

CHIEF MINISTRIES

October 2010

Peace be to all who call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ:

“To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: ‘The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands. ² I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. ³ I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. ⁴ But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. ⁵ Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. ⁶ Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. ⁷ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.’ (Revelation 2:1-7 ESV)

Have your godly works replaced your fervent passion? Isn't love what everyone needs more than anything? How's your zeal? Your joy for being saved? Remember worshipping Him and thanking Him and adoring Him from your heart and mind, your soul and strength? Not singing hymns from dirty hymnals or reading overhead projection verses. But because of love....

“And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: ‘The words of the first and the last, who died and came to life. ⁹ “I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. ¹⁰ Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. ¹¹ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.’ (Revelation 2:8-11 ESV)

Polycarp was a man ordained by Saint John according to church history. Forced by his congregation to flee because he won't vow allegiance to the Emperor, he later comes back and tells the governor, “No way! For 86 years I have been Christ's servant, and He has never done me wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who has saved me!” the governor says, “We'll throw you to the lions!” Polycarp says, “Bring 'em on.” Seeing no fear, the governor says, “We'll burn you by fire.” So they put up a stake and Polycarp says, “You don't have to tie me to it; just my hands, I'll stay in the fire.” So they set it all up and light the fire. Polycarp doesn't

cry, or scream, all he does is shout to God, “I thank You that You have thought me worthy to share the cup of Christ among Your witnesses.” The wind kept blowing the flames away from him. He feels the heat but the flames will not kill him. The pain, it should have been unbearable, but eyewitnesses say he had a look of joy to the end. And the end came when a soldier finally runs him through with the sword. This is not the good-times, trust - God – to – fulfill – our- American – dream message many have heard all of their lives. This wasn’t a faith where we say the magic words and cruised to heaven. Yes, there’s salvation, it’s free, but it isn’t cheap! It cost Christ His life, and it cost these people theirs. Of course there is joy, Polycarp had it as the fire surrounded him, but... the fire still surrounded him and he was still killed. If persecution ever returns, are we, the bride prepared to give up everything for Him?

“And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: ‘The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword. ¹³ “I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. Yet you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. ¹⁴ But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality. ¹⁵ So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. ¹⁶ Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth. ¹⁷ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.’ (Revelation 2:12-17 ESV)

The people of Pergamum faced the occult practices of Asclepion, hostile Greek and Roman religions, spiritual warfare, intellectual reasoning, overwhelming information, all constantly attacking their minds and spirits, and when the assault was too much, they had plenty of diversions to distract and numb the pain. Sound familiar? Today in this information age, full of truths and mistruths, information overload attacking on every side. So many opportunities to give up, throw up our hands, quit the fight and zone out with worldly diversions. We must fight with the sword of the Lord – the Word!

“And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: ‘The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze. ¹⁹ “I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. ²⁰ But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. ²¹ I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. ²² Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, ²³ and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works. ²⁴ But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any

other burden. ²⁵ Only hold fast what you have until I come. ²⁶ The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, ²⁷ and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. ²⁸ And I will give him the morning star. ²⁹ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’ (Revelation 2:18-29 ESV)

1 Peter talks of being holy. It isn’t a suggestion. It wasn’t even a goal. It was a command! Just as important as not killing, not stealing, or not committing adultery. *Galatians 5:19-21* is a list of immoralities. We may not be guilty of all of these or even any of these on the ‘outside’, but how many do we tolerate on the inside? The final verse says: *I warn you as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.* Does He then expect us to live a life that is pure and holy? What does Romans say? In *chapter 6:15-18* ¹⁵“What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! ¹⁶ Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? ¹⁷ But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸ and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness”. (ESV) We are not only free from the penalty of sin, but free from the power. *1 John 3:4-9* says; “⁴ Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. ⁵ You know that he appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. ⁶ No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. ⁷ Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. ⁸ Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. ⁹ No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. (ESV)

There are requirements my brother. We can embrace this truth or choose to ignore it. But if ignored, the penalty is devastating. *Galatians 5:21_b* says; “*I warn you as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.*” Harsh but true.

“*And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: ‘The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. “I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. ² Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God. ³ Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you. ⁴ Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. ⁵ The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. ⁶ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’ (Revelation 3:1-6 ESV)*

About 2500 years ago, the Pactolis River was the source of gold in the world. That made the rules, and a fellow by the name of Croesus became the richest man on earth. His palace was impregnable, except for one small opening in the wall. So, Croesus stationed two watchmen there to guard it. Everything was fine, until Cyrus, King of Persia decided he wanted the ruler's gold. But there was no way to go in and get it. So, he brought his army into this valley, and he waited and waited and waited. Until, one night both watchmen fell asleep. That's when Cyrus made his move. He broke through the wall, stormed the citadel and defeated Croesus, taking all the man's gold and riches. All because the watchmen fell asleep. And now today, look at some of our churches. Beautiful buildings with a rich history of good works'. There's no false teaching, no lack of love, no immorality (noticed I said some). Christ has nothing against them... except they've fallen asleep. They had rested on their past accomplishments as an excuse not to act, a reason to retire from the battle. But the battle always continues. And, like Cyrus, the enemy is always waiting, waiting for us to quit, to retire, to fall asleep so he can storm the gates. Wake up! Repent!

