

The Seven Churches of Revelation

Part 4

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[00:00:01] The Revelation, chapter 3, verse 14.

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, These things saith thee, Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God. I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot.

I would thou wert cold or hot.

So then because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.

Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods and of need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, [00:01:03] and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear, and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.

Be zealous, therefore, and repent.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock.

If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with me.

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. We have reached the last of these seven letters [00:02:01] addressed by the Lord Jesus Christ in his character as a judge walking amidst the churches, and in many ways a sad end it is, but we rejoice that for the open ear it is shot through with hope and with opportunity.

True, the emphasis is laid not upon the door opened by the Lord himself, as it was in Philadelphia, but the emphasis is upon the door that may be opened by the individual in their desire who hears the word of the Lord Jesus. Behold, I stand at the door and knock.

If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and sup with him and he with me.

I suppose most of us would agree that there is no more precious promise in the word of God than that, [00:03:03] but it comes down to our first responding to the voice of the Lord Jesus and opening the door.

Well, we've been trying to see exactly what the Lord Jesus thinks about the church in its character as a witness, because that, of course, is what is meant by the fact that these churches are considered as lamps, candlesticks or lamps.

They're lightbearers, they were intended in the fullest sense to be witnesses of the greatness of that which has reached us from God and his grace through the Lord Jesus Christ. We had the opportunity, the churches had the opportunity of being witnesses to the Father and the Son. How have they carried out this? Well, we can easily see that it's a record of a downward road.

In the very first letter we read that the Lord Jesus Christ puts his finger upon the point. [00:04:06] Everything outside, everything outward in those who appeared good and right, that the Lord Jesus Christ said, but I have against thee that thou hast left thy first love.

And although that letter relates to a phase of the church long since closed, we feel in our hearts that the Lord Jesus Christ has put his finger upon a spot for us, that it is responsive love to himself which lies at the core of every right response, and it is the failure in this that lies at the core of every failure of which the church and ourselves have been guilty. We have listened to the words without any reproach or encouragement for those who were in suffering, tribulation, prison, distress, and death, [00:05:03] and the Lord Jesus Christ without reproach says to them, Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. A direct word for those who suffered under the persecuting emperors, but a word also, and we can never forget it today, a word for those suffering like things behind the Iron Curtain, and in all the police states that there are in the world where the people of God suffer, to them, in like manner, the Lord Jesus is saying by these words, Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

I'm sure that no true believer believes that he can be faithful unto death. I'm sure that no true believer believes that he would ever stand the test of being faithful unto death. Yet the records of the history of the church and these words of the Savior indicate that when the grace that is needed is not to be overcome in living, [00:06:03] but when the grace that is needed is to be overcome in dying, then the fount of strength is found equal to that in what comes from the Savior. My grace is sufficient for thee.

And we reviewed the phase, the period, when instead of suffering, the church was patronized by the emperor, and it dwelt in the place where Satan's seat was, that was the world. But we read a very wonderful thing there, and that is that they remained true to his faith and to his name. And we gathered up the wonderful fact that in those days, the frontiers of the faith were delineated once for all. And in those words, the Lord gives his approval to the way the brethren of those days searched, not that they might invent what were the limits of the faith, outside which a man should not be called a Christian, [00:07:02] but they inquired, what did the holy apostles of the Lamb say? What did the holy scriptures say? This is what they wanted to know. If we have to die for that faith, we want to be absolutely certain what that faith is. And so, once for all, with the Lord's approval, they drew the frontiers, the map of the frontiers of faith, outside which no one should be called a Christian. And that's a very important thing today, because lots of the people who come to our doors are not only people who we've been taught to turn away from, but they're people who have forfeited the right to

the Christian name at all, because they don't believe that Jesus is God. And that decision, that recognition rather, comes from the Pergamos phase.

Then we reviewed the great church period, when the bishop of Rome claimed and established his claim, not to be ruled by the emperor, but to rule the emperor, [00:08:04] and succeeded in dominating the world.

