



The Seven Churches of Revelations

Introduction

In Revelations Chapters 2 and 3, the Lord instructs John to write messages to seven churches in Asia Minor. The verse “Whoever has ears ought to hear what the Spirit says to the churches” is repeated 7 times, once at the end of each Church’s message.

After reading that verse seven times, I decided I should listen to the Spirit. Maybe the messages are not just history lessons. Maybe the messages are not just for those churches. Am I one of those churches? Is there something I need to do?

To Ephesus

Has my love for Jesus become weaker than when I first believed? Have I lost my joy in suffering for Jesus?

“I know your works, your labor, and your endurance, and that you cannot tolerate the wicked...you have endurance and have suffered for my name, and you have not grown weary. Yet I hold this against you: you have lost the love you had at first. Realize how far you have fallen. Repent, and do the works you did at first...To the victor I will give the right to eat from the tree of life that is in the garden of God.” (Revelations 2:1-7).

Wow! The church in Ephesus had a lot going for it. Yet, the Lord was not pleased. What happened? Did they get complacent, proud? Were they only doing works out of Christian duty and not because they deeply loved the Lord and His people? Did they suffer, but not with joy?

I pray...

Lord Jesus Christ, I desire to eat of the Tree of Life in Your garden. Return me to my first love. Protect me from pride and complacency. Pour your love into me that I may pour your love into others.

Jesus, I love You. Jesus, I trust in You. Amen.

To Smyrna

Am I anxious or stressed about life?

“I know your tribulation and poverty, but you are rich...Do not be afraid of anything that you are going to suffer...Remain faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life...The victor shall not be harmed by the second death.” (Revelations 2:8-11).

The church in Smyrna was in better standing than the church at Ephesus, as they did not get chastised. But one gets the sense that the church may have been downhearted over their poverty and anxious about their suffering. They needed reassurance from the Lord and encouragement to continue on.

I pray...

Lord Jesus Christ, I desire to wear the crown of life. By the torment You suffered in being stripped of Your garments, help me to strip myself of all attachment for the things of earth. Clothe me only in Your love. Grant me the strength to remain faithful in all things.

Jesus, I love You. Jesus, I trust in You. Amen.



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To Pergamum

Do I follow the teachings of society instead of God? Do I condone those who hold to false teachings?

"I know that you live where Satan's throne is, and yet you hold fast to my name and have not denied your faith in me...Yet I have a few things against you. You have some people there who hold to false teachings...Therefore repent... To the victor I shall give some of the hidden manna; I shall also give a white amulet upon which is inscribed a new name, which no one knows except the one who receives it." (Revelations 2:13-17).

The church in Pergamum lived in the midst of a pagan setting; but did not stray from the faith. There were, however, members of the church who held to false teachings. This parallels the Catholic Church today. Although the Church teaches against abortion, same-sex marriage, etc. many people proclaim "I am Catholic but I believe in ...", denying the Church. How in the world can the Catholic Church be a light to the world when the members of the Church cannot even agree and be of one mind? Paul said, *"I urge you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree in what you say, and that there be no divisions among you."* (1 Corinthians 1:10), yet pride and arrogance continue to cause many divisions within the Church.

I pray...

Lord Jesus Christ, I desire to eat Your hidden manna, Your bread of life. I desire to receive a new name and become a new person in You. Send Your Spirit to guide and protect me from all false teaching that I may be one with Your Church as You and the Father are one. Help me to lovingly bring back others who hold to false teaching, that they also may be one.

Jesus, I love You. Jesus, I trust in You. Amen.

To Thyatira

Do I tolerate false teachings and evil?

"I know your works, your love, faith, service, and endurance, and that your last works are greater than the first...Yet I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, who teaches and misleads my servants...you must hold fast to what you have until I come... To the victor, who keeps to my ways until the end, I will give authority over the nations". (Revelations 2:18-29)

The church in Thyatira seems to be in a similar boat as Pergamum. But Pergamum had people who believed the false teachings of society and culture. Thyatira had false teachers within the church. Our Church, today, continues to be infiltrated by false teachers. Some are priests and bishops. We must distinguish between teachings of the Church and teachings of "wolves in sheep's clothing" inside the Church who will lead others astray. We must follow the Church and not individuals within the Church.

I pray...

