

Revelation 3: 20-22 (Part 2); "The Promise and the Pledge", Sermon # 29 in the series - "The Faithful and True Witness", Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on August 27th, 2006 in the Afternoon Worship Service.

When we were last together in this text, I had asked the question, "How can we overcome lukewarmness in the Christian life?" Lukewarmness exists in a Christian's life when a person allows himself to become lax about everything that he knows and everything that he has been given spiritually to him by his Lord Jesus Christ; the One who died for him. It is when he knows that he should be devoted to the Lord in daily Bible reading and prayer but he does not do it. It is when he knows that he should be engaged in good works in relation to the church and people around him and yet he lives for himself basically. He has come to the place where he is convinced that he is all right spiritually when he does nothing to try to forward the kingdom of Christ in his own heart and in the lives of other people. His thoughts are more caught up with the cares of life and his own selfish interests rather than thinking about what true fellowship with Christ might consist of, and what it might mean to His Savior and Lord. Is this the case with you, dear believer? Then follow me into this sermon where we will talk about the things that are important to Him and which I hope and trust will become important to you when you hear of them.

The only remedy for lukewarmness we have seen a previous study, is to "buy from Christ", to transact with Him spiritually for the things that you are lacking, that he mentions in verse 18. The lukewarm believer who wants to overcome his lukewarmness must come and ask Christ to refine him spiritually; to convict him in relation to all the commandments that he is presently not keeping. And then to pray also that the Lord will bring the right combination of providential ordering of events into his life which will show him how he should live and what he should spend his time doing. He prays to be shown what he should repent of in the way that he is currently living his life. He may have been spending everything that he receives from Christ in grace, on nothing but his own worldly pleasures and somehow this must change. He has been interested in recreational pleasures but not interested in finding the spiritual pleasures at God's right hand. He has been accustomed to living the Christian life in his own strength and wisdom rather than praying for grace to please God. He has come to attempt to live the Christian life in accordance with the wisdom of the world rather than according to the wisdom which is from above. These are the reasons that the Lord Jesus is ready to spew this church of Laodicea and her service to him, out of His mouth. How can this change? It changes when we will come to the Lord Jesus and really begin to have fellowship with Him.

We first of all must take notice of the Position that Christ takes with every believer; "I stand at the Door." We looked at this last week and so I will not take the time to go over it again. Suffice to say that the context and what the Lord Jesus is looking to do with the person whose heart's door He is knocking on, shows us that the primary reference of this verse is not an evangelistic appeal. It is referring to Christ standing and knocking to come in and have fellowship with him, the one who has already come to saving faith in Christ. Fellowship with God is not automatic in the Christian life. It is something that we must consciously pursue as we would a relationship with a friend, but remembering that the Lord Jesus is far greater and more important than any earthly

friend. He is your Lord and Master. So it is the most important of relationships that He is seeking to develop with each individual believer in their hearts. And of course, then, when the interaction between our soul and Christ is regular, then the church that we are a part of also is strengthened to bring glory to Christ in the various ways that we serve Him. So we want look more this afternoon at the 2nd truth about the Lord Jesus that will strengthen us to overcome lukewarmness and that is the Promise that Christ gives to any believer; "If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to dine with him and he with Me." And then, as we time, we want to look at the 3rd truth about the Lord Jesus, the pledge that He gives to those who overcome the temptation to lukewarmness.

2. More on Christ's Promise of "Dining" with the believer.

Turn back with me again to Song of Solomon chapter 5, because that is where we left off last week. What we were speaking of in relation to this text is that the relationship between Christ and the believer is that of a Kingly husband who seeking the fellowship and the love of a spouse who has closed and locked the door and has gone to bed and is asleep when He comes knocking on the door. The picture is identical to the picture in the text we are studying in the book of Revelation, but even more revealing. "I was asleep but my heart was awake." She has a heart that has been awakened to righteousness and it is a heart that loves her Savior and King, the Lord Jesus. But He comes knocking at a very inconvenient time. And because of that she will not open to him. I told you last week that this is the way our Christian life is. It often seems to be inconvenient to hold fellowship in your heart and mind with the Lord Jesus, and in those times, we excuse ourselves from having and holding fellowship with our Beloved. But I said to you that this does not stop the incessant knocking of the Lord Jesus to come into our heart and mind and to dine with us. In these verses Christ appears to have been knocking for a long time because His head is covered with dew, and His locks with the drops of the night. What it finally took for the spouse to open the door was to see Him put his hand through the opening or the latch of the door, and in seeing this her feelings are aroused for Him. It says in verse 4, "My beloved put His hand by the latch of the door, and my heart yearned for Him." "I arose to open for my beloved, and my hands dripped liquid myrrh, on the handles of the lock." She repented of this lukewarmness and experienced a godly sorrow for her sin, that she had been so reluctant to go to the door. "I opened for my beloved, but my beloved had turned away and was gone." We must not think that all was lost for the spouse at this point. Sometimes the Lord will withdraw from us the sense of his presence and blessing if we have grieved him by not opening the door of our hearts to Him to come in and have fellowship. We must do what the spouse did in these verses. She went looking for him. The rest of the chapter goes on to explain the difficulties that she had finding Him after he had gone. She gets up and puts her clothes on again and goes about the city trying to find Him by describing Him to others and asking if they have seen Him. The watchmen, who represent faithful pastors and teachers, "found her and wounded her, and the keepers of the walls took her veil away from her." This describes in picture form the reproof given to her by ministers and faithful friends that brought conviction of her sin to her. She was wounded, but faithful are the wounds of a friend. They told her and showed her how foolish she had been, how unfeeling and unthinking to let her Kingly husband stand outside knocking and trying to come in while she only thinks of her own comfort. But by the end of the chapter she has so reminded herself of what He is like in

His love for her and how beautiful a person He is in His holiness, and how sweet and desirable He is in His grace and affection for her, that she soon is having good fellowship with Him again.

