

Checkin' Out My Walk  
#35 - Problem in Ephesus HINDERS Overcoming

Truths: 1. Justification is a free gift. There are NO works involved.

2. ALL born again believers are in Jesus Christ and His Life is in every believer.

3. ALL born again believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit. He indwells the believer.

Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you

4. Sanctification is not automatic. It is a life-long process that entails a fight and a battle to be obedient, faithful, yielded and allow the Holy Spirit and the Word of God to work in us and through us.

5. Every born again believer is an overcomer in his position in Jesus Christ.

However, not all born again believers overcome.

6. The Holy Spirit is the POWER that will produce the fruit of the spirit and the new life of Jesus Christ in a believer. As we abide in Him, He causes us to triumph and overcome.

7. Every believer needs to keep his "vessel" clean by confessing his sins. I John 1:9

This maintains his fellowship with the Lord so the Holy Spirit can manifest the life of Jesus in the believer.

8. Every believer is to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit > Eph. 5:18.

7 Churches: I KNOW THY WORKS! Presents the Problem; Solution; Ear to Hear; Promise  
Ephesus - The Apostolic Church - The Loveless Church

Rev. 2:1-3, 6 -To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, 'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. You have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; <sup>3</sup> and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. <sup>6</sup> But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

1. Serving > Very BUSY doing the works of the Lord > Much activity

2. Sacrificing > Labor = Toil to the point of exhaustion

3. Steadfast > Patient = Endurance under trial > kept going when the going was tough

4. Separated Themselves From > False Doctrine > Weeded out heresy; Gate-keepers of Truth

5. Suffering > Patiently bore burdens; toiled without fainting > ALL for His name's sake

Christ's Concern: His diagnosis is very clear as He examines the Heart. I KNOW THY WORKS!

I Cor. 3:13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what SORT it is.

Rev. 2:4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

This busy, separated, suffering people suffered from heart trouble.

1. They abandoned or LEFT [NOT lost] their first love.

The word FIRST indicates the love which has been left is a love which existed previously.

Consider: It is possible to serve, sacrifice and suffer for His names' sake and not TRULY love Jesus Christ.

Truth: Church of Ephesus >so BUSY (Being Under Satan's Yoke) maintaining their separation they neglected adoration. Consequently, they lost their warmth and zeal for Christ.

Thus, they began to "go through the motions" of good works. What was once a love relationship cooled into mere religion.

Problem: Had forsaken the most important > LEFT their first love > Special fellowship with the Father

Jesus' Exhortation: Rev. 2:5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.

Solution: 1. Remember from where you have fallen. "Have/are fallen" is the perfect tense in the Greek. It looks at a completed act with existing results, a state, and not a process.

We are in a fallen condition (are out of fellowship) and working in the energy of the flesh whenever we move away or cease to operate out of condition of love and devotion that stems from personal fellowship or a walk of faith with the Lord Jesus.

This is a call to reflect, go back and recall and remember the past.

"Remember the way it used to be in your relationship with Me."

Example: When the Prodigal Son was in the pigpen, the first step in restoration was remembering what life was like back in the father's house.

Luke 15:17-19 But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.'"

This is a call to recognize your TRUE condition.

Truth: If I have lost the joy of the Lord, it is because I have LEFT the position of devotion and occupation with Christ.

2. Repent > Means to change your direction; go a different way > Urgent appeal for instant change of attitude and conduct before it is too late. Ask God to show me my sin the way He sees it. Don't excuse it or blame others. Face the reality of it. Confess it!

3. Do the First Works > "First" is prwtos which means "first in time, place, or rank."

Note: This is not a call to more Christian service or to renewed Christian activity!

Consider: In the context, I believe the first works include honest confession of sin, prayer, Bible study, reading, meditation on the WORD, memorization, fellowship with believers, being occupied with Christ and refocusing all of our life on Him, the faith rest life, reckoning on our position in Christ, etc. (Mark 3:14; 6:30-32; Ps. 119). We never outgrow these!

John 15:4-5 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. <sup>5</sup> I am the vine, ye *are* the branches:

He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Ponder: They were doing MANY good things, but they were DISTRACTED from doing their first works...their first love, and, unless they return to that first love, their church itself would become extinct...no more...of no use to Him any longer.

Consider: Satan does a masterful job in creating a sense of general dissatisfaction with these first works. Christians will run after almost every new, strange method or program for growth and stability. Our shortened attention spans make us easily bored with the truest excitement. Sometimes we will do almost anything *except* the first works.

