

What About You And Your Blind Spots

by James Jennings

This sermon emphasizes the importance of personal communion with the Lord Jesus Christ, highlighting the danger of becoming lukewarm in faith and neglecting a deep relationship with Him. The speaker urges individuals to examine their hearts, seek the Lord's presence, and be open to His correction and discipline. The message underscores the need for ongoing spiritual growth and a renewed focus on Christ as the ultimate cure for spiritual blindness and complacency.

Scripture: Revelation 3:20, Psalms 139:23, Luke 6:41, Colossians 2:1, Proverbs 7:22, 1 Samuel 16:7, Psalms 19:12, Luke 10:38, 1 Samuel 4:52

Topics: "Personal Communion with Christ", "Spiritual Growth and Vigilance"

Description

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Transcript

Lord, I pray that You would help us. That You'd meet with us. That You'd give us more of Your Spirit.

We want to be with Jeff and Laredo and St. Manetti and Austin, Tafik, wherever he's at today, Mark and Corpus. Lord, we want to honor You. We want to proclaim the riches from Your Word.

And so I pray You'd even use this. Lord, in my life and my brethren's lives, Lord, would You affect us today? We desperately need You. And we just ask for Your help humbly, Lord, where You don't deserve for You to give us anything.

And yet, Lord, You love us. We're Your flock. So I ask that You would feed us.

Lord, help me to preach this clearly in Christ's name, Amen. Well, in a moment, we're going to read from Colossians. Does anyone remember the mini-documentary I did on the church at Ephesus? Anyone remember that message? Some? And one thing I wanted to consider when we looked at that months ago was that different phases of that church were recorded in our Bibles.

We didn't have to go to anything extra-biblical. We didn't go to church history. But 60 years, different tidbits within 60 years of the church at Ephesus are in this book.

And just like a documentary that you watch on television, it can be very informative. You see how, say, this start-up company started. And you see when they get to this peak.

And you might even see when they get to a point where the market changes. And then you see them struggle through that. And then they excel and they figure something else out.

And you learn from these documentaries. It's the same thing with a biography. The Old Testament contains a lot of biographies of different men.

And you watch Joseph's life. You watch David's life. You watch Uzziah's life.

And you learn. And the New Testament itself tells us that the things contained in the Word are given as an example with what purpose? To instruct you and me. It's not just the Old Testament, but what we find in the New Testament it's given for our instruction.

Isn't that what with parents we teach our children? That person was a good example. And we're holding them up as a good example because we want our children to imitate what was positive. The same thing happens with all these different characters in the Word of God.

And these are not made-up characters. This is not fiction. This is reality.

These people lived, as you and I do, with faith, trusting in the Lord for the power to honor Him. And so with the church at Ephesus, we saw three major phases. The first was the glory days.

The second was the days of fighting for doctrinal purity. And then the third thing we looked at was the church at Ephesus in Revelation. And we found they had good doctrine there, but they had a lack of love.

For God and man, that was overflowed in the earlier years, it wasn't there. They wouldn't bear with false teaching, but they were failing to bear with one another. And so Ephesus was a warning to us that the same pitfalls that they had early on fighting for doctrinal purity, those were not the same pitfalls they had 60 years later.

They had a different pitfall or blind spot. It's not always the same snares that try to wrap themselves around your legs as you're running this race as a Christian. And so this morning, I want to do another mini-documentary.

Not on the church at Ephesus, but the church of Laodicea. And we have less footage on the church of Laodicea. And I had less time editing through the footage, meaning the Scriptures that we have in the Word of God that I would have liked to have prepared this.

But there's something here that really stands out to me that I hope I'll be able to drive home to you all. So why Colossians? If we're thinking about the church history of Laodicea, why did we just turn to Colossians? Because Colossians records references to Laodicea because they were one of the recipients of different things that Paul is saying here. And so if you look at Colossians 2:1, and this is the first occurrence.

It brings up Laodicea. For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea. So there it is.

And for all who have not seen me face to face. Okay, what's his struggle? His struggle is that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery. And he defines that mystery, which is Christ.

And then he talks about Christ. What's there about Christ? In Christ, there are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Then he says, I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments.

This mystery of Christ, that's the big thing. Not these plausible arguments. For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit.

