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Revelation

Chapter 3

Revealing the Secrets to Overcoming Darkness

Fame is not Flame

vs. 1-6

Revelation 3:1-6: “To the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, says this: ‘I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. ‘Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God. ‘So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you. ‘But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. ‘He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I

will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

If you and I were to ask people around us, "What is a church?" You'd probably get a lot of different ideas, a lot of different thoughts. Of course, down through the ages, the churches looked very different basically, based on the fact that it has allowed itself to be infiltrated by the thought of the world. I always thought it was funny that when I was younger, there were certain churches that we'd been in where they voted a congregational vote, and it was a majority that ruled, and I'm going, "What's that about?" Because there's really nothing in Scripture that says anything about that. But we live in a democracy, right? So, our country is democratic, and we take votes, and the majority rules, but that's not the way the church

should be run. So, down through the history, there have been a lot of things. Of course, the Roman government had amalgamated with the church and in that amalgamation had actually had positions that were not unlike the Roman government. So, you have those that are in a position like a king and they even have a kind of crown, and they begin to pontificate. Well, it's understandable. But the church was never meant to allow the world to come in. In fact, God tells the church over and over again, "Be separate. Don't be like them." What, then, is the job of the church? Well, to put it very simply, the church is to be the light of the world, just as Christ, the One we follow, is the Light of the world. Scripture tells us that the Light shone in darkness; the darkness could not overpower it. That Christ came to earth to demonstrate hope. He came to convey and to enlighten the people's hearts; to take them out of depression and darkness. It is the message of the gospel that gives the hope to man which declares, "You've been saved." What a wonderful thing that is. So, the picture that you have at the very beginning of Revelation 1, of the church, is that they are candlesticks. That makes sense. And that the

power of them becoming a light is in the hands of God. Well, that's the seven stars that are in His right hand. Unless Christ really empowers the church, it cannot be a light. Unless Christ is the One who endows us with His Spirit, we can't be a light.

What's interesting is that because we have gotten our cues from so many resources, people are so confused. What's interesting to me as we go and look at these seven churches in Asia Minor, they are interesting pictures of how each church is struggling with something in their lives that is causing them to get off course. So, Christ is saying, "You're messing with the light. The light is here to display the glory of God and to point to Him. You're not doing that." And it begins to show the things that aren't. I don't want this to be misconstrued in any way, but what's interesting is, you don't read anything about Him rebuking any of the churches for not evangelizing. Do you think that's interesting? The point being is if your life is right with Christ, you will evangelize. But evangelizing is not something that just anybody can do. It's something that only people who love God can do. What we've done

is we've packaged evangelism. We package it, put it in a box and then we hand it out to people, and we say, "Go, do it." And quite frankly, a lot of people that are going out and doing it, their hearts are not right with God. But they're perceiving that, hey, it's a notch in the belt and it's something that we should be doing. Yeah, it's something you should be doing all the time, wherever you are. It says as you're going make learners of Christ. But the church is not doing that. I think it's interesting that He's not rebuking the churches for this. What He knows is, if they're right with Him, they're going to be doing this, and the focus is more on them being a light than them proclaiming the message. Now, once again, the message is going to be proclaimed.

If you were to read in 1 Thessalonians 1, he makes mention specifically with the fact that the word of God has spread. But what he says in that particular text is, "The word of God has spread because of your character, because of the nature, because of your life among the world." And that's why the word of God is spreading. If you and I are not living the life, then why should

somebody perceive that we have any kind of salvation? Have we been saved from our sin, and yet we're sinning? I don't know how that can be a light to anybody. So, in every case He begins to reveal the necessity of the light. Whether it's in Matthew 5:14, as He tells His disciples, "You are a light set on a hill. You don't want to cover that light," or whether it's in Revelation 1:20, as He makes reference to the fact that the candlesticks and the stars are obviously the pastors within the church, or whether He speaks in Ephesians 5:8, in which he says, "You once were darkness, but now you are light. Be like men of light."