But at the same time, that woman, Jezebel, taught the most fearful corruption in the church. However, there were those in that system which is very much alive around us.

There were those who were faithful.

There were those who kept his name, and the Lord gave the greatest encouragement to them, and the most wonderful promises to the overcomers in Thyatira. Then we came to the period resulting from the Reformation. And I would like to repeat again the lesson that I felt we ought to draw from this, and that is the beautiful words of approval to the few in Sardis who had not defiled their garments. They had the Lord's approval in Sardis. Now that means, you see, that in the special phase [00:09:04] of being a lamp or a witness that was appropriate to those days, it was after the recovery of the true gospel had taken place by the Reformation, but as a whole, the church merited the view of the Lord Jesus expressed when he said, Thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead. And the great mass of Protestantism is just like that. From the Reformation it has a name to live, but it is in fact a mass of death. And amongst it there were those, and I read you some wonderful specimens of the discipline and the devotion to the Lord and to the Word which drove some men, whose names are well known to us today, to take what they knew of the Word of God and to be what they should have been to be a part of the lamp.

We know the names.

[00:10:01] There were the poet Cowper and Newton.

There was Wesley and Whitefield.

There were many others of those days whose names we know who present to us a most tremendous example of being faithful in the circumstances in which they were. But as we, with so much light, can't hold a candle to them, ourselves as individuals in the devotion that they gave to the witness of the Gospel, which is what they knew. Now we know that they were aiming at the wrong things when they preached the Gospel. They thought the Gospel would convert the world. They were in a time of real delusion, but they did preach Christ and him crucified and forgiveness and justification through him and the Lord greatly blessed these men's fulfillment of the purpose of the Church in the world, and that was to be lamps, to be witnesses.

[00:11:03] And then we spoke yesterday about another phase in the Church's history when there is nothing at all to condemn, but that a company apart from the two great systems that everyone can see, the Catholic system and the Protestant system, there was another company apart from them who loved the name and kept the word of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And though they had a little strength, they went through the particular door of opportunity that the Lord Jesus Christ opened for them, and they were promised that if, since they were keeping the word

of his patience, he would keep them from the hour of trial. Now when we come to Laodicea, there's one point that this Church shares with Philadelphia. If you look at Philadelphia in verse 10, verse 10 says, [00:12:02] Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee out of the hour of temptation or trial, which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth. Now I don't think I specifically mentioned yesterday that that involves the rapture. It is by the rapture that the Lord Jesus Christ keeps his people out of the great tribulation. And that's a matter which is confirmed by many other passages. But a point I'm at this moment making is that that promise is fulfilled at the rapture of the saints, when the Lord Jesus Christ takes his own out of the world, and he takes them out of the world to leave the world for its period of greatest trial and its tribulation. Therefore, this is the first one of the Churches concerning which it is directly said that the rapture of the saints, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, [00:13:02] takes place in these conditions.

Now, the Church concerning which we have read tonight also specifically refers to the rapture.

The other side of the coin is in verse 16.

I'll come back to this, of course, afterwards. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.

It means I will utterly reject thee, this Church, the Laodiceans. I will utterly reject thee. You have two things, therefore.

In Philadelphia, I will keep thee out of the hour of trial.

In Laodicea, I will spew thee out of my mouth. That means the Lord Jesus Christ, as I've said, would utterly reject it. When does he utterly reject it? He utterly rejects it when he takes his own people out of the world by the rapture of the saints. [00:14:02] At that moment is a spewing of the rest out of his mouth as abhorrent to him.

And so we are here really at the very end of the story, and it's a very, very serious point for us to understand. At the end, therefore, we have those who are marked by taking the opportunities that come to them through an open Bible and a completion of a recovery of the truth.

And by reason of this, their hearts are at every stage with the Lord Jesus. And we notice that in the letter to Philadelphia, whereas in Laodicea, we find there is absolute indifference to the Lord Jesus, and therefore that body is rejected.