And then he says this about the church at Laodicea. He's speaking to them. And for those, so they're one of the people hearing this.

He says this, I'm rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ. You hear that? He's rejoicing that they have good order, but specifically that they are firm in what? Their faith in Christ. They are incredibly Christ-centered.

We're going to see, when you get to Revelation, that's not the case. Thirty years later, that is not the case because you've got Christ knocking on the door implying He is not among them. Wherever they're at doctrinally, that's one thing, but where is Christ? The firmness in Christ here somewhat deteriorated in the next 30 years by the time you get to the recording of what happens in Revelation.

It's an interesting reality. People were trying to delude them. It wasn't happening here.

They weren't getting deluded. They weren't giving in to these plausible arguments, but something happened over a period of time that changed that. And if you go on here, look at verses 18 and chapter 2. He says, let no one disqualify you.

And that's kind of the same language to some of the churches in Revelation. Let no one seize your crown. There's a way to get disqualified just like in a race where you might start early or you might go over the line.

Here, he's saying let no one disqualify you or judge you, insisting on asceticism, worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up with reason by a sensuous mind. And then look at this. Not holding fast to the head.

Right? Be firm in Christ. I'm rejoicing you are. And I want you to hold fast to the head who is Christ.

Then one more verse here. If you look at chapter 4, verse 15. He says, give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea and to Nympha.

It's hard to know if it's a woman or a man, they say. But to Nympha, and it seems when it says in the church in her house, if it's her, then that's referring to her, which it seems it is, then it is a woman. And so there's this woman here, Nympha, who's got a church meeting in her house in Laodicea.

You just picture them there and they're getting this letter and Paul is rejoicing that they're firm in their trust and faith in Christ. They're not being dislooted. They're not being disqualified by all these other things.

And then this chapter closes. You kind of have one of those transitions where it has those captions at the bottom and it says, 30 years later. 30 years later.

And so you're wondering, it's kind of green and happy, and it says 30 years later and all the buildings are destroyed or something like that. You're wondering what's going to happen? What's going to happen? Here it's in 60 A.D. it seems, and around 30 years later, you've got an update. So let's go to that update in Revelation 3. We kind of have a second phase here.

What happened to them? Did the culture change a lot? What happened to the godly people's children who got raised up? Did they live on the past glory days of their parents? We don't know a whole lot of the answers to some of those questions. What we do know here is what Christ tells us. And if you want anyone to come in and diagnose a church, who would you want that person to be? You want it to be the Lord Jesus.

He knows, as He says constantly throughout all these churches, He says, I know your works. And He's not making that statement arrogantly. It is a genuine statement that He specifically knows the works of those in that church.

He's not missing anything at all. And one thing we can also consider is Christ, what He hits on with these churches, I think it's a safe assumption to say what He wants to pull out into the front, it's the biggest thing to deal with. He's pulling out the big kahuna, as they say.

This is the issue. It's not the cut over here. It's not the broken bone over here.

What is the thing that is most deadly poison or cancer that is rotting away in this church? That's what I'm going to go after. So Christ does. He doesn't beat around the bush.

And He's dealing with all these churches, these seven churches in Asia Minor, He's dealing with them as individual local churches. So let's read what He says to Laodicea starting in v. 14, chapter 3. "...And to the angel of the church in Laodicea, write the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, since the beginning of God's creation. I know your works.

You are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spit you out of My mouth." I will spew you out.

"...For you say..." So what are they saying? I'm rich. I have prospered. I need nothing.

"...Not realizing..." Hear that statement. "...Not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, and blind, and naked." Then what's His counsel to them? Christ, a good physician, doesn't just tell the problem. He gives the solution.

I counsel you. This is like the counsel from the best counselor you could ever have. 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." Refined.

There's some sort of discipline happening here. There's a change happening. And then He says in v. 19, well, those whom I love, I reprove and discipline.

And what should our response be? To be zealous and repent. And then He gives this incredible encouragement in v. 20, "...Behold, I stand at the door and knock." This is commonly taken as an evangelistic text. Not that there aren't people in these churches who are lost.

The fact that He would say, I'm going to spit you out. Clearly, just like in any church, not everyone is truly regenerate, right? But this is primarily dealing with those who are here. It's among the church.