So, as you come to Romans 13:12, it begins the same thing, of course, obviously, the call of the church to be a light. As well as John 12:36, all the way through really, and John is really good at this because he emphasized in the Gospel of John, he emphasized it in 1 John and of course, in Revelation, that the church is the light.

Now, here's the point, and you might want to mark this off to the side, the light is very clearly defined in John 3. Let me just quote you the text and then we'll go back to

the very familiar one in verse 16, but in John 3:19, it reads this way,

(John 3:19) “This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light...”

So, the question you have to ask yourself, what is the light? Obviously, it's Jesus. Now, what is that light of Jesus? Well, that's John 3:16, isn't it? “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.” So, it's the love of God. It's the love of God displayed through Jesus Christ, and it's the proclamation of that message in our lives. It's the change that is wrought in our lives that really should be drawing people to Himself. It is that which drew people to Christ. While He's on the cross, He's not going through the fundamentals of the gospel. He is living the fundamentals of the gospel, that “I love you this much to die for you.” And this is what the church should be about. Church can easily get off and man will easily, because of that, blame so many things on God because he doesn't see the reality of what the light is. But here's the fundamental point, that the problem is not that man can't

see the light. That's not the problem. The problem is that man won't see the light. The problem isn't necessarily that God doesn't love man. The problem is that man won't believe that God loves him. See, in every case the problem is not that there isn't salvation, but that man won't take it. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name." The problem is not that "The price is way too high for me. I can't afford it." But the problem is we won't receive the gracious gift of God. So, in every case, it's man rejecting that which is evident and shining bright, and that's the love of God. It's that which the church should be upholding and living and demonstrating by their actions.

Now, what is it that causes the darkness to move in? Well, one of the first things that we see, obviously, with the Church of Ephesus is that there's a tendency when you're dealing with sin, when you're dealing with people that are doing the wrong thing, of course, it's hurting them, it's hurting others around them, and you just want to wring their sweet little necks, and yet that sense of power and

harsh, intimidating threats is not going to change them. So, to the church at Ephesus, He goes, "Your problem is, you're forgetting why you're doing this." You're doing what you're doing because you love them, right? So, you have to be reminded of that, because before long you're thinking, "Well, the only solution is I've got to threaten people, and I've got to pontificate, and I've got to be dictatorial in their lives, and I've got to shake them, and I've got to make them to the right thing." And that was the Church of Ephesus. I mean, you're doing that of love, but you forgot to love. You weren't really loving while you were doing this. You got so wrapped up in the stopping the bad behavior that you stopped loving. So, one of the things that brings that darkness in is we stop loving the people and we make fixing the problem the focus of our lives.

The problem with the Church of Smyrna as we look specifically at them is that fear can easily move in. When there's intimidation around us and when there's people that are against what we're standing for, it's very easy to be intimidated by fear, and God is saying within the

context, if you want to be a church that displays light, you have to be fearless. A church cannot in any way be afraid of what the world is doing to them. I mean that immediately takes them out of being light.

A great passage in Philippians 1:28 reads this way,
“in no way alarmed by your opponents...”

His statement is, if you will not be alarmed, this will be a testimony to them. Where does the church lose its testimony? They're afraid. They say to the world, “God is more powerful than anything” and the world threatens them, and then they run. Scripture says, “Ok, where's the light? What happened to the light? There is no light.”

Because if in fact you love God, will you be afraid of man? Are you afraid to say to somebody that you love your spouse? Is that love? If people are intimidating you because you love somebody and you back off because of their intimidation, do you really care for them? So, the love of God is really displayed in a kind of fearlessness.

In fact, Peter writes this in 1 Peter 3:14,

“But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED.”

It's interesting because the first part seems to focus on the external. The second part seems to say that you can't even be troubled inside because God sees your heart, right? And if you're troubled inside, God says, “I don't think they love Me.” This is important to God, and He's the one that we're trying to please. So, when He turns to the church at Smyrna and He knows that they're going to suffer, He knows that they're going to die, “In ten days, you're going to have tremendous tribulation and probably die.” He says, “Of all things, you cannot be afraid.”

