

Lessons From the Sermon of Jesus on the Mountain Part 56

The Letter of Jesus to the Church in Sardis Part 1

“1 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. 2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. 3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. 4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. 5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. 6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” (Revelation 3:1-6 KJV)

“1 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.” (Revelation 3:1 KJV) Jesus now sending His letter to the church in Sardis, the fifth church that is also located in Asia minor, which is Turkey of today. Here the Lord Jesus presented Himself in such a way: ***“These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God”***, as the one who has the seven spirit of God. Seven is the perfect number, and we can read about the Spirits of God in *Isaiah 11*, ***“And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.” (Isaiah 11:2 KJV)*** The Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding, the Spirit of counsel, the Spirit of might, the Spirit of knowledge, and the Spirit of the fear of the LORD. Jesus wants us to seek and gain the good things and the components of His Spirit. Jesus has the Spirit of God without measure, ***“For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.” (John 3:34 KJV)***, and here he needed to present Himself to this church with such a way because that church has reputation of being alive but they were dead. The church of Sardis was a dead church, ***“hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.”*** They needed to seek the Spirit of God to revive them. ***In the same way we need to seek the Spirit of God without measure, to revive us.***

These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars: Jesus also here introduced Himself as the one who is holding in His hand the seven stars, who were the seven servants of the seven churches. So He is telling them, that every man's life is in His hand. Therefore, they needed and we need the Spirit of Jesus to revive our lives once again, as He promised, ***“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” (John 6:63 KJV)*** He is telling them here that they were dead but they can get life again by His Spirit, and that they will receive His Spirit as they were willing to receive His Word by the letter that He is sending through the writing of Apostle John.

“I know thy works,” Jesus knows each and everyone of us works. Jesus told them I know thy works, what works He means here? Jesus explained it immediately when He said, ***“That thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.”*** There is nothing good here but dead works; which denote the work of the flesh as we read here: ***“19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Galatians 5:19-21 KJV)***

“That thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.” He is telling them, that the people know about them that they have certain good things, but Jesus was seeing nothing good in them, and more than that he was seeing only that they were dead. They were either boasting with their previous experiences and achievements, and now they are doing nothing but living away from doing the will of God, or they were living in sin. ***Therefore put in your mind, if you are living in sin or not living the will of God then you are dead.***

“That thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.” They were possibly not born again Christians. It is similar to what Jesus said to Nicodemus, the Jewish teacher, ***“5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.” (John 3:5-7 KJV)*** The church members were not born again, they were not born by the Spirit of God. We need to be born first by water and that is the flesh (the human body formed in water media when sperm fertilize an ova and that is the flesh), then we need to be born by the Holy Spirit. ***Those who are born by the Spirit of God they can tell exactly the turning point in their lives and they can tell exactly how they were converted.*** I believe there are many now days who are part of churches but they are not born of the Spirit of God. The church of Sardis it looks like a graveyard; people alive, but they are dead because they don't have yet the Holy Spirit of God; because they were not born of the Spirit of God, or they had lost the Spirit of God due to their lives of sin.

“That thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.” * You need to understand that the people may see you in certain good figure because of your past or because of what you are boasting, or with what you have from material things, or power, but all these are of no value if the Lord is seeing you as good as dead because of sin in your life, because of lack of fruitfulness or because you have not yet the Spirit of God and you are not led by the Holy Spirit.

**** Good thoughts and good deeds do not mean they are the works or they are the leading of the Holy Spirit. They might be having activities and functions and they look like a church, but their works was just their own doing and not the leading of the Holy Spirit.***

“2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.” (Revelation 3:2 KJV) Jesus is warning them and is calling them to be watchful, as if that they were sleeping and they were not

aware about the deterioration that they were in. *The Word of God when we read it or when we hear it, contain warnings and commands that we need to do; we need to wake up and to take it seriously to avoid putting ourselves into more troubles.* Jesus is telling them and telling us today, *“strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die”*, this means there were members or workers among them who were about to die due to sin or lack of care and follow up, and that will take place due to their laziness, negligence, carelessness and the insensitivity to the warning of the Holy Spirit in this church.

The other important reason for death to come to their midst is their non willingness to complete the work that they started and their non willingness to keep it to the quality that Jesus ordained for them to attain and achieve, as He told them: *“for I have not found thy works perfect before God.”* *Did God wants us to be perfect and for our work to be perfect? Yes He wants us to be perfect.* Many who say there is no one perfect because they want to justify their non willingness to repent. Some of them will pick small think on the pastor and try to accuse him falsely just to justify their non willingness to repent and move forward with perfection toward God. The following Scriptures will help us to see the theme of perfection in the Scripture:

“These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.” (Genesis 6:9 KJV) Noah was a perfect man before God because he was a righteous man and he was walking with God. There are other people in the Scripture described as being with perfect heart.