This isn't primarily an evangelistic text. He says, "...Behold, I stand at the door and I knock. If anyone hears My voice, opens the door, I will come to him and I will eat with him and he with Me.

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, he who has an ear..." How good is our hearing? "...let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." So, first, I just want to point out a phrase here that has really gripped me this past week. And it's right there in v. 17.

I need nothing. Not realizing. And then he says that you are and he has multiple things.

Not realizing you're blind. I want to stick on that specifically. Not realizing you're blind.

They don't realize their true state. They have blind spots. They've got things they don't recognize.

You could say they are sure they are right, and yet what? They're absolutely confident they are right, but they're absolutely wrong. They don't recognize it. They don't actually recognize it.

This is different than secret sins. Secret sins are things by which you conceal. You know about it, but you're concealing it.

You're hiding it. David knew about his adultery. He knew about his murder, but he's hiding it.

He was trying to avoid being confronted about it. This isn't secret sins. It's not even on your radar what all is happening.

Not realizing. It's the same Greek term as in John 3.8, but you do not know where the wind comes from. You don't know.

You're ignorant of it. And the common way we think about blind spots is driving a vehicle. They say check your blind spot.

Right? Because you can't see it in all of the mirrors. Now, I've got a different problem. Because I'm tall.

The other day, I'm in my Toyota Corolla and I'm at a four-way stop at Home Depot and I look at all of my places not realizing my mirror because of my height was blocking a car right there. And as I started to pull out, all of a sudden, a car came right out from behind my mirror. I was blind to it.

I checked everything, but I was unaware. Think about Apollos. What type of blind spots did Apollos have in Acts? What type of blind spots did he have? He had theological blind spots, right? He only knew the baptism of John.

But we can have character blind spots. Think about Psalm 19. Who can discern his errors? Now what does he say next? Declare me innocent from hidden faults.

Hidden faults. Hidden errors. Who can discern his errors? What is our ability to discern where we might be off and lacking in Christ's likeness? Apparently, this church in Revelation, Christ Himself says they didn't realize something.

They thought they did, but they didn't. They didn't realize something. Hidden.

Something hidden. And the writer in Psalm 19, what does he go on to say? He says, let my what be pleasing and acceptable to the Lord. What the meditations of my heart and the words of my mouth.

So what's he thinking about when he thinks about things that might be hidden faults? He's not thinking about external actions. He's thinking about what he was thinking about in his heart on the drive to school. Or what he was thinking towards his child this morning as they were getting ready to go to church.

Was that meditation towards the child, was it right? Was it pleasing to the Lord? Or was there some sin hidden within the heart internally that no one else really saw that I was not dealing with or acknowledging? So he wanted everything right down to the very meditations of his heart to be right. Now, he says here this church is lukewarm. They're not useful to him to the point where he will vomit them out.

He's putting them in his mouth, so to speak, like a drink, and it's not worth anything. How did they get to that point in 30 years? How does it tend to happen? It tends to happen with a little something here, a little something there. There's this slow cooling down that begins to happen.

I woke up this morning. I go out to study. And we have our second fridge in our laundry room.

And I noticed the light was coming out of the second fridge. That the door had been cracked for six hours. So everything in there, it was slowly cooling down because we were ignorant of the door being slightly open when we went to bed.

Think about people who are blind. I've always been amazed at Proverbs 7 when it talks about the immoral man who goes to the adulterous woman. It talks about him like a bird who rushes into a snare.

And it says what about him? He does not know what? It's not that he doesn't know the danger. That's part of it, but he says it more specifically. He does not know that it will what? Cost him his life.

That's very severe of a statement. He doesn't know that. People want to say, well, it might cost you your marriage.

Well, it might cost you your ministry opportunity. Forget that. The Bible says it will cost you your life and the man doesn't know it.

That he's like an ox being led to the slaughter. He assumes it won't cost him that much. So we're thinking, just this idea of blind spots and things that you and I don't realize.

And Luke 6, you don't need to turn there, but how can you say to your brother, let me take the speck that is in your eye, when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? When you hear that statement, when you yourself do not see. And then he calls them, he says, you hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye and then you will see clearly to take the speck that is in your brother's eye. And you

know what our proud assumption tends to be is that we ourselves are the ones who have the clearest vision.