But we must ask ourselves what was it that He had wanted that night that was so important that He would stand outside knocking at this inconvenient time. It was, that He could spiritually dine with her, and she with him. And this is described for us in chapter 4, verses 12- Chapter 5, verse 1. Verse 12 says explicitly that "A garden enclosed is my sister my spouse, a spring shut up, and a fountain sealed." The spouse is the garden that he comes into, to see what kind of plants that she has been growing there for him. In this garden He says in verse 13 are, "an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits." "The believer has many graces, he is an orchard planted with many trees and plants." So says James Durham in his commentary on this book. John Gill says in his commentary on this place, "Pomegranate trees in some countries are very large; and so they were in the land of Canaan." "They were very fruitful trees: the fruit they bear, as it is full of a delightful juice, so of grains or kernels; which may denote the saints being full of grace, and all the fruits of righteousness and good works." The Beloved, the Lord Jesus Christ, comes into the garden of our hearts looking for what His grace has produced and to share a dining experience with us in our hearts. You see this in a New Testament prayer of the apostle Paul in Philippians 1: 9 when he says, "And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God." The spouse in Song of Solomon prays for more of the Holy Spirit's good influences in verse 16 when she says, "Awake, O north wind, and come, O south! Blow upon my garden, that its spices may flow out." "Let my beloved come to his garden and eat its pleasant fruits." The believer is not only pictured as an orchard garden, but a spice garden. Frankincense, myrrh, aloes, calamus, and cinnamon are all mentioned. How many of you like to eat your meals with spices on them? I would venture to guess that many of you do. The Lord Jesus wants to dine with you over the meat of His blessed Word. And He wants to taste the spices of His grace at work in your life. He wants to see faith, hope, and love at work in your life, to taste and see your patience, your goodness, your kindness, your faithfulness, your gentleness, and your joy. He wants to eat the honey with the honeycomb with you; a special treat. He says in Psalm 81: 16, "For I would feed you with the finest of wheat and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you. He wants to drink wine with his milk with you. He wants you to remember what He has done for you on the cross and all the manifold grace that He has purchased for you there. In Isaiah 55: 1 it says, "Ho!" "Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy, and eat." "Yes, come buy wine and milk without money and without price." "Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy?" "Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance." Oh what great blessings to the believer's heart and soul, to be able to dine with Christ, to partake of such rich and tasty food for the soul, fellowship with the Lord Jesus over what is written in His Word and what is then impressed upon the mind and digested by the heart. In Song of Solomon 5: 1 our beloved Savior says, "Eat, O friends!" "Drink, yes, drink deeply, O beloved ones!"

Oh how I pray that each of us will understand how precious and how powerful, how stimulating and ravishing to the soul is this kind of fellowship with Christ. Many of you have favorite restaurants that you go to and you like to spend time together there. But will you not see that the kind of dining that the Lord Jesus does with you is that he comes to your heart house, and you have prepared various things in your heart and actions for Him to partake of, and He brings further grace and understanding of Himself and His truth to give to you. There is something for Him and something for you, in fellowship. It will be this that will take away your lukewarmness and enable you to become hot in service and devotion to Him and to the cause of righteousness and truth. It is a stimulus to a deeper prayer life and leads to a greater thoughtfulness of what we can do to serve our Lord more.

And then 3rdly- There is the Pledge that Christ gives to victorious believers; "I will grant to sit with Me on My Throne."

To sit down with Christ on His throne is not something that we as believers will be able to do literally until the last day, on the day of judgment. In Matthew 25: 31 it says, "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of his glory." "All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate the sheep from the goats." Will the throne be so great in size that all the true believers will come and literally sit on the throne with Him? I do not think that this will be the case. In our text in verse 21 it says, "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. Christ is sitting at the Father's right hand presently, until all His enemies are made a footstool for His feet. He has overcome and is interceding for His people, and awaiting the time when He will return in His 2nd coming. When we overcome our lukewarmness and live to the glory of all that Christ has died to bring us, when we suffer with Him in this life, "we shall also reign with Him," it says in 2 Timothy 2: 12. That reigning with him will take place after His 2nd coming. In Matthew 25: 33 it says, "And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on His left." When Christ overcame it says in Ephesians 1: 20 that God "seated Him in the heavenly places far above all rule and power and might and dominion, and every name that is name, not only in this age but also in the that which is to come." And in Ephesians 2: 6 it says that, "even when we were dead in trespasses, He made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." In this spiritual sense we are already seated on the Throne with Christ. And there will be a future sense in the Millennium when the saints will reign in a spiritual sense upon the earth for that "thousand years." But to "sit on the Throne" is reserved for the last day and the resurrection from the dead. We will reign literally physically, and spiritually with Christ in that day if we overcome. Whether the Throne is literally that big or whether we will stand with our Lord around it makes no difference. It will be plainly seen that we are with Him. Perhaps, individually at some point, we shall have the privilege of being taken up to be seated with Him on the Throne for a time and to know the literal physical fulfillment of this passage. But if this is not so, there will be a literal spiritual fulfillment of it that will be so entirely real that we will be fully persuaded that the promise has been fulfilled. May each of us come to that blessed place.