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Welcome back to our Gamma studies, looking at Revelation chapter 3 study. Brothers and sisters in Christ, we will be doing three churches; Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. All right. So let's start with what a prayer. We ask Lord that you continue to help us through the lens of these three churches to understand the dangers that confront us in our spiritual lives and how we are to overcome. We ask for Jesus sake. Amen.

Now we move, we've done Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamon and Thyatira and today we're looking at Sardis.

1 “And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: ‘The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.

Which is the fullness of God's spirit.

“I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead.

Here you have a contradiction of terms. It seems as if the people understand that they are all fully alive, but when God looks at you, you're dead.

2 Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God. 3 Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.

Here we have got the ruins of the church of Sardis. Very famous king there, King Croesus. In fact, there was a term “to be as rich as Croesus”. This is a place where immense wealth, in fact this was where money was born. The first time the people in the area started using gold and silver pieces like this as money, because it was more easy to transact than to basically have barter trade.

Remember that famous legend about King Midas, whatever he would touch would turn to gold and in fact, unfortunately he even touched his daughter and she turned to gold and to get rid of that golden Midas touch what he did was he went down to the river next to the city called the Pactolos River and he washed and the Midas touch was lost and allegedly the gold washed down the streams and now the people of this city could actually mine or pan for gold at the Pactolos River.

So here is a picture of these hills, which the city was built on it. It was an impregnable fortress. You can see all the ruins left here. It was so impregnable, the people were so confident in the strength of its walls, but it was actually twice conquered. It was conquered by Cyrus the great in 546 BC when there was a part of the walls, which actually left unguarded because it was standing on top of huge cliffs. They thought nobody could climb these cliffs. And so therefore they left it unguarded and there was a soldier inside, one of Cyrus man who actually, you know, who dropped his helmet over the walls and went through a secret passage to retrieve that helmet and that is where they spotted about the secret passage walls and they launched an attack on the opposite end to distract the soldiers while the special forces off the Persians entered through this secret passage and took this city.

And the city was taken twice. The next time was by Alexander the Great and twice was because of their overconfidence. And this seems to have been appropriate to the sins of this particular church, Sardis, because they were overconfident and thought they were great church with great heritage, but they were actually dead. And you notice if all the other churches had persecution, there wasn't any persecution here that is described, and this is one of the two richest churches, the Sardis church and the Laodicean church among the seven. And next to this church is a huge, we call it Necropolis basically, people place where you actually bury the dead. 1,100 cave tombs where all the dead were buried were famous for this particular cemetery. The caves were used, you know, because of the soft earth there.

There's a story told of a pastor who actually went to pastor a 100-year-old church. And it was a church that really had, there is no evangelistic activity. The previous pastor left and told the young guy, look you know, I think you're going to have a very tough time. People here, they won't change. It looks like a dead church, you know. He tried as much as possible, he instituted four spiritual laws, got them to evangelistic programs, probably tried a lot of Alpha, nothing seemed to work, you know. Everybody seemed to be satisfied to do what they've always done for the past few hundred years. And then he got a bit tired and one day he said to his congregation, you know they say this church is dead. So next week we're going to have a funeral. What? A funeral for the church. And so people were excited because they put notice up there, funeral service the next Sunday at 10 o'clock and the whole town was excited. What is he talking about? How is he going to hold a funeral for this 100-year-old judge?

And in fact, the following Sunday at 10 o'clock, the whole church was packed with Christians, non-Christians, they all packed the church and he preached a sermon, a sad sermon on how the church had declined. At the end of the particular sermon, the people were invited to stream up. You know, in a funeral, you go and see the open casket and you'll see the dead inside. So they were asked, all of them to line up and file pass the casket to have a look inside and they did and everyone came up there and look at it and they left with a shock look, and you know what was inside the casket? You guessed it, a mirror.

So, every time they went up, they saw a picture of themselves and that shocked them. They thought they were alive. They thought they were a proud church with a hundred years of history, but spiritually they were dead.

Now in this passage there are several hallmarks of a dead church. The three hallmarks; reputation replaces repentance.

- You're a dead church when your church values performance above perseverance.
- You're a dead church when your church has compromised instead of commitment.

If you look in chapter 3 verse 1

**“And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: ‘The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. “I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead.**

Verse 3 downwards,

**Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent.**

So what they actually valued was reputation more than repentance. And I guess if you come from a long Oigus church with a long tradition, like I did, when I first started out, as was a child I was baptized at age of six, confirmed at the age of 12. I attended Bible study and Sunday school right from a young age. And so I had a lot of reputation. So when my friends actually came to talk to me about Jesus Christ and

gospel, I didn't really know much about Jesus Christ, but it was my reputation that was more important than repentance.