You tend to deal with the situation and you assume that you've done all the research and you've got all the facts and that you're the one who sees and the other individual is not the one who sees. But here you have an entire church who didn't realize something. There's no fault with my vision.

I'm 20-20 in the spiritual realm. We better be very slow to say such statements as that. Now, talk about blind spots.

I suppose I should address those in here who do not have any blind spots. I was wondering where you guys are seated at. But you know what happens? We might be the very person who thinks we don't have any.

Then we're too blind to that. That quick thought in our mind that says like Peter, oh, I'd never do that. I'd never deny Christ.

So, here's something to all of us from Jonathan Edwards. And I put this up in the full article years ago and I'll be honest, it's very, very convicting. So let me read.

Jonathan Edwards, if you do not know, Jonathan Edwards from hundreds of years ago. Some would say he was the greatest theologian in America at that time. He's the one who helped take care of David Brainerd as David Brainerd was dying of tuberculosis.

Pride. It's much more difficult to be discerned than any other corruption because its nature very much consists in a person's having too high a thought of himself. No wonder that he who has too high a thought of himself does not know it.

For he necessarily thinks that the opinion he has of himself has just grounds. Therefore, he thinks it's not too high. I mean, if he thought such an opinion of himself was without just grounds, he would therein cease to have it.

Those that are spiritually proud have a high conceit of two things. Namely, they have a high conceit of the amount of spiritual light they have. And they have a high conceit of their degree of humility.

Both, which are a strong prejudice against a discovery of their pride. Do you get what he's saying? Like the two very things that will keep you from discovering your pride are your view of your humility and are your view of the amount of spiritual light and discernment that you think that you have. Yet the proud man, because he has those two things, it all the more keeps him from recognizing what he is really blind to.

Being proud of their light, that makes them not jealous of themselves. He who thinks a clear light shines around him is not suspicious of an enemy lurking near him unseen. Because he's assuming there are no enemies.

If there was an enemy, I would have seen it by now. But there might be an enemy right on top of him. And then being proud of their humility, that makes them least of all jealous of themselves in that particular way, namely, as being under the prevalence of pride.

They just assume because of my humility, there's no way I'm deceived by my pride. There are many sins of the heart that are very secret in their nature and difficultly discerned. The psalmist says in Psalm 19, 12,

who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults.

But spiritual pride is the most secret of all sins. The very nature of it is to work self-confidence and drive away jealousy of any evil of that kind. There is no sin so much like the devil as this for secrecy and subtlety and appearing in a great many shapes undiscerned and unsuspected.

Pride appears as an angel of light. It takes occasion to arise from everything. It perverts and abuses everything and even the exercises of real grace and real humility.

As an occasion to exert itself, it is the sin that has as it were many lives. If you kill pride, it will live still. If you mortify and suppress it in one shape, it rises in another.

If you think it all gone, yet it is still there. You hear what he's saying there? The proud man says, God so humbled me ten years ago, and I remember how he dealt with my pride then, so it can't be pride right now. Who says it's not round two? Or maybe round ten.

I think I'm on round fourteen or something like that. Maybe I missed a couple rounds accidentally of God's crushing, humbling blows. Jesus is still Edwards.

There are a great many kinds of pride that lie in different forms and shapes, one under another, and encompass the heart like coats of an onion. If you peel off one, there's another underneath. We need therefore to have the greatest watch imaginable over our hearts with respect to this matter, and to cry most earnestly to the great Searcher of the Heart for His help.

I know that's a long quote. Maybe it's hard to follow. But Edwards, he's trying to show you and I that if we in any way start to assume that pride is not an issue with us, that very well might be the very evidence that it is.

I think I'm really discerning. I figured it all out. God really humbled me years ago.

I have humility now. Really, do I? Do I have light? Do I have discernment? What did He say to this church here? Did anyone else say this to this church? Or is it just Christ? Is it just Christ who could see through? You say, I'm rich, I've prospered, I need nothing, not realizing that you're wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, naked. Not realizing.

What do you and I not realize right now? That's one of the things I've been asking myself. What am I blind to? What do I not realize? And now, this is a church. He's saying this to.

I don't see anything here where He's calling a few individuals out in the church. I see it as something that is to the corporate body. They thought corporately.

You see what I'm saying? The numbers. The majority thought something. And yet here, they supposed they had recovered, but they were still sick.