“And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.” (Genesis 17:1 KJV) Here God admonished Abraham to be perfect before God. *We too today are called and admonished to be perfect before God.*

“Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God.” (Deuteronomy 18:13 KJV) Moses admonished the people to be perfect with God. The Word of God admonished us to be perfect. *We as church admonish our members to be perfect before God. And we do that by developing and working out with God to develop a perfect heart.*

In the occasion of bringing the ark of God into the temple of God King Solomon admonished the people under his care to be perfect and to keep God’s commands: *“Let your heart therefore be perfect with the LORD our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day.”* (1 Kings 8:61 KJV) As God helped them and blessed them in giving them resources and success to build up the temple and to bring the ark of God in the temple of God, then what was expected from them is to be perfect and they will do that by living according to the Word of God and according to His ways and in obeying His commands. *Even today when God is blessing the church and helping us then we need to express our faithfulness to God in the way to be perfect to God by walking in His ways and obeying His commands.*

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” (Matthew 5:48 KJV) *Jesus Himself instructing us to be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect. We need to take it seriously when we hear Jesus telling us, “for I have not found thy works perfect before God”, and we need to respond appropriately.*

“Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.” (Matthew 19:21 KJV) Here Jesus was instructing a rich man, who came to Him asking how to enter the Kingdom of God, how he can be perfect, by selling all what he has, to give it to the poor and to come and follow Him. The Lord will speak to us certain commands and give us certain instructions so that we will be made perfect after we obey. *May be the Lord will tell you forgive, give, go, decline, be patience, don’t give up, etc., in order for you to be perfect. Therefore be attentive to the voice of God today and do what He is instructing you to do so you will be perfect.*

“Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.” (2 Corinthians 13:11 KJV) Paul also instructed the brethren to be perfect as if he was telling them that their work was not perfect before the Lord God. Paul was working out to present every believer perfect in Christ, *“Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:”* (Colossians 1:28 KJV) *The Word of God when we read it and allow it to work in our lives; receiving doctrine, rebuke correction and training, will make us perfect, for “16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”* (2 Timothy 3:16-17 KJV) Perfection means we are thoroughly equipped to do the work of God. Ultimately as we commit ourselves unto the Lord He will work out in our behalf to perfect us, *“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.”* (1 Peter 5:10 KJV) *Even in times of sufferings and trials as we are willing, the Lord will ultimately work it out for our completeness and perfection.*

“for I have not found thy works perfect before God.” Perfection in our lives will come and accomplished in the following steps:

1. By repentance from your sins and to use your life and the parts of your body to serve God: *To be perfect is to stop doing the sins that you are doing.* Every now and then the Lord will show you certain sins that you need to stop and give up so you can progress forward. *Perfection will come when you start to seek God and find out His perfect will and achieve it. “1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”* (Romans 12:1-2 KJV) To be perfect is by not conforming and following the pattern of this world, and by renewing your mind by following the Word of God and not the culture or the tradition of man. As we look back into the history of our lives we need to see our progress toward God, how we had forsaken our sins on each and every station of our lives; how we were adjusted and how we were obedient to do the whole will of God.

2. By completing the work: *God needs us to be perfect by completing the works that is entrusted to us to achieve for Him.* Paul in His letter to the Colossians said to them,

“And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.” (Colossians 4:16 KJV) Here Paul was telling them to convey a message to one of their members who it seemed that he was doing a ministry that he had received from the Lord, that he need to finish it and to fulfill it. *We should not keep aside the work that He asked us to do. We need to do it and fulfill all our assignments.*

3. Perfection also to add new good things and invest them into your life as Apostle Peter recommended to us to do: “5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; 6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; 7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. 8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.” (2 Peter 1:5-9 KJV) *To be perfect is to improve in your spiritual life and walk with God, that there is always improvement as you are moving from better to best as the Holy Spirit is leading you.* Every now and then the Lord will lead you to overcome certain sin, or to do new thing for Him, then you need to respond in such direction as God is leading you and that is how you attain perfection in God’s sight as you continue to respond to Him adding to your faith virtues of good work, knowledge, temperance (self-control), patience, Godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity.

My dear and beloved: We today as church needs the Holy Spirit of God to come and to refill us and to revive us so we will go forward and revive the parts that are about to die, so that life may go through them once again. Time for you today to respond to the call of God, to repent of the sins that you are aware off and receive the Holy Spirit of God and go in the way of perfection and do your complete assignments that He entrusted you to do for Him and for His Glory alone.

My prayer: *Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins, who was buried and rose from the dead on the third day to give me eternal life. Lord, thank you for your Word that revived me and made me wake up.*

Confess your sins now to God. Lord forgives me the following sins _____. Repent of your worldliness, boasting, telling lies, laziness, lack of commitment and non willingness to complete the work of God.

Lord I commit myself to abide with this Word of yours that I received in this message. Lord I commit myself to do all your works. Lord give me the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding, the Spirit of counsel, the Spirit of might, the Spirit of knowledge, and the Spirit of the fear of the LORD. Lord revive me once again and fill me with the Holy Spirit and give me the spiritual gift that I need in my life to go and serve you, to evangelize reaching new people and to make new disciples.

Lord, I pray for my Brothers and Sisters who accepted your Word, repented of their sins and are willing to live their lives and serve you, Lord protect them and provide all their needs. Lord give them perseverance, patience, self-control and the rest of the fruit of the Holy Spirit so that people can see Jesus in their lives.

Lord bless us and sustain us as a church. Lord revive us and fill us once again with the Holy Spirit to go on and serve you. Lord, we pray that you will enable us to plant new Bible studies and new congregations for the church and fulfill the vision of the church, ‘Multiplication in Peace with Implementing the Whole Will of God’. Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us, and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus’ name, Amen.

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