In fact, we are blind. Martin Luther says,

**“The ultimate test of a sinner is that he doesn't recognize his own sin”.**

John Wesley was like that. He was a founder of the Methodist church. All over the Methodist churches in the world, owe their origin to John Wesley and he actually went into America in the state of Georgia in the city of Savannah to preach as a missionary and he wasn't really a Christian. He was ultimately confronted by a group of 25 Moravian brothers who actually shared with him the gospel and this is what he wrote,

**“But I understood it, not at first.”**

I mean, he did not understand that.

**“I was too learned and too wise; so it seemed foolishness unto me.”**

So he didn't realize that he actually was a sinner. The trouble is you don't realize when you're dead. And then later on, it was later on where he actually was confronted by gospel of Jesus Christ when he read Martin Luther's introduction to the book of commentary on Galatians when he realized that with his good works, for which he dependent on that actually would bring death rather than life and he needed to throw himself on God. And this is a hymn, which brother Charles Wesley wrote

Long my imprisoned spirit lay  
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,  
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
My chains fell off, my heart was free,  
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.  
My chains fell off, my heart was free,  
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread;  
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine!  
Alive in Him, my living Head,  
And clothed in righteousness Divine,  
Bold I approach the eternal throne,  
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.

Now the second feature of this church was the value of performance rather than perseverance. I know your works. They have works. They work hard. But if you look down in the second part of verse two,

**for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God.**

There were works but it was not the right kind of works. In fact, some of us think that God grades on a curve. Do we have to do just the minimum, attend Bible study or Gamma and go to Alpha and then I'm okay. I don't have to really do very much. Does God grade on a curve? We delude ourselves. In fact, Matthew 7 says,

22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' 23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

The emphasis in our world today is basically on prophetic gifts, spectacular gifts, healing, the visible and not the mundane. In fact there was a story told of a plastic surgeon, who was asked, you know, which kind of surgery that you do the most and why people like it? Facelift. Why do we do facelifts? Because when you actually have a facelift, just because you look good and young, you think you will probably live forever. And that's basically an illusion, isn't it. And good works is like an illusion that you're actually alive, but you are not complete. Matthew 7 24 says,

"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

Just because you attend Gamma, just because you understand how to interpret Revelations doesn't mean anything. You not only must hear it, you must actually do them, which is why in Revelations 1:3 the challenge is

Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy,

This Bible study, this prophecy,

and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

Lastly, there is compromise instead of commitment,

4 Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy.

So we have people who soiled their garments, who basically is a metaphorical term for compromise and if you look in Sardis, they actually have the largest synagogue outside Palestine. If you look very closely at a synagogue, you know what you will see. You see a statue of the eagle. The eagle is the symbol of the Roman Empire. And they officially dug right deep underneath the synagogues and they found names of the Jews buried there with Roman names. So they actually combined the religion. They've actually compromised their faith and right next to the synagogues is actually the gymnasium, where people actually have exercise as well as open sex, which is actually deeply offensive to Jews, but these Jews didn't mind that have their synagogues next to the gymnasium.

So we compromise. Why do we compromise? We compromise because the emphasis is being happier and more fulfilled. So therefore we look for worship that excites us, sermon that entertains us, counselling that makes us feel good, music that propels us through the day, or provide services for our children in Sunday School. This is the challenge, we need to stop compromising.

3 Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.

Which means there will be judgment and that will come at any time and what they have to do is what they have received, they heard and keep it and repent. You know what this is? This is actually the gospel. Paul says, (2 Tim 1:13)

13 Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 14 By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

See the gospel is altered, it is no longer the gospel that is why, if you are believing in good works, you are believing in reputation, you are believing in a lifestyle. If you believe in the moral benefits and moral principles of the gospel and you're following that, you will find that, that won't save you. The gospel is the fact that Jesus Christ died for us because we are sinners destined for death. That is the gospel.

That is what you've heard, you received and we need to keep it and we need to keep on repenting. And the reward,

5 The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments (which is righteousness which God gives), and I will never blot his name out (which in Greek words says, I will never ever which is a strongest Greek word. I will never ever blot your name out the book of life.

And anyone else,

I will call out his name.

Which means Jesus Christ himself, while you are standing there in heaven. Jesus Christ will call John Goh, Malcolm Anderson. Won't you love it when your name is called out called out before John, before God the father and before all the angels of the universe.