Now let me say this. Am I preaching this right now because I think we are this church? How do I answer that? My gut would be to say, no, I'm not preaching this because I think this is our church. What's wrong of me if I say that though? I mean, these people didn't think it.

So I'm preaching this because this is something that I've been asking in my own life, my own personal walk with the Lord Jesus. But we'd be wrong to just dismiss that everything is okay with us individually,

etc. So I wouldn't answer it and say no.

Not that I look and I see something glaring, but what if something is? What do you and I not realize about ourselves? If our attitude is to say, well, it's not me, then how do we know there's not some pride in us preventing us from seeing our faults? And just like Luke 6, what is the judgmental man? It's easier to look out and see the specks in others' eyes and not recognize the log in his own eye. And one of our first reactions is to say I'm okay, and we look at others and we find the issues with them, but lo and behold, we don't recognize where we ourselves are at. And we should ask that.

But where are we individually at? Do you first suspect yourself or someone else? Now, I know there are people who overanalyze and they get paralyzed, and these type of statements could hinder them, but did any of these churches in Revelation out of all seven of them, did any of them have the big issue of they overanalyzed themselves or they became too introspective? Did any of these churches have that issue? Did any of the churches in the New Testament have that issue? That's not the issue. So as much as we might want to run there and be careful, and we should be careful, at the same time, we've got to recognize the bigger issue more than not is maybe we don't do enough considering are the meditations of my heart acceptable to God. So, let's consider some of these things here.

And this isn't going to be exhaustive. Like I said, I lack time to edit the footage, but also that blind spot thing was really one of the main things I wanted to put forward. But he tells the church here in v. 15, I know your works.

I know your works. And this is a statement used in five of the addresses to the churches. And the idea is the Lord is saying I know what occupies your time.

I know that which you're undertaking to do. I know the products that you are producing and what is accomplished by your hands. The Lord is fully aware of that.

He knows all of that. In Christ, He says to them, He says you're neither hot nor cold. He says they're lukewarm.

And we're going to look at that on Tuesday night in the Berean Bible study. Is the hot and cold both positives? Or is just the hot positive and the cold means you're all out in the world and lost in it and Christ would rather have you not professing at all? I don't want to deal with that right now. We're going to look at that Tuesday night.

But clearly, they're not useful to the Lord. However you define the hot or the cold, what's clear is they're lukewarm and that's not a good place to be. Christ threatens to spit them out.

What occupies their time, their statement of I need nothing gets a response from Christ. I will spit you out of My mouth. And the only other time that word is used in the Greek that I could find in my software is in Isaiah 19.14 where it talks about someone staggering in vomit.

It's the word vomit. A church not realizing what's going on internally, what's happening to them. They say I need nothing.

Christ is not near. Christ says I'll spit you out of My mouth. These are shocking words.

I will throw you up. We tend to think of radical terms like that, especially in our Internet age, like clickbait or something. You make a really exaggerated title on a video to get people to click on it and they call that clickbait.

You're trying to bait them in. Christ here, this isn't clickbait. He's trying to use as much vivid imagery as possible to get across the seriousness of this reality.

And what makes the Lord use the imagery of a person throwing up at the lukewarm taste of the church? Why will they be destroyed? And we already looked at that. He says in v. 17, for you say. So something they're saying which indicates an internal attitude in the heart is getting the Lord to the point of almost spewing them out if they don't respond.

What were they saying? I'm rich. I've prospered. I need nothing.

We can mistaken prosperity and material possessions and even spiritual possessions of good doctrine. We can mistake that as a sign of divine approval. Do you need to have good doctrine to really be approved by the Lord? Yeah, absolutely.

You want to have really good doctrine. But you know what? There's a lot of churches out there like this one that was firm in Christ 30 years ago. What happened later on? So, firm in doctrine, maybe that's part of what he means by we need nothing and we have prospered.

Or is it just these riches and the things that are physical and the prosperity gospel nowadays says look, that's a sign of God's blessing on your life. He provided you the \$40,000 car and all these different things. And people think God is pleased.

That's not the case here. But, they had a poor attitude. I need nothing.

I need nothing. They don't acknowledge their need. Okay, what did they need? They're not acknowledging their need.

What did they need? I mean, I know he says to them that they need to repent. Those I love I reprove and discipline. So be zealous and repent.