Although there are still touching appeals.

Now, it's a conviction, it's my conviction, and I wouldn't be a little bit surprised [00:15:02] if it is the conviction of everyone who has, through their lives, reflected upon these letters. It is my conviction that the honor of Saia Tyre is as alive today as ever. The Catholic churches to this day are absolutely brimming with people.

They pour out of the mass half a dozen times in the morning. The Catholic churches are not lukewarm. There may be signs that we don't know about, but there's every mark of the fact that such as their religion is, they're keen about it, and they are very active in it.

But when we come to Sardis, it is my conviction, and I believe it will be shared by many of you, that from those days, and right through the days which we live, permeating the face of Sardis, [00:16:01] and not by any means without its effect upon the face of Philadelphia, but the stream, the current is set.

It has set in.

The current is strong towards Laodicea. That's the way the tide is flowing to a greater and greater indifference to the Lord Jesus Christ. And we all know, if we are swimmers, we know what it means to swim against the current. If we were navigators, we know what a lot of way is lost if the ship has to go against the current. The current is set, and it's streaming fast to the indifference of Laodicea.

And therefore, what happens here is the greatest possible warning to us. I sometimes think that you could imagine the scene inside a house, and the group of people there is discussing the saying of a well-known statesman, [00:17:03] we've never had it so good.

They're discussing the fact that they have accumulated, and perhaps how they've accumulated, and how smart they've been in accumulating.

But who is that knocking at the door? Well, it doesn't matter. We don't worry about who it is knocking at the door. What concerns us is our riches.

And we are increased with goods, you see.

Our dividends are increasing all the time.

And we are taking counsel how we can forward this process, and we can enjoy the goods.

But who is that knocking at the door? Oh, we're not concerned about who wants to draw attention to us. We don't care about that. We are concerned about our material possessions. And they go on and rejoice in the fact [00:18:01] that they have need of nothing. But all the time, behold, I stand at the door and knock.

There was once a thorn-crowned brow.

There are the marks of his passion in his hands and in his side.

He's standing there, ignored.

Who ever imagined such a scene as this? Something more truly pathetic than the Savior knocking at the door of the church, and he's outside.

Now that's the situation to which the current is very strongly set.

We live in a time when material possessions, the exact things that are spoken of in this verse, you see, the one that I was quoting, verse 17, we live in a time when material possessions are everything. Now I don't suppose it's possible for us to imagine that we can go back to a world [00:19:01] without refrigerators and without motor cars, without lots of the things that sort of delineate the material forms

of the present life. But I am quite sure that the Lord can keep us without our hearts being in them, without their being our real treasure. We would thank God for them and keep them in their place, therefore, and desire that our hearts might be responding to the Lord Jesus Christ and never, never keeping him outside for the sake of a greater concentration upon these things.

Where are the people who used to throng this hall? Where are they?

The tide is setting very much, and we know it well, it's setting very much to indifference. It's setting very much away from a serious attention to the Lord's things and to the word of God and to his institution in the ministry of the word. We have to be really aware of this, and oh, how we ought to pray for our young people, [00:20:02] how we ought to pray for them. It's easy to criticize them. We do lament their absence from the fellowship of the saints on many occasions, but oh, how we ought to pray for them because the tide is flowing so strongly in the direction of being indifferent to the things of Christ and the person of the Savior, and a tide flowing so strongly to a complete immersion in material things and material possessions and the kind of activities that go with these forming the centerpiece of our lives.

Now, it will be necessary for me to go over the details in more detail of this letter, beginning at verse 14.

The Lord Jesus Christ, as always, presents himself in characters appropriate to the church [00:21:04] which he's addressing, and there are many ways in which you might regard the purpose of this presentation.