We're continuing our study on Revelations chapter 3, looking at the next church down the line called the church of Philadelphia. And we're going one big circle and Philadelphia here is third church, sorry the sixth church down the line. Here are some pictures of the ruins of Philadelphia. We don't have many. Let's read Revelations chapter three verse 7

7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: 'The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens. 8 "I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

So here we actually have this concept of the key of David. It is Jesus described as the Holy one, the true one and he has the key of David. Now this idea of the key of David has somewhat been distorted by some pastors, we will explore this whole issue. This is what he writes in his website.

*Live life unafraid, trusting that God will open all the right doors for you! In this uplifting DVD album, Joseph Prince shows you how your Savior holds the key to the doors of eternal life, faith, deliverance and every blessing you need. Discover also what the key of David is, and how worshipping the Lord with the psalms of David can turn your negative situations around. Get ready for a bright future knowing that when Jesus, your shield and the lifter of your head, opens a door for you, no one and nothing can shut it!*

And this is the teaching and there is one of the folk who bought into this teaching, he now shares a testimony

*Immediately after hearing the sermon, I prayed and asked the Lord to open a door for me to something big in the entertainment industry. After my prayer, I received a phone call. I was told that I was going to be on the season premiere of the Guinness World Records Unleashed. This was no coincidence for the Lord had heard me and Jesus*

*opened the door.*

Now, do we apply this encouragement of Jesus to the church of Philadelphia that we can all have the key of David and we can use that key to unlock all the treasures, all the blessings in our lives, whether it is in the medical field or the commercial field or the entertainment industry. Let's look carefully. This word of the Holy one, the true one who has the key of David and this key is used to open doors.

Now let's look, there are three elements in this particular passage. One, is the key of David. It functions to open doors and three in the context of this encouragement given to a weak and persecuted church.

We're going to look at the Old Testament background, and we're going to look at a New Testament background, and we're going to look at the context of Jew and Gentiles that is addressed in this particular passage. Old Testament background is taken from Isaiah 22.

**20 In that day I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah,**

Now, just before we start, this is the passage in Isaiah, which talks about the time of Hezekiah's rule. And during Hezekiah's rule he has got a servant, which is like the prime minister and his name is Shevana and he has not been serving the country well, and what God has done is that he has chosen another steward to the King. And this is Eliakim. Verse 21.

**I will clothe him with your robe, and will bind your sash on him, and will commit your authority to his hand. And he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. 22 And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David. He shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.**

So very obvious, this is God choosing Eliakim as his servant and this Eliakim will have the key of David. The key of David means he has the authority to open and shut in terms of government. The key of David in the Old Testament background is a person who is a servant of God who has got authority of government. Now Revelation chapter one. There's a key there too, it is Jesus,

**"Fear not, I am the first and the last, 18 and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.**

Jesus has keys too but his key is the key to living or eternal death. Then we have got this idea of open doors. If you look in the New Testament, the concept of open doors is open doors for evangelism. Acts 14:27

**And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.**

2 Corinthians 2:12, for Paul,

**12 When I came to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ, even though a door was opened for me in the Lord,**

Here again, the open door means a door for opportunity for evangelism. Then we go to the context of the church in Philadelphia, small and persecuted and what was happening is that the people at that time, the Christian, gentile Christians will be able to go into the synagogues and put their name on the roster and worship there under the protection of the Jews, because the Jews were the only ones who

were allowed to have a religion other than the Roman religion. But it came a time when the Jews closed the door on them, took them off the roll, and then they were left out in the cold, vulnerable, the persecution and doors closed for evangelism. What were they to do? So here is the context of these three things. There were locked out of safety, lost opportunities to witness and they were marginalized. And so therefore, what does the key of David mean?

So here we actually have the combination of all of these things that Jesus has the key to eternal life. And for opportunities for witness. He is the one with the key of David. The key of David is key that opens up opportunities for sharing the gospel and for people to come to know the Lord. So, Jesus says the Jews aren't the ones with the final say. I had the final say. They may have locked you out of the synagogue, but I'm the one who has the key to opportunities for witness and to save all of you.

Now there is a superiority of Jews in terms of them having the gospel and the gentiles eventually coming to the Jews in order to gain the gospel. Isaiah 45 verse 14,

Thus says the Lord:

“The wealth of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush,  
and the Sabeans, men of stature,  
shall come over to you (these are the gentiles) and be yours;  
they shall follow you; (that means the gentiles will follow the Jews)  
they shall come over in chains and bow down to you. (they will honor the Jews)  
They will plead with you, saying:  
‘Surely God is in you, and there is no other,  
no god besides him.’”