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: ‘The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. ⁹ Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet and they will learn that I have loved you. ¹⁰ Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth. ¹¹ I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. ¹² The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. ¹³ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’ (Revelation 3:7-13 ESV)

These are comforting words. No rebukes, commands, nothing to repent of. Just encouragement, and the promise that if we hold on to what we have, God will reward us. We say, “no problem there, when I don't have anything left, hanging on isn't hard. What stands out to me is the phrase; “I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut.” I believe that when we really, really have abandoned self and we've let God reshape us, make us into the man of God that He's been looking for, that phrase will make more sense than ever before. I want out of prison now but that's my “self” still trying to run things. He knows exactly what I need in my life and for how long, whether I deserve to be in prison or not – Joseph was locked up for 17 years for a crime he didn't commit! But it's what it took for Joseph to stop thinking about himself. It's only when our vision is dead that God's vision comes alive! He has set an open door before you, my brothers, that no one can close. All you have to do is go through it. It's time for you to sprout and bear fruit!

“And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: ‘The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation. ¹⁵ ‘I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot.

Would that you were either cold or hot! 16 So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. 17 For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. 18 I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. 19 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. 21 The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. 22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” (Revelation 3:14-22 ESV)

The wealth and strength of today’s church will be its downfall if she doesn’t humble herself and receive Christ’s real riches. God wants you to feel His love. So right there where you are start thanking Him for the small, immediate things. Your bed, a toilet, a hot shower, a commissary soup, a lockdown! - Ugh! The beauty of your mother, or wife or family members, the people around you, the sun, its warmth, the green grass, the rocks at your feet. The wondrous creations of your children, each with their unique looks and personalities. What marvelous diversity! Prime that praise pump! Let your worship blossom, let it grow from a pure heart. But not just worship over what God has created. Worship over who God is. His goodness, His faithfulness, His majesty. Be in awe of an awesome God! And with that I pray you feel His love. Let it cycle. A cycle of adoration and love one for another, spiraling, drawing you closer and closer to each other until you’re totally immersed in His love, and it fills you and begins to pour out of you towards all creation. This is the Creator’s heart. And with this heart comes the fire. The same fire in our Lord’s eyes for His bride! The same all - consuming passion. Let His spirit take control, don’t fear, He’ll show you everything you need to do. let His love strip you of your sin. Let Him take complete control. Love Him with your whole being.

I’m not sure exactly why I felt to share with you these verses in Revelation, it just suddenly occurred to me, so I feel the significance is this: we must find ourselves preparing for much change and revelation to our own lives as we seek His will. It may not look like we think it should, but that’s OK! Fear not! God is about to do some awesome things for those that believe! And call on His name! *Fret not yourself because of evildoers; be not envious of wrongdoers! 2 For they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb. 3 Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness. 4 Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. 5 Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act. 6 He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday. 7 Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices! 8 Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil. 9 For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the Lord shall inherit the land. 10 In just a little while, the wicked will be no more; though you look carefully at his place, he will not be there. 11 But the meek shall inherit the land and delight*

themselves in abundant peace. ¹² The wicked plots against the righteous and gnashes his teeth at him, ¹³ but the Lord laughs at the wicked, for he sees that his day is coming. ¹⁴ The wicked draw the sword and bend their bows to bring down the poor and needy, to slay those whose way is upright; ¹⁵ their sword shall enter their own heart, and their bows shall be broken. ¹⁶ Better is the little that the righteous has than the abundance of many wicked. ¹⁷ For the arms of the wicked shall be broken, but the Lord upholds the righteous. ¹⁸ The Lord knows the days of the blameless, and their heritage will remain forever; ¹⁹ they are not put to shame in evil times; in the days of famine they have abundance. ²⁰ But the wicked will perish; the enemies of the Lord are like the glory of the pastures; they vanish—like smoke they vanish away. ²¹ The wicked borrows but does not pay back, but the righteous is generous and gives; ²² for those blessed by the Lord shall inherit the land, but those cursed by him shall be cut off. ²³ The steps of a man are established by the Lord, when he delights in his way; ²⁴ though he fall, he shall not be cast headlong, for the Lord upholds his hand. ²⁵ I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread. ²⁶ He is ever lending generously, and his children become a blessing. ²⁷ Turn away from evil and do good; so shall you dwell forever. ²⁸ For the Lord loves justice; he will not forsake his saints. They are preserved forever, but the children of the wicked shall be cut off. ²⁹ The righteous shall inherit the land and dwell upon it forever. ³⁰ The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks justice. ³¹ The law of his God is in his heart; his steps do not slip. ³² The wicked watches for the righteous and seeks to put him to death. ³³ The Lord will not abandon him to his power or let him be condemned when he is brought to trial. ³⁴ Wait for the Lord and keep his way, and he will exalt you to inherit the land; you will look on when the wicked are cut off. ³⁵ I have seen a wicked, ruthless man, spreading himself like a green laurel tree. ³⁶ But he passed away, and behold, he was no more; though I sought him, he could not be found. ³⁷ Mark the blameless and behold the upright, for there is a future for the man of peace. ³⁸ But transgressors shall be altogether destroyed; the future of the wicked shall be cut off. ³⁹ The salvation of the righteous is from the Lord; he is their stronghold in the time of trouble. ⁴⁰ The Lord helps them and delivers them; he delivers them from the wicked and saves them, because they take refuge in him. (Psalms 37 ESV)

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Chief

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Christ's

Heart

In

Every

Felon