He says that in v. 19. But, he says they're blind. They're not realizing something.

They don't see where they are at. Well, where are they at? What was his counsel to them? To do what? V. 18, what's it say? Where did he send them to? Himself. Okay, what's that imply? If he's sending them to Himself, where are they currently? If he's saying, buy from me.

If he's saying, I've got the salve. Where does that imply they're at? They're not with Him. Remember, they just said I need nothing.

All these churches, Christ is the ultimate cure. Even v. 20. It's the close of dealing with all the churches.

You can look at v. 20 and 21 and 22 as a summary towards all the churches. Or you can just take v. 20 as specifically dealing with Laodicea. But Christ points to Himself.

What's this imply? They've stopped buying from Christ. And rather than get confused, try to define what does he mean by buying? What do we actually need to go buy from the Lord Jesus Christ? The bigger

thing you don't want to miss is the fact that he's calling them to Himself. That's exactly what's happening in v. 20.

I stand at the door and I knock. If you hear my voice. They're not hearing because they're over there with the earbuds in their spiritual zone thinking we don't need anything.

They don't realize the fire alarm is going off. Christ is saying, if you're here, and you open, I will come in to Him. And I will eat with Him and He with me.

But you notice what's happened? They're not getting counsel from Christ. They're not eating with Christ. In other words, their communion and fellowship with Christ has corporately disintegrated in the midst of their prosperity.

And they started prospering and they got to the point where it's like they're not. This prayer life with the Lord Jesus, it's faded. This communion with Christ, it's not where it used to be.

And then He calls out to them, let Him. He's calling to us individually even to ask ourselves, is Christ at my table? In my heart? Is He there? Am I not just receiving good doctrine? Where is my communion with the Lord? And it's incredible here that we're the ones who've run to Christ, yet who is doing the pursuing? Christ. Christ is doing the pursuing of us.

That's incredible. Why? He wants us to see as He does. I mean, the Lord is not making it difficult.

He's got the salve. He's just knocking at the door saying, are they going to come? I'll heal them of whatever blindness, whatever thing it is that they do not realize. So you recognize here, I could look at this and I could say to myself, you know what? What do I not see? You know what this text calls me to do? It calls me to go and pray and fast and seek the Lord and commune with Him and trust that He even there has that ability to reveal things to me that I might have become numb to, that I might have become calloused to in my heart, that I might have become desensitized to.

And He is more than willing to put the salve on my eyes. Can He use other people? Can He use people as a means? Absolutely He can. But He can show me that.

And He wants to show us that. He doesn't want us to have something in the life or in the church that we do not realize. You know, He's like the door-to-door doctor.

He comes to you. He's knocking. He wants to come in.

He wants to put salve on your eyes. He wants to let you see. But they've stopped visiting the Lord.

They've stopped having fellowship with Him. They don't need Him. They are content in a bad way.

They should be discontent with the lack of the presence of He who walks among the churches. Where is their personal communion with the Lord? Christ indicates He is the very cure they need. He's the cure.

How do you have nothing and yet you're told to go and buy from Christ? Don't get lost in that. You go, by faith, to Christ. Rather than the imagery or the symbolism or all of that confuse you, you go and you cry out to the living God and He is more than willing and able to take some salve and put it on the eyes.

And He is the very One pursuing us. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline. Isn't the reproofs of the Lord a blessing in the Christian life? All the way back to the psalm, I ask the Lord that I might grow.

Or all the way to the Psalm 141, where David prays, let the righteous rebuke me, it is kindness, it is oil for my head, but don't let my head refuse it. You find these realities throughout the very Word of God. You find the reality I preached on years ago of Uzziah having 81 men of valor go in and rebuke him for doing something he had no right to do and his response was to say to them, do you know who I am? And he didn't hear them.

But the Lord struck him with leprosy. The Lord reprovved him. That's how much our God loves us.

He deals with us. He works in us. He wants us to become more like His Son.

And His Son is right there helping us. So, personally, my understanding of Laodicea, I don't read this and think they had a heresy creeping in the church, but I think they've got something just as deadly. A lack of communion with the Lord Jesus.

They're not eating with Him. They're not buying from Him. And He's outside.

He's outside. They don't realize it. Who didn't realize the Spirit of God had left Him? Samson? And what did he do? He went and tried to do something.