This presentation is one which would, if the saints had taken account of it, if they had sought to know the Lord Jesus Christ in these particular characters, they would have been kept. You see, they would have been kept, however strongly the current may be setting, they would have been kept if they'd only had their eye upon him. Why is it that every one of these letters begins with, I know thy works, I, and the Lord Jesus Christ presents himself in some of the varied glories and characters and powers and authority that he has? It's in order that we might begin in every case by fixing our eyes upon him and opening our ears to his word.

And the first great lesson of what the Lord Jesus Christ thinks about the state of the church [00:22:02] is presented by these presentations of himself. Now he says here, these things, says the Amen, the first thing, the faithful and true witness, the second thing, the beginning of the creation of God.

I wrote down an extract about the fact the Lord Jesus Christ is the Amen.

It's from Hamilton Smith. And could I say, by way of passing, that if you don't know about it and you would like to read something really both clear and straightforward as well as deeply heart-moving about these seven letters, then the little book by Hamilton Smith entitled The Letters to the Seven Churches you would find very helpful. As the Amen, he is the one in whom all the promises of God have been taken up and affirmed [00:23:02] in all their bearings to bring to pass every good and overthrow every wrong and eternally to glorify God in so doing. And that struck me as being a very wonderful comment upon this statement of the Lord Jesus, I am the Amen.

He is the affirmation, the unalterable affirmation, which makes sure that every promise of God and every element in the eternal counsel of God, it is affirmed, it's available to us today, and it will

certainly come to its fruition. Why? Because there's this person who says, I am the Amen.

In the first chapter of 2 Corinthians, you have it, in him is the yea and in him the Amen to the glory of God by us. The Apostle Paul is admitting having changed his mind. [00:24:01] Well, I don't suppose he knew the word, so what?

But it seems to me very much as though in that passage the Apostle is saying, yes, I did change my mind, so what?

It doesn't prove that I use lightness, it doesn't prove that I was careless, but I did have a fresh communication with the Lord which made me change my mind. But there is one who never changes.

What he has declared, he will perform.

What he has undertaken will come to pass, and all that's needed to glorify God will come to pass because he is the Amen.

What a wonderful presentation for Laodicea.

Rich, increased with goods, need of nothing, but Christ outside.

And all that they should have been doing in being a lamp of witness to the Lord and his truth, it could all have been carried on, it could all have been kept going, and in fact nothing that will fail [00:25:02] because the Lord Jesus says to them, I am the Amen.

He then says, the faithful and true witness.

Now that's very suitable because this just is exactly what in this particular aspect the church ought to have been. I haven't said this evening, although I've said it many times before, that this is not the only figure of speech under which the church is described to us. In fact, it's the last one. But the others, of course, are of central importance in the counsel of God, the body of Christ, the bride of Christ, the house of God, the saints on earth united by the Holy Ghost with Christ in heaven.

That's the main picture that we have of the church in the New Testament. But here at the end we have this other picture of the churches, and that is the churches were intended to be lamps shining in the night of the absence of the Lord Jesus Christ, [00:26:02] a witness to all that he is and all that he is doing and all that he's going to do. Well, it's a very wonderful thing that the Lord Jesus Christ can present himself in the midst of those where the lamp of witness is on the point of expiring, and he can say, I am the true, I am the faithful and true witness.

Oh, what a strength that would be for those who really feel the move to be true witnesses to the Lord Jesus Christ and his truth.

There are many things that are said concerning the Lord Jesus about his own witness.

There was his witness to himself.

When Pilate said, Art thou a king?

He said, Thou say'st it, for this cause came I into the world to bear witness to the truth.

And so he witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, [00:27:02] as the apostle says to Timothy. He bore witness to himself. He was there as the sent one of God, as he'd said so many times. He bore witness to the truth about himself.

He bore witness to heavenly things.

You remember in the third chapter of John, If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things? He then goes on to say, of his witnessing, that which he knew, and that which he had seen, the witness of the Lord Jesus Christ is an unfailing witness about the heavenly things that belong to those who are the possessors of eternal life. Oh, how much our hearts would be rejoicing if we were searching more and more into the knowledge of what the Lord Jesus Christ witnesses.

