose, you will be spit out. Do you remember that spit is a defiling substance? God talking to Moses about his sister Miriam.

You can look that up. I counsel you now. I counsel you to take from me.

I counsel you to receive the offer I am giving you. Look at the word here in verse 18. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire.

What an odd turn of phrase. To buy? I thought all of grace, everything is free. I counsel you to come and get gold refined in the fire.

I counsel you to walk over to the pile of garments. I counsel you to hold still while I make mud and use dirt and spit to make it and put it on your eyes so that you can see. Jesus doesn't do any of these things.

He has these available, but you have to go and buy them, he says to Laodicea. I suggest to you, my counsel, my strong advice to you is buy from me. Why? Why does he say purchase? Remember what David said up on the top of Mount Zion when he is in Aronah's field and the plague is stopped after he numbers the people and Aronah says, look, I'll give you the land, I'll give you my oxen, I'll give you my wooden equipment here and you can make a sacrifice to the

Lord.

What did David say? I will not sacrifice to the Lord using that which cost me nothing. There is a cost. There is a personal investment that we need to make to fix our problem.

You can't just say, oh, Lord, use me. Oh, Lord, I surrender. I've never cared and I appreciate that our musical team has avoided one of the hymns that I really have a hard time with and that is, I surrender all.

I heard that thing dozens of times growing up. I surrender all. It's not about surrender.

It is about commitment at cost. Repentance, change of mind and investment in the plan and purpose of God, claiming the grace of God requires sacrifice. It costs us something.

And if you think that it's flowery beds of ease and a rose petal strewn pathway and all I've got to do is lay down and God's salvation is not a crutch, it's a stretcher and I will be carried through the narrow gate after having traveled the straight road and into life. Jesus says, you know what my advice is to you? You have no sense of need. I'm telling you, you're wretched, poor, miserable, blind and naked.

You have multiple needs. You can't see like you should see. You're not aware of the shame of your nakedness like you should be and you ought to be doing something about it.

And you do not have resources. You say, I'm wealthy. I'm need of nothing.

You need everything. What's the matter with you? Pay attention. Listen to the witness that is faithful and true.

What is his advice? Having pointed out the problem, you need to invest. Come to me. Jesus says in one place, all you who are laden, burdened down, I will give you rest.

Rest is one of our needs when we are tired from our own efforts. Come to me, all you labor and are heavy laden. I will give you rest.

But we also come to him and we buy the gold that is refined in the fire. And notice, you would think, well, don't you spend gold and spend silver? Isn't that what money is made of so that you can buy things? What do you buy gold with? Something that you currently already have. You've got to trade in something that you possess that is temporary for something the Lord Jesus possesses that is permanent.

Something you have that is frangible and fungible and flammable and perishable for something that will survive the fire. Whatever you've got, you bring to me your supposed riches. Lay them on the altar.

I will give you gold refined in the fire so that you will have what you need. That will give you genuine riches. Riches like the people in Smyrna have.

What did they buy it with? They were impoverished. It is their commitment of faith. It's their diligence.

It's their repentance, their recognition of need, and their appreciation for God, His salvation, His Son, the Lord Jesus. Buy from me gold refined in the fire that you may be rich. Buy from me white garments that you may be clothed.

We enter into the righteousness of Christ. These white garments. Go to the wedding feast.

Friend, why are you wearing your own clothes and not wearing a wedding garment? They're right there in the closet. All you had to do was go to the servant. He would hand you one.

You came in thinking yours was sufficient. He gets cast out, cut in two, and apportioned his lot with the hypocrites. Yikes for not having the right garment because he had no sense of need.

I don't need the wedding garment. Look at the finery with which I am dressed of my own making. Buy from me white garments that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed.

This nakedness is not just a lack of righteousness. It's a shameful lack. They know better.

They should know better. They lack a sense of need that they very much should have. And anoint your own eyes with eye salve.

He doesn't say let me anoint them. You get the salve and you anoint your own eyes. You invest.

You do what is necessary to see as you should see. A healthy spiritual life takes effort, sacrificial effort. I am not going to do that which pleases me.

I'm not going to indulge my whims. I'm not going to squander my time. I'm not going to be prodigal and profligate with what God has given me and spend it on myself, prodigal son.

I am going to recognize that I am wretched, poor, miserable, blind and naked without that which comes from the faithful and true witness. I need to hear the word. I need to heed the word.

And there is never a time when I don't. Jesus says, I'm telling you this because I love you. I am telling you a hard truth because I love you.

As many as I love, I rebuke and chastise and tell you your nakedness is shameful. Your unwillingness to admit the truth is something that needs to be fixed. Therefore, this is what I have done.