It doesn't go well. Right? That's not me though. I know I'm good.

No. We can't let that be the knee-jerk reaction. If it is, that is a defense mechanism that reveals our pride in our heart.

Christ isn't leaving them there because He loves them and He loves us too. So, I was thinking, Solomon attempted that series years ago, but I slept. Chapter 5. There's an allegory here.

I slept. My heart was awake. It's sound.

My Beloved is knocking. What's Christ saying? Open to Me, My sister, My love, My dove, My perfect one. My head is wet with dew.

My locks with the drops of night. Christ is a pursuer of His people. Don't you see that? Isn't there a place? The Lord just goes out of His way to pursue you because He cares about you.

He cares for this church. He loves us. And in our 20-year history, the different things that we don't realize, the Lord comes in love and He continues to keep us.

And He's going to continue to do that. And there's great hope in Christ because He is the head of the church. So, what happened in 30 years? In the Colossians letter, they're firmly rooted in Christ.

And through that, apparently, they've prospered physically, spiritually, to the point where they felt that they needed nothing and thus they neglected their personal communion with the Lord Jesus Christ to the point where He's using this very imagery of He's knocking on the door. Which if you get that rebuke to you, that implies He's not in. He's not in.

He's not being welcomed. And who's the one not doing the welcoming? It's us, yet they didn't realize they weren't doing that. Think of that time in your life where you had a burden to pray for something and you

stopped whatever it was and you went and you prayed for that very thing.

Is that still a reality in your life? Or have you just attributed that whole thing to emotionalism and maybe that wasn't the Spirit of God tugging at your heart to go pray for something? Or the time in the Word of God? As a new Christian, we're often constantly in the Word, eating up the Word. I hear some of you new believers reading four or five hours a day. What about us who are ten years in the race? Can we say like Job, that the commandments have not departed from me, for Your Word is more to me than my portion of food? Christ is calling them back to Himself.

Calling each individual to Himself. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, He's saying, I will come in to Him. And what if they are not zealous to repent? What if they continue in their pride? He's going to vomit them out.

He's going to destroy them. And no doubt that would prove the lost estate of that many people in this generation of this church at Laodicea. Whatever their parents had and that firmness in Christ, it's gone.

So what about blind spots? You know, you go to this godly Christian and you have a meal with them and you're trying to get them to point stuff out in your life. Nick Hendricks, Monday we're at the house, and he asked me to point out errors in his parenting, errors in his sermons, and errors in his life. And whatever discernment I have, I tried to help him.

And that's great he wanted help. He recognizes that opportunity. But you know what this text is saying? You can have a meal with the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, and He can put salve on your eyes and let you see things that you have not seen.

And you can pray, Psalm 139, Search me, O God. Try my heart. Try my ways.

Lord, see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Not many people want to call the FBI to come and search every single document in their house and download every file on their computer. But you know what? The Lord Jesus, He wants us to do that.

To call upon Him to come in. Send the search party in my heart, O Lord. Show me what I have not seen.

I shared this with my grace group and it just came to my mind, but Terry, Bethany's mom, mentioned after Bob had died, Bob's oldest son at that point had not yet been converted. He renounced his false professions. He was lost at that point.

You know what a lost son did when his father died? He went on his father's computer and he looked through all of his father's Internet history to see is my dad really real? Or is there anything on there that I will find that will speak of hypocrisy? Because he's not believing right now. And he's wanting to know. Did my dad walk the walk? Was there hypocrisy in his life? And he didn't find anything bad.

So do you individually have a deepening personal walk with Christ? And that's really the question. Are you eating with Him? Are you feasting on His Word? Are you praying to Him? Not like the Pharisees. Are you going to Him? Why personally? Because Christ says, Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if anyone, no matter what everyone else does, what are you going to do? What are you going to do? And I'm reminded, years ago, I think the first time I was reading through the Bible when I was converted, I ran across 1 Samuel 4.52. And what it says, it says, this is King Saul, a lost man.

When Saul saw any strong man or valiant man, what did he do? Anyone know? He saw a strong or a valiant man. It says King Saul attached himself to that individual. What do you get from that? You know what you get from that? You and I, it's not about the strong Christians that we are around and us finding some sense of assurance and blessing based on our association with them.