Rev. 2:7 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

To him who OVERCOMES I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."

Note: Promise is not to the Noun > overcomer.

The promise is to the overcomer who overcomes > ACTION

My Belief: The Rewards View Of These Promises: Overcomer passages are promises to encourage and kindle love and obedience in view of who they are in Christ and what they possess in Him and guarantees of special blessings or rewards for faithful service and lives of faith.

J. Sidlow Baxter writes: But the promise is to those who *overcome*." Do all believers "overcome"? Let him think twice who would answer a dogmatic "Yes" to this question. These letters to the seven churches, at least, suggested otherwise to an unprejudiced reader.

Our standing in Christ is no artificial position of immunity.

As there are degrees of punishment [in hell] so there are degrees of reward [in heaven].

One is made ruler over ten cities, another over five."

Barnhouse: Promises of rewards for faithfulness

Context of the 7 letters: Jesus says: I KNOW YOUR WORKS.

1. The letters RESTRICT the meaning of the overcomer. Each letter without exception moves from an address to the church as a whole, to individual groups in each church, to the individual in each church with a personal appeal to the one who has an ear to hear and to the one who overcomes.

2. The promise of reward is restricted to the faithful believers who overcome specific trials and temptations. Each letter presents illustration of the battles we must overcome and for which rewards are promised for overcoming.

How? By faithful obedience through faith in their new life in Christ > SANCTIFICATION

3. If the promises of Revelation 2 and 3 are not restrictive, then we have what appears to be a contradiction between:

Rev. 2:26 And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations.

Rev.3:21 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.

CONSIDER: To apply these promises to all believers seems to rob them of their force as promises. Hodges points out, "a command that everyone keeps is superfluous, and a reward that everyone receives is nonsense."

4. Evidence from the analogy of Scripture is consistent with the teaching of the New Testament in other places.

a. Born again believers in Christ cannot lose their salvation, but Scripture teaches they may lose will lose (forfeit) or gain rewards according to what he does with the stewardship God has given him. (I Cor. 3:11-15; II Cor. 5:10; Col. 2:18)

I Cor. 9:25-27 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain *it*. And everyone who competes *for the prize* is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a perishable crown, but we *for* an imperishable *crown*. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as *one who* beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. (castaway)

Note: Paul was fearful of not winning the prize and becoming a castaway.

Lest: Strong's #3381 - God Forbid That I Should

Castaway: Strong's #96 = One who is unapproved, rejected and worthless = one who is not worthy of inheriting because he is not fit, prepared or ready

Word Studies in the Greek New Testament - Castaway means disapproval after having failed to meet the requirements.

Rev 3:11 Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.

5. Many believe there is a difference in the New Testament between entrance into heaven and being a joint-heir of the kingdom.

Rom. 8:16-17 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, IF indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.

6. These letters do not present victory as a certainty, but rather as an aspiration which each individual should pursue. The Savior's words are never to *them* who overcome, but to HIM who overcomes. Victory is not a collective right, but an individual attainment.

The Christian life is full of conflict, tribulation, and trials but VICTORY AWAITS all believers through the victory accomplished by the Savior, but it is a victory that must be appropriated by an active faith that is fed through fellowship with the Lord.

Barnhouse: The context for Rev. 2:7 is the admonition in 2:5: Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works.

Note: The promise is to the overcomer who is obedient and overcomes the particular problem Jesus has brought to light. He seems to speak of overcoming their coldness of heart and lack of love marked by leaving their first love and first works.

## *I Miss My Time With You*

"There He was just waiting, in our old familiar place  
an empty spot beside Him, where once I used to wait  
to be filled with strength and wisdom for the battles of the day  
I would have passed him by again but I clearly heard him say...

I miss my time with you; those moments together  
I need to be with you each day and it hurts me when you say  
you're too busy; busy trying to serve Me.  
But how can you serve Me when your spirit's empty?  
There's a longing in my heart wanting more than just a part of you  
It's true; I miss my time with you.

What will I have to offer; how can I truly care?  
My efforts have no meaning when your presence isn't there.  
But you will provide the power if I take time to pray.  
I'll stay right here beside Him  
and you will never have to say

I miss my time with you; those moments together  
I need to be with you each day and it hurts me when you say  
you're too busy; busy trying to serve Me.  
But how can you serve Me when your spirit's empty?  
There's a longing in my heart wanting more than just a part of you  
It's true; I miss my time with you.