

He Who Has an Ear, Let Him Hear...

Revelation 2:7

The Greek word for Revelation “apokalypsis” translates to an unveiling or disclosing. And the opening words, “The revelation of Jesus Christ”, indicate the subject of the entire book. Notice the words are in red. This is Jesus speaking.

Revelation 2:7 (NKJV)

The Holy Spirit is assuredly speaking some radical things to the Church today.

There is a stirring among many of the people in the Church, which is God the Holy Spirit Speaking. I think some in the Church have relegated the Holy Spirit to just a hireling or servant of God. However, the Holy Trinity is truly God in three individual persons. (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) Each one fully God but unique in person.

Now God the Holy Spirit, through all modern day’s turmoil and shouting, of international controversy, through the clash of materialist society and even the tangled complexity of ecclesiastical debate, through the waves of emotion and fear of our own hearts, is speaking a loud and clear message to the Church.

God the Holy Spirit is crying out to those who are listening for His voice.

The Apostle John wrote these letters to Seven churches in Asia. Now there were more than Seven churches at that time and these churches were not picked for their size or location. Rather, Seven is a symbolic number, the perfect number. It shows completeness.

So these Seven churches symbolize all the churches, in writing to them, John writes to the church universal, to all congregations.

We today are part, John writes to us today also.

Now each letter has a distinct tone, a specific word of challenge to sum up the whole message. Today let’s compile these markers into the map the Spirit is laying out for us as Christians to follow.

THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS (the loveless church)

Revelation 2:4-5 (NKJV)

We the Church are based on Four miraculous historical acts; The Incarnation, The Cross, The Resurrection and Pentecost. Yet, can we truly be a part of any of these without repentance?

The Incarnation, the Word (Jesus) became flesh and because of love came down into the pit of miseries, known as humanity. And all the outcast of humanity (sick, poor, prostitutes, criminals) felt at home with him.

However, today's Church isn't really like Jesus.

Religion tends to segregate rather than befriend the outcast. We expect people to clean up before coming in. To the church of the Incarnate, the Spirit says remember Jesus and Repent.

The Cross, not the pretty one in stained glass or one forged of silver but rather the old rugged wooden bloody one that stripped away all dignity in a stark opposition to the world's value system.

Today's Church has allowed in secular ideas of Prosperity, Success and Security. To the church of the Cross the Spirit calls, remember the Cross of Jesus Christ and Repent.

The Resurrection, we the Church of the gospel, the good news for all humanity, the Church that sang "Hallelujah, He is Risen" through many times of persecution.

We aren't like that much anymore. Today we take our faith rather sedately in tedious routine. To the Church of the Resurrection of our Savior, the Spirit cries remember Jesus Resurrection and Repent.

Finally, Pentecost, Ones who actually heard the mighty rushing wind and saw the descending fire, who spoke in new tongues as the Spirit gave to them. Who were all in complete unity in thoughts and deeds.

Church are we like that today?

I think we should be ashamed at our divisions and lack of genuine fellowship in the Lord. For it is truly sinful.

We are called to go out and preach reconciliation to society, to the broken lives all around us. Yet, how can we preach such a message when we are notoriously divided ourselves?

Certainly, there are differences between denominations and no clear or easy solution. However, the facts of the doctrines we hold in common are so miraculous and significant, they should silence that which keeps us apart.

See if we really believe these pillars of our faith (The Incarnation, Atonement, Resurrection, Pentecost) not just espousing them but captivated by them, will they not by their miraculous truth, unite all believers? Or shall we continue debating secondary things?

This is the stubbornness of human sin and pride. Our way is right; others is wrong so division is justified. Jesus warned of this very thing.

Luke 18:9-14 (NKJV)

To the Church of Pentecost, the Spirit exhorts to remember and Repent.

The first marker to us through the church at Ephesus is to hear the Spirit speak, Repent.

THE CHURCH AT SMYRNA (the persecuted church)

Revelation 2:9a (NKJV)

This Marker is the very compass of the New Testament.

Like the novel *Treasure Island*, the new covenant is full of Discovery, Wealth and unsearchable Riches. That Almighty God, bore all the sins of humanity, because of love.

Even in our current world of Electronic Technological Marvels, this is still the Ultimate Mystery and Irrefutable Truth.

That Jesus Christ offers Life, Redeeming us from our Insignificance.