And then, very striking, how in the setting [00:28:01] of this book at the end, he says, I've sent my angel to witness these things in the churches, and the things that we have that belong to the book of the Revelation. The witness coming from the Lord Jesus to the seven churches, the totality of the churches here is a witness.

The Lord Jesus Christ has deigned to tell his servants things which must shortly come to pass, so that, in addition to the impetus that comes to them from the love of Christ, they may receive also the impetus that comes from them, to them, from the knowledge that the earthly scene, the worldly structures that are liable to fill our lives are going to be destroyed by him.

He has sent, he has sent his servant to witness these things in the churches. So, not that we might be serene persons able to write the history of the future, but persons who, to the motive [00:29:01] of the love of Christ, might be added the motive of the world falling about us to be steadfast and unmovable in the service of the Lord Jesus.

He's the faithful and the true witness.

And then it says he's the beginning of the creation of God.

Well, I suppose, in the absence of a precise statement here, that it's true of the first creation as well as the new creation.

It's often been said, and I think a great deal could be adduced in support of it, that the first creation was the work of God's hand, but it's the new creation that is the work of God's heart.

And even though it be true that the Lord Jesus Christ was the beginning of the first creation, by him God created, by him God upholds, in every sense, he's the firstborn of all creation.

But how wonderful to realize that there is to be a new creation, [00:30:02] and that's especially pertinent to the moment when the shadows fall upon the history of the church as a lampbearer.

He's all finished for those whose true faith is in the Lord Jesus Christ. No, the new creation's stainless joy gleams through the present gloom, that world of bliss without a day, the saint's eternal home.

I've often quoted, and you've often heard it, but it strikes me as being a very remarkable cry of the emptiness that the natural man at his best feels in the world around us, how much there is wrong, how much there is a heartbreak in it.

It's the Persian poet, and he imagines himself, the poet imagines himself speaking to his lover.

Our love, could thou and I [00:31:02] with fate conspire to grasp this sorry scheme of things entire?

Would we not shatter it to bits and then remold it nearer to the heart's desire?

He knew, the Persian poet, the ancient philosopher knew that the world was worthy to be shattered to bits and remolded, but whose heart would it be remolded after? Nearer to the heart's desire.

If it was nearer to man's heart's desire, it would land where it did before because man is unchanged in his existence away from God.

Nearer to the heart's desire of man, of failed man, of sinful man, would be no solution to the problem, but the new creation is the work of God's heart. It's God's heart that has planned it.

It is God's heart that has given the one who in his resurrection glory and power [00:32:01] is the beginning of the new creation.

And every time a soul is saved, then it's new creation. And by that we have the assurance not only that the Lord Jesus Christ says, I am the beginning of the creation of God, but that you and I who belong to him have our footing and our life in that new creation.

Our lives are hid with Christ in God.

Now, we have in verse 15 that element which occurs in all the letters and that is the Lord's appraisal of the condition of the church.

Now I've mentioned this but we have to look at it more carefully. I know thy works that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot.

We, in a certain sense, in our age, are proud of the fact [00:33:01] that we live in the age of toleration. Certainly, certainly the ecumenicals will be proud of the fact that we live in an age of toleration. But if we look more closely at it, when the Catholic priests in Spain were burning the heretics alive, it was a dreadful moment and no one would dream of bringing it back. But it meant that both the persecutors and the persecuted were alive and on fire themselves about this. They knew that they were concerned with matters that were of the deepest possible importance. And toleration, although in the mercy of God we can rejoice in the fact that we have not to face such suffering as they faced, but it really means that the whole thing doesn't matter. That's why they don't burn people today, because they think that religion doesn't matter. And in rejecting religion, they're rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ and the things of Christ don't matter. And that's the spirit, you see, [00:34:02] that's engulfing us if we aren't watchful for it. The spirit that says that our zeal and our fire can be in other things but about the Lord Jesus Christ Luke 1.