They will finally realize, there is no God, all their foreign idolatrous gods are but nothing. The gentiles will come and realize the real God is with the Jews.

Now, in this situation, this a reversal of fortunes,

Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not but lie.  
Behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you.

Here we actually have Jesus telling them it was the Jews, cruel Jews who threw them out, locked the door on them. Jesus says in the last, I'm going to come and there's going to be a reversal of fortunes. The Jews instead of being children of God will become children of Satan. That's why they call synagogue of Satan. The gentile Christians are actually the children of God instead of being locked out. The Jews instead of being honored will be dishonored. The gentile Christians will be honored. The Jews who were supposed to be loved by God will be condemned by God. The gentile Christians who were supposed to be condemned by God are actually loved by God.

So there's a reversal of fortunes because Jesus is coming. So therefore, Christ fulfills all of Isaiah's prophecy for us, the church, just like Philadelphia. Verse 10

Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth. 11 I am coming soon.

Here we have Christ talking about protection because he will keep you from the hour of trial. What kind of protection is this? If you look back in the book of John.

I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.

John 16:33

I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

So here you actually have Jesus implying, yes he will protect them, but the kind of protection is actually spiritual protection. They're not going to be bulletproof. They're not going to be immune from the persecution of the Romans, but God is going to protect them as they go through this spiritually, so that they will not fall away.

And finally they will be given the reward as they overcome. And there are three things which he describes what will happen to them. They will be like a pillar in the temple of God, which means if you are a pillar in the temple where God's presence is, you will never go out. You'll be fixed. You'll always be in the presence of God. Number two, they will bear the name of my God. We're having a name of someone is bearing his identity. We will have the identity of God.

Number three, the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven. This is the future. They will bear the name. They will be in the name of that city of God.

Lastly, they will have Jesus own name, Jesus new own name, which means Jesus has given all authority over everything. He will have a new name, and we will have that authority with him only if we persevere.

This is the last church we are going to be looking at. It is called the church of Laodicea, the seventh church. With the seventh church we have covered full circle to this particular church. Here are some pictures of some stonewalls of Laodicea. It was a great place, was a banking center because it was the center of all where the trade routes would pass through. So they were a rich place, rich in commerce, this is the street where they had the market nearby and they were so rich that they actually have two and to build an amphitheater would be very expensive. Here is the Greek amphitheater and they also have a Roman amphitheater. There were two amphitheatres and it was a city with two amphitheatres with a population of 40,000.

Ephesus was a much larger city of 200,000. They had only one amphitheater. They were so rich that that city was once destroyed by earthquake and did they ask for any money for rebuilding from the Roman emperor? No. They said. The Roman emperor wanted to give them some money to be rebuild and say, no, we can take care of ourselves. This is a very rich town

14 “And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: ‘The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God’s creation. 15 “I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! 16 So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.

This church has no commendation at all. Other churches will have accommodation. Good thing to say, and then bad things. This church only has criticism from Jesus. Now, if you look in the geography of the place. There are three cities. We call them the tri cities or Phrygia. All right. You've got Hierapolis, Laodicea and Colossae. They are three and they are all in the Lycus River Valley, which runs right



across and you've got the three towns and the interesting thing about this particular three towns that in Colossae, you actually have water because they are high up from the snows, pure fresh water.

Hierapolis has hot springs. All right. And when you come to Laodicea, you neither have hot nor you have cold, you have lukewarm and horrible tasting water because Cicero, the great Roman orator says, "This is the foulest water in the whole empire." It's really, you can't really drink it, but you have no choice.

In fact, it has got so many minerals in it that if you look, this is a historical drain that actually draws water from our a source into the city of Laodicea and you can see, it is all kicked good calcium, just like an artery of a human being all kicked with chemicals and calcium there and indicating that this is a very, very dirty. Here we have another one, pipe. You can see how it's almost been closed off all the sediments being there. He is saying you are so disgusting that God will treat you just like you treat your water. I mean, they drink water and they spit it out, so God will actually spit them out.