Galatians 2:20 (NKJV)

Just like the tree gives life to the branches, so Christ imparts Life to his Church. Not just a better Life but Gods own Quality of Life.

The issue is that we still refuse to truly believe it.

Hence, the differences in denominational creeds and the weak example the Church is to the world.

Romans 8:16-17 (NKJV)

The Spirit speaks to the church at Smyrna, realize your riches in Christ. The church at Pergamos (the compromising church)

Revelation 2:13 (NKJV)

The Spirit is saying to Resist the pressures of Politics and Modern Ideologies. Stand for Religious Freedom. It was a real threat in the days of Roman rule as it is today.

Look in the middle east (Muslim vs. Christian)
Look in China (Government vs. Christian)
Look here in America (Secularism vs. Christianity)

Today's young people are pressured to acquiesce to a substandard of Christianity (deny Jesus is the only way and all His commands) or be persecuted as a bigot, racist, sexist, hateful ignorant person.

Romans 12:2 (NKJV)

The Spirit says to the church at Pergamos, stand up for your faith.

THE CHURCH AT THYATIRA (the corrupt church)

Revelation 2:25 (NKJV)

Being Tenacious is essential to Christian Discipleship. It is a great danger that we should lose heart in following Jesus. That the effects of time and excursion in life, weigh us down till we collapse.

Galatians 3:3-4 (NKJV)

This corruption of the Initial Infilling is pathetic because it is unnecessary. Through the Holy Spirit, we don't live life from our own resources but a new every morning power that conquers every foe.

Psalm 84:4-7 (NKJV)

The Spirit speaks to the Church at Thyatira to hold fast.

THE CHURCH AT SARDIS (the dead church)

Revelation 3:1-2 (NKJV)

This Church has all the signs of life on the surface but are dead on the inside.

A Church like this is a tragedy for it was the Vitality of the Early Church that the Roman Government feared. The believers in the first Church were like glowing embers in a forest fire. Wherever they landed they sparked a fire.

Unfortunately, this Church is like what Albert Schweitzer observed about what the modern world has done to the teachings of Jesus in the gospels, "*many of the greatest sayings are found lying in a corner like explosive shells from which the fuses have been removed*".

1 Corinthians 13:1-2 (NKJV)

We can have all of Religion but without Jesus, we are nothing.

To the Church at Sardis the spirit warns, Beware of Nominal Christianity.

THE CHURCH AT PHILADELPHIA (the faithful church)

Revelation 3:8 (NKJV)

This Church was in a perfect geographic location to have great opportunity to Evangelize. It was at the neck of a valley that the road to all the Orient passed. It was literally the gateway to all of Asia.

Listen when I say that, Evangelism is our Vocation as Christians.

God has opened doorways before us. Divine Opportunities. The Church is not to sit among likeminded believers, but rather be an Expeditionary Force. "Terra Incognita" Infiltrating the world in Business and Culture, in the name of Jesus.

William Temple wrote: "The Church exists primarily for those who never go near it".

Is today's Church concerned with those who will never go near it?

Hebrews 13:12-14 (NKJV)

Every time we put a barrier between the Church and the lost we are no different from the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant (matt. 18:21-35).

Evangelism is a Forgiven Church, Preaching and more so Living and Offering Forgiveness and Reconciliation to God.

The Spirit says to the Church at Philadelphia, I have set an Open Door before you, Evangelize.

THE CHURCH AT LAODICEA (the lukewarm church)

Revelation 3:15-16 (NKJV)

Christianity's opposition today isn't lukewarm but rather scorching hot. Revival will only come when our desire for the kingdom of heaven truly burns within us like a consuming fire.

Joseph Parker wrote "The Church today is Mt. Vesuvius without fire, Niagara Falls without water and the Sky without the Sun".

We know the Church needs Revival today because we know that we Personally need Revival.

The Spirit calls to the church at Laodicea to, warm your faith at the fire of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 3:22 (NKJV)

Church, if we are to be found “about the Fathers Business “, we must hear what the Spirit is saying to us in these last days.

Repent of our apathy.

We are Rich in the treasure of Jesus and His Gospel

Stand for Religious Freedom and defense of our faith

Hold Fast to our Faith

Beware of Nominal Christianity

Evangelize

Warm your Faith in the consuming Fire of Jesus Christ

Let's Pray