Lord Jesus Christ, I desire to be there when You come again in glory to rule the nations. Grant me discernment to recognize false teachers. Show me Your will in not tolerating false teachers...Yet show me how to love the false teacher as even You love them. Grant me the strength to hold fast to Your Word until You come again.



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Jesus, I love You. Jesus, I trust in You. Amen

To Sardis

Am I just a good person, or do my works lead others to Christ?

"I know your works, that you have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Be watchful and strengthen what is left, which is going to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God. Remember then how you accepted and heard; keep it, and repent...The victor will thus be dressed in white, and I will never erase his name from the Book of Life but will acknowledge his name in the presence of my Father and of his angels." (Revelations 3:1-6)

There is no praise or encouragement at all for the church in Sardis. Many people praised the Church of Sardis, probably because of their good works. But somehow the Lord was not pleased with their works. There are people of every religion, and even those who do not believe in God, who are known for their good works. Good works are not a sign of being Christian, and good works do not lead to salvation. People can be good, but not be in Christ. The works we do must be complete, they must bring people to the knowledge and love and salvation of Jesus. If they do not, those works are dead.

I pray...

Lord Jesus Christ, I desire to be purified and wear the white robe of salvation. I desire for You to acknowledge me as Your child when the Father opens the Book of Life. Open my ears and eyes, that I may know the works You have set before me. Let me see in the crosses of others Your cross, and like Simon of Cyrene, carry the crosses of others to lead them to you. Send Your Spirit to strengthen and guide me, that I may fully complete the works you call me to do.

Jesus, I love You. Jesus, I trust in You. Amen

To Philadelphia

Do I completely trust in God and rely on God for all things?

"I know your works (behold, I have left an open door before you, which no one can close). You have limited strength, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name...Because you have kept my message of endurance, I will keep you safe in the time of trial that is going to come to the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth. Hold fast to what you have, so that no one may take your crown... The victor I will make into a pillar in the temple of my God, and he will never leave it again." (Revelations 3:7-13)

The church of Philadelphia, like Smyrna, is one of only two churches not receiving some sort of chastisement. They rely on Jesus to open the doors to good works. They trust that, since they are called by Him to do the works, nothing can stop them from completing His works; not even their own weaknesses. Even Moses resisted the Lord because of his weaknesses, yet God encouraged Moses and Moses completed the mission God set before him. A little encouragement from the Lord can go a long way.

I pray...

Lord Jesus Christ, I desire to be a pillar of faith for You; I never want to leave You. You know I am weak, and cannot accomplish anything without You. Open my eyes, that I may see the



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doors You have open for me. Grant me strength; that I may walk through the doors and be faithful to all You call me to do. I can do all things, through Him who strengthens me.

Jesus, I love You. Jesus, I trust in You. Amen

To Laodicea

Am I a lukewarm Christian?

"I know your works; I know that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. For you say, 'I am rich and affluent and have no need of anything,' and yet do not realize that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked... Those whom I love, I reprove and chastise. Be earnest, therefore, and repent...I will give the victor the right to sit with me on my throne, as I myself first won the victory and sit with my Father on his throne." (Revelations 3:15-19)

The church of Laodicea is in very bad shape. Even the church of Smyrna, who is dead, is not "spit out of the mouth of God". The problem is being lukewarm. Those who are cold at least have the chance of eventually recognizing they are cold and repenting. Those who are lukewarm believe they are good enough and do enough. They are happy to call themselves Christian, or Catholic; but live in their self-righteousness and the comforts of their possessions. They believe they are justified by their good works. They have no desire and no reason in their own mind to believe they need to draw closer to Christ.

I pray...

Lord Jesus Christ, it is hard to believe that You would allow me to sit on Your throne with You next to the Father; but this is Your love and desire for me. I want to sit on Your throne with you more than anything. Let the fire of love for You keep burning hot within me. As you were stripped of your garments at Cavalry, strip me of all worldly desires and let me be clothed in nothing but love for You and your children. Heavenly Father, gaze upon Your poor and pitiable creature and see only Your Son, in whom You are well pleased.

Jesus, I love You. Jesus, I trust in You. Amen.

Conclusion

Whoever has ears, listen to the Spirit...for the message to the churches is a message to whoever has ears!

What is the Spirit saying to you?