Because once you show that fear, once you demonstrate, even in your heart, a sense of fear, anxiety, it's sending bad signals to God that you really don't love Him. It's the love of God that constrains me, right?

In 2 Timothy 1:7, it reads this way as Paul writes to Timothy,

“For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.”

Of course, as you read at the end of Revelation, it talks about heaven, it talks about the people there, it talks about the people that aren't there, and it says, "There will be no cowards in heaven." None, just to let you know. That's why Jesus says, "If you confess My name before men, I'll confess you before my Father in heaven. I mean, can you really say you love somebody if you're afraid to confess their name? "I don't want to say anything."

Hebrews 10:39 says this,

"But we are not of those who shrink back..."

I love that verse. We don't shrink back. We're not afraid. If you look in Acts 4, it talks about different ones in that particular chapter being filled with the Holy Spirit. Do you know what the characteristic of everyone that was filled with the Holy Spirit was in Acts 4? It was that they spoke with all boldness. In every single case, they were filled with the Holy Spirit, they spoke with all boldness because we're not afraid. The church oftentimes is afraid, and the light goes out because love is not demonstrated in fear. Perfect love casts out fear. So, a wonderful truth as we look at the Church of Smyrna.

The Church at Pergamum is really a message specifically, in which it's telling us that we're not faking this. This is something real to us. Paul writes, "We're not like many peddling the word." He gives the example of Balaam, the false prophet, who for money would be willing to say whatever you want. Really, the bottom line is that church cannot be a pretending source. What I've often said is that there's only one thing really that we do better than the world, and that's real. The church must do real. Look, believe me, the world is much better at entertainment and fake and facades. That's a glorious part of them. But we do real better than them, and it's the genuineness of our heart. That's why Paul says, "We don't seek what is yours. We seek you. We're not trying to get stuff from you. We're trying to tell you that God loves you." The light oftentimes goes out because man is trying to capitalize. In many respects, the church has tried to make themselves look like the Savior, and they capitalize on this and they exploit people. They tell them what they want to hear, so they can be the nice guy, and it's in being the nice guy that they begin to extract and exploit from these poor people things, and of course, they walk away not knowing

the truth. Obviously, we are not those that are opportunistic in our ventures. What's interesting of course is not only does he mention Balaam within the text, but we know that it's the city where the great temple of Asclepius is. Asclepius, not being a real character. How do I know? Well, mythology. So, that's how I know. It's a myth, but this character, who was perceived to be the most gracious physician, and of course the grand rod that he has with the snake around the pole. The physicians have the Hippocratic Oath, right? Oh, by the way, Hippocratic Oath. Yeah, since I mentioned that. Let me quote it. They've taken some of it out. I just want to let you know. But the original Hippocratic Oath starts off this way,

“I swear by Apollo the physician and Asclepius and Hygeia,”

which is his daughter, Hygiene.

“and Panacea, invoking all the gods...”

That's how it starts off. Now, it starts off by swearing by Apollo, and just to let you know, Asclepius is the son of Apollo according to myth. So, the great physician is the

son of Apollo. Now, just to let you know who Apollo is, “Apollo” means “destroying one”. That's why you have a serpent around a pole. The destroying one is the physician. That's bizarre, isn't it? So, the Scripture says, “They call light darkness, darkness, light.” So, it's the whole twisting of things. So, we worship the destructive one. “Apollon” is another name for Satan. Just to let you know. We worship Apollon as our physician, and that's how it starts off. So, it's the nature of man, and this is why Scripture says don't let the world intertwine with you. We're not of the world. Back away. Stay away from the world. Don't let the world become a part of you. Whether it's Balaam or Asclepius or Simon, the magician in Acts that was trying to gain some or even so many TV evangelists today that are trying to hook people in by virtue of telling them whatever they want to hear so that they send in the money. This is not the light of God. This is man exploiting others. I mean, it's not just the big TV evangelists, it's the back road snake handlers. It's whatever man can do to somehow exploit, but the church cannot do that. Once it does, there is no light. There's no light in exploitation. Where is the love of God? We're not

showing a love for them. We're showing love for us. That's more narcissism than anything. So, God has called us to demonstrate His love. Once we start going into the realm of the manipulation and getting gain for ourselves, obviously, we lose that wonderful message. We seek not the riches of the world.