But you remove all of that and it's just you and the Lord. What do you got? What's really there? Do I have personal intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ? Is He reproving me? Is He dealing with me? Is He pruning me? Is He making me more like Christ? People often live off the reality of other individuals. And the other individual is growing and they are not.

And not to overly quote my father-in-law, but I tried to get some wisdom from him before he died, and he made the comment to me, he said, James, I was amazed at how many spouses fell away after one of the spouses died. So you've got two people in the church both professing one dies who is the real Christian, the other fell away. And Bob's observation was their Christianity, it was built more on the marriage, it was built more on attaching themselves to their spouse and the reality of their spouse than they themselves have an individual intimate relationship with Christ.

So that's why I say, where are we at personally? That's what Christ does. He doesn't say if any married couple. He says if anyone.

If you hear Him, He wants you to come to Him. He wants you to say, Lord, put salve on my eyes. I don't want to be blind.

I don't need nothing. I need You. Not to make light of people who might feel like no one invites me over.

I know that can be a real thing. But guess who's inviting you over here? And He's not inviting you over. He's coming to you.

He's knocking. He's looking for you. And you want to open the door by faith and you want Him to put that salve on your eyes and you want Him to work in your heart.

So how is your hospitality towards the Lord Jesus? Have you any missed calls from Him? Is He seated at the table? Is He there? Are you eating with Him? Is His voice speaking to you through the Word on a personal level? You think again about Martha and Luke 10. One thing is necessary. Mary has chosen a good portion.

Martha was anxious and troubled about many ministerial things, you could say. And somewhere in the midst of that, a neglect of an intimate walk with Christ had crept in. And so, as one brother said, their illness can be remedied only through a renewed relationship with Christ by buying true spiritual resources from Him.

He's there offering that to you and I. And He says here to the churches, He is the One who conquers. I will grant Him to sit with me on the throne. You can look at that word conquer and you just get into battle mode.

And not that it shouldn't make you get into battle mode, but it comes right after a statement of opening a door. Does that sound like a battle? Opening a door of One who is actually seeking you out. Do we need a conqueror? Yes.

Are there times we're cutting hands off that cause us to sin according to Jesus' words and we're casting them away? Yes. But you know what? As you're dining with Christ, it's going to be pretty easy to do amputations. It's going to be pretty easy to conquer the different sins in your life that might be grabbing hold of your heart.

Well, what have we got? 1054. Well, I think that's all I have. So I just wanted to share that.

It's been something on my mind my own life. I was doing some spiritual inventory asking the Lord what are the things that I don't realize in my life. You can't live on the past growth.

We've got to currently grow and take higher ground. Let me pray. Now I need to mention one thing.

Father, Lord, thank You so much for Your love. Those whom I love. Lord, how is it that we could be included in that statement? It's incredible.

And Lord, all this initiative that You take. Please, Lord, forgive our dull hearing when we don't hear that knock. When we're too zoned in on other things.

Lord, forgive us of the things we don't realize. Lord, I pray right now that You would search the hearts of myself, of my brothers and sisters. Lord, You'd send the Holy Spirit.

Try our hearts. Convict us of anything there. Lord, and lead us in the blessed, everlasting way.

Lord, we love You. And yet we know, Lord, there are things. We have not had perfection, but we want it.

And so, Lord, don't leave us. In Christ's name, Amen. Well, we're going to have a baptism outside.

It's Jake Wilson. And it's very encouraging. Who got to read his testimony? A handful of you.

I hear one thought as I've had in reflecting on it. You know, when Jake went back to Tyler, basically ran away, I forget, just ran away from conviction and different things. I remember John Dee's going to the Grace House meeting with him.

Different people meeting with Jake. But when he was gone, Matt McDonald really put an effort into maintaining contact with Jake. That was one aspect of what the Lord used.

It's just a reminder to me of the people who've gone out from us, the people who've fallen away. Yes, we've got to worry about everything that's happening among ourselves. But if you ever have something like that cross your mind about one of those individuals, and they're not under discipline, Jake was not under discipline.

There's definitely an aspect of the Chief Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ, to leave the 99 and to go after the one and to try to hunt them down. So I felt like that was one thing God was showing me this week in my own heart. Alright, well, we will go out there probably around 10-10 to 10-15.

Alright, thank you. You're dismissed.

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