I've read, I don't know to what extent it's true or right to adduce it here, but I've read that the three

cities in Asia Minor that are mentioned in the New Testament were very close, you know, within 12 miles of each other or so, were Colossi and Hierapolis and Laodicea. All those places are mentioned in the letter of the Epistles of the Colossians. I've read that one of the greatest differences between these three places on a purely natural scale was this, that Colossi was close to the springs and enjoyed the most refreshing cold water [00:35:01] coming to them directly from the springs. Hierapolis was at a place near the hot springs, which were like all hot springs, they were curative and life-giving and reckoned to be very valuable.

The Laodiceans were a long way from the hot springs and the water that came to them was lukewarm. Well, maybe that there's some value in that fact or not, but the great point that we have here, you see, is that it's not cold and it's not hot.

It's indifferent. That's the point that we have to take account of. And the very fact that we live in a world of toleration makes all the time for the fact that we don't care about these things if we're not careful. We'll slip into the position of being lukewarm.

And we might very, very often rejoice in the fact that some such hymns as we sing are put into our lips.

[00:36:01] Thine is an eternal love Higher than the heights above Deeper than the depths beneath True, free, and faithful Strong as death This alone is our complaint That our love is weak and faint Yet we love thee And adore, oh for grace To love thee more If a contemplation of the lukewarmness of Laodicea makes us go away praying a prayer like that, how wonderful it will be and how willingly will the Lord Jesus respond to it.

Because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot I will spew thee out of my mouth.

It's a fact which is not very vividly presented on the page of Scripture.

But nevertheless, it's a fact that a careful reader of the Scripture would ask.

In the parables of the ten virgins [00:37:02] there were five wives and they went in.

And there were five foolish and they were shut out. And here, a great mass of the professing church is spewed out of his mouth.

What happens to them ecclesiastically?

This is the close of the story of anything that bears the name of a true church here upon earth.

There's only one place for them, all of them, in the prophetic Scriptures and that is Babylon, the mother of harlots and abominations that's going to be destroyed by the ten kings before the utter and final apostasy of rejecting every form of religion that the beast assumes. That frightful burnout that we have in Revelation 17 and 18, that's the reserve for those who are shut out and those who are spewed out. There is no hope for them when that once takes place.

[00:38:03] But here, I've dealt in some detail upon verses 17, upon verse 17, but here we do have the indication that the state of affairs, even in Laodicea, prior to the event which is still spoken of here as

future, that is the spewing out of his mouth, the same moment as the keeping of the true saints out of the hour of trial. There is counsel and there is wonderful comfort. I counsel thee to buy of me.

Now one might well ask what is involved in buying.

Surely we cannot buy in any ordinary sense of the term. Well, I can only go back to Isaiah chapter 55.

Buy of me without money and without price.

There was something about the transaction [00:39:01] which made it appropriate to call it buying, but it was not an exchange of money. It is without money and without price. It surely means a direct and personal transaction between the soul and the Lord Jesus Christ. Buy of me gold tried in the fire.

Now that is being clothed with himself.

That is the divine righteousness with which we are clothed once we become believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the inward truth. That is the inward truth of the preciousness of what we receive when we receive the Lord Jesus Christ.

But there is also the outer truth that they are counseled to buy white raiment that there mayst be clothed and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear. Now that white raiment is explained in the later part of the book to be the manner of our lives.

These Christians, these professing Christians at any rate who were rich [00:40:02] and increased with goods, they didn't have the details of the manner of life that belonged to the new man, that belonged to the Lord Jesus Christ. But we can have it from him because if we come to him then in doing so we have put off the old man with his deeds and put on the new. And that will appear to be in the time, the future time of appraisal when we are with the Lord it will be the white raiment which is the righteousnesses of the saints.

As many as I love I rebuke and chasten.

Be zealous therefore and repent.

Rebuking and chastening comes to all but it becomes effective for those who are exercised by it.