What's interesting within this particular passage, when it deals with Pergamum, is that he actually tells us, and this is kind of a scary thought; I'm just kind of warning you ahead of time. You know how medications have disclaimers? So, I'm throwing mine out. Here's a warning before I say it, Scripture is going to tell you to be intolerant. Scripture is actually going to tell you to be intolerant.

If you look in specific in Revelation 2:20, it says,

“But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel...”

It's dealing with Thyatira. So, it's conveying that the church can't be tolerant of anything that exploits people or anything that uses people and it can't be tolerant of opportunism. It can't be tolerant of exploitation. It cannot

be tolerant of anything that causes compromise of the message. It cannot tolerate that. Here again, it's just like the world to flip things upside down. That true love is tolerance of all these lies, but there's no love in tolerating lies for your kids. That's not caring for them. The passage is making reference all the way through of the fact that God is calling upon us not to franchise the darkness. Truth is not for sale. It's not for sale. We're not going to compromise and do things so that we might have a better job. Interesting context with Jezebel. So, all the way through, he's making reference to the fact of what demonstrates light.

If you just were to put it simplistically, if you look in Ephesians, the Church of Ephesus, light is demonstrating the love of God. That's simplistically. If you're looking at the Church of Smyrna, the light is being fearless. That's the light of God. If you're looking at Pergamum, light is not being tolerant of exploitive or opportunistic ventures. The church will not allow that to happen because Jesus says you don't want to cover the light. These are all things that cover the light. When you look at Thyatira, you can't

compromise for the purpose of gain. Many of the people were saying, "I'm going to lose my job if I don't compromise my life." And He goes, "You don't do that." So, a lot of times out in the job, we'll compromise ourselves because we go, "Ok, but I have to eat." And God says, "You don't want to trust in Me?" You have to walk away and then the world goes, "Ok. So, they actually believe in what they're saying." See, people like to put evangelism in a box and say, "Well, I read them what they have to do to be saved." And God says, "Yeah, but that's not the light. The light of the church is you're not afraid. The light of the church is you don't compromise. The light of the church is you don't tolerate.

So, we come to in Chapter 3, the Church of Sardis, and the Church of Sardis, obviously, is dealing with another issue and another side. When I looked at this passage, I read it over and over again; what is clear is that they seem to be concerned about the fact that they would have a name for themselves. And what is used over and over again within the text is God is calling upon them to wake up. That's very interesting. It kind of goes into a psychological

realm that we'll talk about in just a minute. But the point is that basically, this church is not dealing with reality. They're dealing with a kind of righteousness. They're dealing with a kind of church persona. It's sort of like when you think about the disciples of Jesus, they go, "Wow. Look how righteous the Pharisees are." And Jesus goes, "They're not righteous. Oh, they do righteous stuff, but they're not righteous people." And you're going, "Well, they look righteous and they have a name that they are righteous. I mean, look at that garb. You can't wear that kind of stuff and not be holy." Isn't it interesting how we almost immediately tie those things to pomp and circumstance, all the superficial things? It's like, "That person has a lot of metals. They must be a hero." I don't know, really? This is not what makes a person who they are. So, Scripture is beginning to reveal to us that there are churches out there that are more interested in a name than they are in following God, and fame is not the flame. It's very important that you and I understand that just because somebody says, "Wow, that's a big church or that's a grand church. They're doing great things." That doesn't mean that's the light of God that's shining.