I have witnessed. I have given you the truth. What do you need to do? Be zealous.

What is zeal? That's motivation to get something done. Zeal is motivation. When Jesus cleansed the temple, they quoted the Old Testament scriptures.

Zeal for your house has consumed me. Wouldn't it be great if somebody would look at us and say, you know, zeal for the Lord just defines fill in your name here. Be zealous and change your mind.

Change of mind is not difficult if we sacrifice our pride, sacrifice our self-gratification instincts. If we sacrifice our pursuit of that which we think is a priority for us, change of mind away from dead works. Remember Hebrews chapter six, it's a part of the foundation, not laying again the foundation of repentance, change of mind away from works of death.

Instead, faith toward God. You move away from something and you move toward something else. It is not enough to stop a bad habit.

It needs to be replaced. Change of mind away from dead works, faith toward God. I'm no longer looking at the emptiness.

I'm no longer fooling myself into thinking that I am wealthy. I have need of nothing. I replace that with a zeal to be fit for purpose, to be useful to the master, to take on board the faithful and true witness from the Lord Jesus.

Be zealous and repent. Look, I stand at the door and knock. If you don't think that human beings have choice, you hear Calvinist talking about, well, you got to wait for prevenient grace and, you know, God has to move you.

You can't do anything of your own free will. If you don't have efficacious grace, you're just not the elect and, you know, tough luck for you. Look at this.

The Lord Jesus has just got through saying in the previous letter, he's got the key of David. He opens doors and no one shuts them. He shuts them and no one opens.

That's why there are gates on the new Jerusalem. But here, if he's got the key of David, if he can open any door, he's got the authority. Why is he standing at this door and knocking and waiting for the person on the other side of the door to open it and to invite him in? Because we have free will.

It is our choice. If any Calvinist comes to you and starts saying, oh, all of grace and asking, well, what about Revelation 3.20? Jesus has got the key. He opens and no one shuts.

What's he waiting for? If it's all of God's design, why is Jesus knocking on this door? He's got the key. Do you knock on a door when you have the key? Why would you do that? Maybe you are waiting for a response from the person inside and allowing them to say yes or no to your presence, to your fellowship, whether or not you want them to sit down with you and share a meal. I stand at the door and knock.

If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, Jesus has just said, I'm the opener and the closer. But he defers. He does not come uninvited.

He does not override the willingness. We have to be zealous and repent. He's not going to do the repenting.

He's not going to unlock the door and come stomping in and saying, where's my meal? You open the door. I will come into him and dine with him and he with me. Why does he say it both ways? I will sup with him.

He will sup with me. This is reciprocal. That's the beauty of love.

This is a one another thing here. This isn't Jesus forcing his company on someone. And it isn't something grabbing the Lord Jesus.

I will not let you go until you bless me. Whom I love, I chasten. Whom I love, I knock on their door.

And when they open the door and welcome me in, I will share fellowship meal with him. He will share fellowship meal with me. This is not Calvinism.

This is not divine overruling. This is choice. Every time you see the word repent in scripture, it is a reminder we choose.

So what are we going to do with the rest of today? What are we going to do tomorrow and Tuesday and for the remainder of the days that are given to us by God? What are we going to do with the opportunity to choose? Will we judge ourselves, examine ourselves? Am I in the faith? How do I stack up with these very pointed evaluations to these churches? I am in there somewhere for better or for worse, for commendation or for criticism. Do I have an ear to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches? You think about the chain of custody of this message from God the Father all the way down to us. And the last link in the chain, even after the messenger of the church reads it, the Holy Spirit is the one that is saying, what are you going to do with this? Am I going to respond? Am I going to repent? Am I going to lay hold of these great and precious promises and be someone who qualifies for them or not? It starts with God the Father, it comes through the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is ministered to our heart by the Spirit.

He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to each and every one of us. We are somewhere in those churches, maybe multiple places. What will we do with the message? What a powerful concluding communication from the Lord Jesus we find here in this great book.

Well, we'll pick up our study this coming Wednesday, but we'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ. We are so honored and privileged to live in this age to be a unique possession of His through our faith in His atoning and saving work, to be His body, to be eternally united with Him with the potential for close fellowship and service in the ages to come.

We pray that as we reflect on these truths, God the Holy Spirit will minister them to our hearts in a way that is meaningful, that helps us see clearly not only what the situation is, what the

faithful and true witness is, but how we can implement response, how we can repent, how we can avail ourselves fully of Your grace through the Lord Jesus, through Your Spirit. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.