And the reason for this is spiritual apathy,

For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, I have made it, I don't really need anything, not realizing that you are indeed wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

You see this is a situation, how they perceive themselves is actually quite the opposite of how God sees us and that is really scary, isn't it. We wake up in the morning and we think that we are doing okay. When you wake up in the morning and God looks at you, you are not doing okay until he opens up your eyes. Here we have a bunch of folk who are prospering by compromising with idolatrous practices because in those days, the only way you're going to get ahead was to compromise with the Roman authorities. Rank materialism right in the center so much so that they don't have time and therefore push Christ to the mind.

Doesn't it sound familiar? Does it sound familiar to the kind of lives that live in Kuala Lumpur? They're poor in God's eyes, but they were banking center flush with cash. There were blind, in fact they had a very famous Eye Institute there. They were very famous for having a special eye treatment to cure people with blindness and yet they were blind. That's what Jesus said. They had a great textile industry where they made the finest of clothes to clothe people but Jesus looked at them and they were naked.

The solution Jesus suggest to them is verse 18,

Let me 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.

Now what do we need? What do the Laodicean need from Jesus? Gold refined by fire, white garments to cover your nakedness and ointment self to anoint your eyes. These three are basically metaphors. What is gold refined by fire? Well, if you look at 1-Peter chapter 1 verse 7, gold refined by fire is faith. Faith refined by tribulation, so that their faith is proven true. So, what we need is the purity of faith. White garments to cover your nakedness. What is this about? White governments? It is about idolatry. If you look here, it is a language used against Israel in exile. Ezekiel 16:35,

35 "Therefore, O prostitute (he calls Israel prostitute), hear the word of the Lord: 36 Thus says the Lord God, Because your lust was poured out and your nakedness uncovered in your whorings with your lovers, and with all your abominable idols, and because of the blood of your children that you gave to

them, 37 therefore, behold, I will gather all your lovers with whom you took pleasure, all those you loved and all those you hated. I will gather them against you from every side and will uncover your nakedness to them, that they may see all your nakedness.

So here is a language used against because Israel were idolatrous. It is the same language used against other nations, against Babylon. Isaiah 47:3

Your nakedness shall be uncovered, and your disgrace shall be seen. I will take vengeance, and I will spare no one.

So even though Babylon are not the people of God, they're still accountable to that one almighty creator of the world. They indulged in idolatry and so as God saw them, they were totally naked and they need to be covered.

Now these are words against Assyria. Nahum 3:5

Behold, I am against you, declares the LORD of hosts, and will lift up your skirts over your face; and I will make nations look at your nakedness and kingdoms at your shame.

Here again, Assyria is a nation founded on idolatry and God is going to punish them, lift up their skirts, so everybody see how naked they were. So here is the concept of idolatry being nakedness and then the solution. They are blind. They have salve to anoint their eyes. The ability to see through the spiritual deception. You see, these people were actually poor and naked, but they couldn't see it. What would they actually need was the ability to see through the spiritual deception that goals and comfort and technology had brought to them. And so that's all we need. We need purity of faith. We need to be cured of our idolatry and ability to see through spiritual deception.

This is Deuteronomy chapter eight, when God spoke to the people of Israel when he brought them towards in the direction of the promised land and He warned them

11 "Take care lest you forget the Lord your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today, 12 lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, 13 and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied,

Verse 14, when prosperity comes, you know what happens

14 then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery,

You see Deuteronomy tells us that power and wealth is actually neutral. If you look at the power and wealth which God gave to the people Israel, they are supposed to remember them. When you remember how God had brought them out of the suffering and slavery in Exodus from Egypt through the Sinai desert and the promised land. They need to remember that now they have lands, they have farms, they have wealth, they have plenty to eat. Did they remember all that comes from God and because it comes from God, they are faithful, they worship and they are obedient.

But the problem is they forget and when they forget, they are disobedient because they have attributed their current wealth and power and ease, not coming from God but coming from themselves. And that is the biggest tendency on us, nothing wrong with prosperity. The trouble is, it is cast as something that

is what I've gotten by myself. We would disregard the fact that it is God who has gotten all this for me.

The issue is who do I obey? Genesis chapter 3:5. This is,

For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God.

There is Satan telling Eve you will be like God knowing good and evil. The issue is that who do you want to obey? They attribute, right from the beginning Eve wanted to be like God, to be able to determine for ourself what is right and wrong to take all the credit.

Deuteronomy chapter 8 verse 17

Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' 18 You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day.

And the reason God gives them power and wealth and ease is based on his relationship to them. This whole idea is to bring them close to him. The issue is the relationship. The issue is not the power and the wealth.