We have a kind of a focus in America in which everybody wants to be a star. "A star is born." Of course, now we have shows in which the average Joe can come off the streets and become almost overnight an icon, an idol, an American Idol, anyway, and they can become great and people are looking for that. Their perception is, "If I become a star, then I become somebody." And it really is the lie of the world that is taking us on a path of not a flame, but a black hole. The black hole really, if you think about it, is one of darkness. I mean, look at the childhood stars and follow their lives. Very few make it out of that black hole. What you have are people that are frightened, people that are disappointed, people that are dealing with grief, depression, all kinds of painful and hopeless thoughts and wait a minute, that can't be; they're a star. Yet, the bizarre thing is people still want to be a star, and their perception is that the accolades of men, the recognition of men is what's going to get it and pull it for me, because really, life is fundamentally mundane and pretty depressing if you just take life by itself, and it throws you a lot of curves and it's very disappointing. But we walk in light and the joy of the Lord is our strength. So,

it's a whole different way of living. The church could get sucked into this, and the Church of Sardis obviously was. Sardis is one of the cities in Asia Minor, about 30 miles away from the last one, and at one time was one of the greatest cities of Lydia. Actually, from what I understand was the capital of the kings of Lydia. The last king of Lydia is what the city was known for. I say the last king, because about 500 to 600 years prior to this, Cyrus came in and conquered this particular city. So, who was the great king at that time? Well, the story goes that Croesus was his name. It's actually not spelled like that, but that's the way it's pronounced.

If you look throughout, different cities are known for certain things. I oftentimes think of Saint Augustine, and it's just kind of right down the road, and you go to Saint Augustine and you just can't help but understand that there's this guy by the name of Ponce de Leon that has something to do with it. Now, we're talking about hundreds of years ago, but the city still kind of holds as their kind of hero guy, Ponce de Leon. So, the same was true with the city of Sardis, theirs was Croesus, and

Croesus was the great king, and his perception was that because of his greatness, because of his grandeur, he was undefeatable. History tells us that this was the source of his Achilles heel, because his perception was that he couldn't be defeated. Even the city itself had these rocks and stones and places in which once you started chipping away at them to get to the city, they had this natural protection. The way that the stones would chip is they would form pinnacles and there was just no way to get into the city, and he goes, "They're not going to get me. Besides, I'm the most powerful king around." So, it was on a particular day in which Cyrus comes with all of his army, and they corner Croesus in his areopagus, and the thought was "They still can't get me." But they did. They got him so quickly and so fast in one day that it surprised everybody. The perception was that "I'm undefeatable. It's impossible for me to lose. I'm the greatest. I'm the star." And God says, "You have no idea." It's that same thing that you're going to see with the Church of Sardis, the same kind of mentality. "We're great. We're powerful. People know about us. You can't walk in our region and say, 'Does anybody know that church?' No, everybody

knows that church. They have a name for themselves.” By the way, don't ever think that having a name for yourself makes you a great church. That's not what we're trying to do. My goal isn't necessarily to make everybody know that Family Bible Church exists. My desire is they know God exists, and that people come to Him and fall in love with Him and are at home with Him forever. Whether they remember me or forget me, there's a reason why my name's not on the sign, is really irrelevant. I'm unimportant in the scheme of things. I've got to decrease, according to John; He's got to increase. Our hope is in Him, not in us and not in the fact that people recognize or know us. It's that pursuit of recognition by men that we find ourselves getting entrapped in.

So, it starts off this way,

(Revelation 3:1) “To the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God...”

The reason why he's making reference to this specifically is that God knows very well what you're thinking. He knows very well what's in your hearts.

“... He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars...”

He's the One that enlightens and will bring the light to your church.

“... says this: ‘I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.’”