And it's a wonderful thing to see that after the heart rending indifference that is manifested by these persons that the Lord Jesus Christ still speaks of the troubles that came to them [00:41:01] as a manifestation of his love.

And then in verse 20 Behold I stand at the door and knock.

If any man hear my voice and open the door I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with me.

Supposing we did feel and is there a heart here?

Is there a conscience here?

That doesn't feel that the Lord is speaking to us about our indifference?

About our potential engrossment with the things of this life? If it be that the Lord speaks to us and brings us some measure of conviction about this then there's a wonderful hope because there never was a more precious promise in Holy Scripture than this. Behold I stand at the door and knock.

It could be that the ministry of the word is the Saviour knocking.

I'm sure it has been [00:42:01] as I've been reflecting on these things anew many and many a time in my life.

It could be that the Lord Jesus Christ is awakening us to the realities of our own position as truly his people but oh so liable and swept up in the current which is set so steadfastly to the lukewarmness of Laodicea.

Then the Lord Jesus Christ is knocking.

He's knocking by his word and his voice.

And he says if any man hear my voice and open the door.

Now there can be no question you see about what this means. When we were speaking about the open door in Philadelphia we understood that the Lord Jesus Christ by the providential interposition in the affairs of history had brought about a new opportunity for these brethren to enter in to the true knowledge [00:43:01] of heavenly things and to live with and alongside the Lord Jesus Christ in the knowledge of these things. And therefore we understand always that an open door is the plainest possible symbol of an opportunity.

If any man hear my voice are our ears day by day open to the voice of the Savior.

If any man hear my voice secondly and open the door.

Now to open the door to the Lord Jesus Christ is to give him the opportunity to come in.

How many times we have to admit that our lives are filled to overflowing every minute of every hour and every second of every minute occupied and involved in the always necessary affairs of this life. And I think above all the means whereby you and I [00:44:01] can open the door is to give time to seek the secret place in the spiritual sense the upper room and there wait upon the Lord so that he may speak to us. If any man hear my voice and open the door I will come in.

He won't fail it's us who fail he won't fail and the person who does this can have the upper room discourse with the Lord Jesus all to himself. I will come in and sup with him and he with me in living moving power for our hearts he will speak to us of the Father's house and the fact that I'm going to be with him there. He'll speak to us of the Father coming and making his abode with us in the meantime. He'll speak to us by the Holy Ghost to lead us into all the truth and in us and through us to glorify his name.

I will come in [00:45:01] and sup with him and he with me. I want to leave you with the impression coming from the Lord through this scripture no more precious promise no more appropriate promises made to those who are so liable to be engulfed in the current setting towards Laodicea and this promise of the Lord Jesus Christ and there are overcomers in Laodicea.

What can it mean?

But the overcomers in Laodicea are those who have bought gold and have bought white raiment and above all the overcomers in Laodicea those who are going to be awakened afresh by the Lord to be lamps and to witness all that we know of him to those who need it so much. Witness to our fellow Christians being witnesses for him then if we are awakened to a re-understanding [00:46:03] a new understanding of the fact that we are left in this world in the churches to be lamps shining in the night for him then we are told that we shall be with him he shall sit with me upon my throne.

I don't think it's the first importance that it is upon his throne but they shall be with me some spewed out and some with him they will sit with me on my throne as I also overcame and am set with my father on his throne. I'm not aware but I might be corrected upon this I'm not aware that the expression my father's throne occurs elsewhere.

He's at the right hand of the throne in heaven he's in the midst of the throne in chapter 4 but we are told here that when the Lord Jesus Christ went up into heaven he went to sit on his father's throne. The time when he will have his own throne [00:47:01] is not yet come and that's what it means to speak about the patience of the Lord Jesus.

He's patient for the time when he shall have his bride with him.

He's patient for the time when he shall sit upon his own throne.

In the meantime we're told that when the time comes that he sits upon his own throne at the time when the millennial glory is introduced and his people will sit with him as he also overcame and is set down with his father on his throne.

He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.