Look at the miracle of the feeding of five thousand. It is great time. All right. In John chapter 6, Jesus feeds 5,000 people who come. They bring nothing to the table. He out of the few loaves of bread, barley bread and fishes he feeds 5,000 men and including women and children, it could be more than 20,000 and they tried to follow him. And John chapter 6 verse 15,

Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

They saw, they had a free lunch. This is a guy who could actually feed almost 20,000 people. He has got it and what they want is that they want to make him King. You know why? Because if make him King, they would have food by miracle every single day. That's what they want and because Jesus perceived they're going to come and make him King by force so that it is actually their interest not his, that's why he said to them

"Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs (which indicates Jesus as Messiah), but because you ate your fill of the loaves.

You see they were after Jesus, not for Jesus' sake not for the relationship. They were after him because of their stomachs.

Do not work for the food that perishes,

Because when you eat, it will be gone.

but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal."

Isn't that the problem with riches. God gives it to us as a sign of his grace to build up our relationship with him. We take it and all we want is his hands. We don't want his face. That's why we're going to appeal the prosperity gospel. Are these people flocking the church simply because they see God's

fidelity, God's love and faithfulness, and they are in love with God, or are they in love with that prosperity that is actually promised to them. It is just like us. If we join political parties, is it about us and our interests or are we really loyal to the party? Actually, if you're honest, it's always about us. We support either religious figure or we sport a political party so that our interests are upheld.

And so therefore, if we have such an attitude towards God, just like in the garden of Eden, the couple who wanted to be like God to make up their own decisions, to have their own power, to be independent of God, they were rejected by God and the rich people, the rich Christians in Laodicean church is spat out by God.

So true prosperity in life.

- Gold refined by fire, which is purity of faith.
- White garment of righteousness to cover and nakedness.
- Salve to anoint your eye.

Where do we get them? We get them in Revelation chapter 1 verse 3. It is a description of Jesus

13 and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. 14 The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire,

We get it from Jesus. So therefore, Jesus has an open invitation. For those I love. You see, even though they were rich, even though they were spiritually poor because of the materialism that push Christ out to the edge, he still addresses them very tenderly.

19 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline,

So Jesus doesn't condemn them. It is the fact that he loves them, which is the reason why he brings up their spiritual poverty.

I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

So the picture is Jesus standing outside the doors of our hearts, because we have closed the door to him, because we are self-sufficient inside, eating by ourselves with our own wealth, with our own gold, we can't see him. But right now through the letter to the Laodiceans, Jesus is knocking on the hearts, the doors of their heart, and telling them, look I stand here, open the door to me, repent and have fellowship and renew this relationship. It is not about the goods. It is not about the money. It is not about the material. It is about, the covenant is about relationship with God.

So now we end. There are seven churches where God speaks to them, each specifically through the church corporately and into individuals personally. And in verse 21, we conquer

21 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. 22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

This last verse speaks to all of us. We need to be like him. We need to conquer like he conquered. No matter where our faults are he disciplines us because he loves us and he reproves us. However people have distorted this. This is a picture of a Hyung Jin Moon's church in the United States called the

World Peace and Unification Sanctuary Church. This is how he conquers. They wear crowns and they attend church with M16. Everybody has a gun. Is this how we conquer? What about another group of Christians who believe that they the economy, government, family, religion, media that we need to conquer. Their idea is that Satan has usurped man's dominion on earth. The church is God's instrument to take dominion back from Satan. Jesus cannot or will not come back until the church has taken back dominion over these seven areas of life, economy, government, family, religion, media, education and arts.

Is this how we conquer? Well, some people in United States believe that's why they are supporting president Trump because government is a way, one of the seven mountains, you can reconquest so that Jesus will come back quicker, but this is how Jesus conquers. Revelations 1 verse 5, the description of Jesus.

**It is from Jesus Christ the faithful witness (martyr), the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.**

How do we conquer? We conquer when we are like Jesus, willing to be faithful witnesses, even unto death and looking forward to be the firstborn of the dead, which means looking forward for the resurrection and then only we shall rule. We don't need, you can't rule with M16s. You can't rule with political power because this world is not configured that way. The only way we can rule is following the one who has actually conquered, who bore witness, who died on the cross, who was resurrected, and now stands as the ruler of all the Kings of the earth.

So, I hope this look at the seven churches has been a look on our own lives. Let's take what Jesus has given us as evidence of his love. He wants us to grow. He wants, he stands at the door of our hearts and is challenging us today to come to him, to receive from him gold purified by fire, to cover us with his righteousness and eye ointment to see real value in life. Let him open up our eyes.