Now, you couldn't be so far off that you actually thought you were alive and actually be dead. Is that possible? It couldn't be more extreme than that, could it? You think you're alive. Now, you don't want to skip over one particular word, “deeds,” “*ergon*,” works. The passage begins to display the fact that they are busy, busy people. It's got to be a great church. It's doing all this stuff. Feeding the poor, they're doing all this and they're so wonderful. “We're busy. Busy, busy, busy, busy, busy.” “Ok, I know your deeds.” God is not saying, “I don't recognize the fact that you're doing a lot of work, but do the deeds make you alive?” See, you go into Luke 10, and you have a woman by the name of Martha, and you have a woman by the name of Mary. Martha's really, really working. So, that means she's really close to God. No, it

doesn't mean that. It means that she's very, very busy, and she's trying to find a life of significance. Now, that doesn't mean everybody working and is busy is trying to do this, but if that's your focus then you're going after the wrong thing and don't think for one moment that your business is somehow going to placate God and God's going to be impressed. Because just to let you know, just a little side note here, God created the world without you. So, everything beyond that is really kind of a no brainer for Him. So, the point is that “I know that you're working hard, that you have a name.” If you understand what He's talking about here, the name is “busyness”; the name is “working hard”. “You are known for your hard works for the deeds that you're doing. And because of this, you're perceived as being very active and alive.” “It's so vibrant, such a vibrant place.” Ok. Yeah, it looks that way, But. You. Are. Dead.

Now, the interesting contrast is He starts off by saying, “I know your deeds.” That's present participle, “You're doing a lot of work.” But then He ends with saying, “But your name is,” because it's in the nominative. “Your name

is not alive. Your name is dead.” That's very interesting. “You're working so hard to get a name for yourself, and the only name that you have before Me is dead.” He'll actually say in this particular paragraph, “I'm going to blot your name out of the Book of Life. So, lest at any point in time, your perception is closeness with God is by busy work, think again.

He says this,

(Revelation 3:2) “Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die...”

It's an interesting picture of the light going out. The light's flickering. “Why?” Because there is no light. “Well, the light are my deeds.” No, no, no, because you're saying they are your deeds. See, this is one of the big problems that the church is getting into today. “We're doing great things. We're doing great things. We're doing great things. We're doing great things.” Ok, to God be the glory; great things He hath done. It's very subtle, but before long you just hear one after the other, say just how wonderful they are, and patting themselves on the back. I mean, they just can't get arms long enough to do it.

If you look,

(Revelation 3:2) “Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed...”

Now, what He's using here, *“plēroō,”* is a word that really describes the inability to accomplish what has been set out to do, and His point is, “You're not accomplishing My will. I know you're working hard, but everything you're building is not for Me. It's for you. So, you're not accomplishing My will.” That's why Matthews reads the way that it does, “Many who come and say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, didn't we prophecy on Your name? Didn't we do all these wonderful works in Your name? I mean, we even did miracles in Your name.’” And He goes, “I never knew you. You didn't do it for Me. You did it for you.”

This is why Matthew goes on in Chapter 6 and he says, “Look, beware of practicing your deeds before men. When you pray, don't announce it before the public. Go in your closet. When you're giving money, don't let anybody know that you gave money. Give it to Me and your Father

sees in secret and you'll get great blessings.” Who are you doing what you're doing for and what are you trying to generate? Well, obviously there's almost a kind of picture of a frenzy. Now, here's the interesting point, and I told you I'd get a little psychological with you on this one. Here's the interesting point, you almost have what I would call a manic state of the church. I think it's so bizarre that people know all these names. I mean, things that I studied in psychology many years ago and you say, “manic depressive,” people would go, “What?” But now you say “manic depressive,” “Oh, yeah, I know that. I have some medicine in my cabinet that takes care of that.” I mean, it's bizarre to me. I mean, they'll mention Crohn's disease, and I'm going, “One in five trillion had Crohn's disease when I was going to school. Now, they have enough to become millionaires.” But interesting point. But manic depressive, who doesn't know about manic depressive, right? And the key to understanding manic depressive is that it's not rooted in the manic state. It's rooted in the depressed state. That the depression is what's fueling everything. It's not the manic.

Manic is an interesting state and I was going to read you some of the facts, but if I could just describe it to you, when a person goes in a manic state, they're very vital, they're full of vigor, they're efficient, they're efficacious. It's almost like life on steroids. They can't do things fast enough. In fact, a manic person will be tireless. They'll be busy. It will be an abnormal elevated mood of inflated self-esteem. In fact, people in a manic state will basically tell you that they can run the world. They'll tell United Nations how to function. We actually had a woman that was going here a number of years ago, that 1 week she tried to commit suicide, the next minute she was in her manic state, and she was telling me that she's god. Strangely enough, one of the Christian radio stations had her and was interviewing her. I don't know why you would give somebody that platform. Her perception was that she was going to fix the world in her manic state. They sleep very little, maybe 3 hours a night, if that much, and they can go at least a week in that state. I know that people will try to take it back to genetics and all this stuff. Ok. Good for you. The reason why people are in this state is because of depression. There is a search for escapism

and they're fighting off the depressed state with anything and everything they can. So, they run into a realm of business.

In psychology, there's an interesting phenomenon. Have you ever heard of a workaholic? Ok. Why do you think a workaholic is a workaholic? Because he's fighting depression. So, it's a pursuit to pull these things because there's something inside of people that says, "I'm not significant. I don't matter." So, what do you do to fight that off? Well, you show them you are significant. You work tirelessly, and you put yourself in a frenzy, and before long the frenzy's taking over. I mean, you literally are not in control anymore. The interesting thing about this passage is what does He tell him the solution is? "Wake up." Did you see that? "Wake up. You're dreaming." What you're dealing with are people that are trying to fight and combat their problems and the feelings of insignificance with visions of grandeur. "I can change the world. I am the greatest person in the world." You know, you start hearing those kinds of things and you go, "This is a depressed person. This is a person who doesn't

feel good about themselves.” This is why James says, “Don't try to boast about yourself, ‘I'm going to do this and this in this city.’” All such boasting brings evil, or more specifically, hurts you because it puts you in a world of virtual reality, and it's the virtual reality that causes you to not be able to handle the reality of God. You immerse yourself in another world, and before long you're stuck there and you begin to believe it yourself, that you're god.

His statement is,

(Revelation 3:2) “Wake up...”

(Revelation 3:3) “So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief...”

His point is, “You'll never see what hits you.” Why? Because they're living in Lala land. They're living in a dream world. They're inventing their world, whether it's schizophrenia or a manic state, it's people trying to deal with the sadness of their lives and trying to run away from it in some way, and the perception is, “I'm going to be somebody if I work hard enough.” And this is one of the problems in the church; the church will oftentimes feed

that. "You're somebody if you do something for us."

That's not right. You're somebody because God loves you and this is why, He says,

(Revelation 3:2) "Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed..."

In other words, "You're not pleasing Me," right? "You're not trying to do what is pleasing to Me."

"... in the sight of My God."

Now, watch,

(Revelation 3: 3) "So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it..."

Ok, what have you received and heard? Well, let me tell you.

Romans 12,

(Romans 12:1) "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God..."

Ok. So, how were you saved? By the mercies of God.

"... to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice..."

So, am I presenting my body a living sacrifice because I'm trying to find significance? No, I'm doing it out of gratitude. That's why I'm serving.

And then it goes on in the same text, in Romans 12, “I tell you, by the renewing of your mind, not to think of yourself more highly than you ought.” See, that's that pseudo self-esteem and quite frankly, it never brings about joy and happiness. It's sort of like somebody laughing too much. You ever had somebody laugh too much or laughing all the time? They're probably depressed, so that they're always pursuing something that would try to convey some sense of happiness. They just can't seem to. It's elusive to them. The passage is telling us that you've got to come into the real world. The real world begins by asking yourself one simple question, “What does God want?” That's where it all begins.

So, go back with me in Ephesians 5. You wouldn't think I'd run out of time with my voice, would you? Ephesians 5:10. It's just a short verse, yet you ought to memorize this verse. A very easy verse to remember. I'll quote it to you from memory.

(Ephesians 5:10) “trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.”

Now, this is the game changer, because you see, works, Martha, working so hard, who is she trying to please? Does she ever ask Christ what He really wanted? See, what Christ really wants is you to come to His feet and have a relationship with Him. That's what He really wants. Did anybody ever ask Him? “No, I'm busy. I'm trying to show Him that I'm worth saving.” You're not worth saving. The only reason why we're saved is because of His mercy. It's because of His love, not because you're worth it. But you've become worth it by virtue of Him loving you. I mean, you don't become so good that God wants to save you. While we're yet sinners, Christ died for us. Remember where it started. Go back to the beginning. Quit living in dreamland and thinking that somehow, you're going to impress God. You have forgotten your calling, trying to learn what is pleasing to God.

Now, if you understand what he's saying here in Ephesians 5:15-20, I mean all the way through, He's saying, “Ok, so this is what you need to do.” “You go,

“What's the will of God?” He goes, “Ok. Here's the will of God, be filled with the Spirit.” What does that mean? Well-being filled with the Spirit is being filled with the Spirit of Christ. Ok, what does that mean? That means that you love the father and are willing to do anything for Him. Jesus says, “Everything I see the Father do, I do in like manner because I know it pleases Him.” So, you start getting in the word of God, you go, “What is it You really want me to do?” Now, you're dealing with reality, and what you're going to find, much to your amazement, is that God's not necessarily wanting you to be really busy. He's wanting wives to love their husbands and He's wanting husbands to be sacrificial towards their wives. He's wanting children to obey their parents. I mean, you go through the list and it's not a complicated life. The complication that comes into our life and all the pressures that come upon us because we're somehow trying to find significance by impressing the world and getting a name for ourselves. He says, “The only name you have from Me is dead. That's the only name you have.”

(Revelation 3:2) ““Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain...””

(Revelation 3:4) ““But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white...””

The point in the text is the white there is actually a light. It's where we get the word “Lucifer”. “*Leukos*” is light, and his point is, “You'll be a light.” White garments is a picture of the garments beaming. You'll be light. You'll be walking light. The point in the passage is that “If you'll wake up and you'll do what's pleasing to Me, I'll make sure that you are a light to the world. I'll make sure you are. I'll make sure that people are not moving you to think a certain way, but you're influencing the world around you instead.” We're so wrapped in the thought, “I've got to be a star, therefore people have to applaud me. I have to dance on the stage.” Ok, quit dancing for them. Why don't you go out front and be a leader and be a light to them and show them what you need to do. Because God has called us to be lights in the world, and that the world should follow us to Christ.

“But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments...”

Let me just say this too. What's interesting about the manic state is not only do people normally go into a workaholic kind of mentality, but they indulge in pleasures way beyond what they would ever do. The point is it's God really revealing, “You're into this for yourself, aren't you?” Now, these are all interesting signs that are really telling us that this is about me. It's not about God, and God is warning us. I don't want to go too much into the psychology, but the point is that the church is so immersed in this kind of thought, and He says, “Because you have been seeking for that immediate gratification of significance, you have gone into realms where you don't belong.” Because it's all about immediate gratification, right?

When you read about the Church of Thessalonica, He goes, “You were doing well, but because you feel hopeless, you've now gone into debauchery.” You know why people sin immoral sins? Because they've given up hope. It's one of the main reasons why people go into

them. So, they're going to find some source of gratification that's more immediate. At least they can get a buzz today. So, Scripture's telling us, "You've gotten in it yourself, but there are some that haven't."

If you look in the passage,

(Revelation 3:4) "... they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy."

That's in the nominative case. Once again, "I'm calling them somebody." That's God saying, "I'm calling you somebody. If you walk with Me, I'll call you somebody." And not only that, but the phrase, "they will walk with Me" is actually a phrase that conveys that He's working together with him. In other words, God is saying, "If you'll do what I tell you to do, and you'll start walking the way I'm telling you to walk, we'll get things done. You'll have a name on yourself that says this person is valued." I've seen many old saints, and you can tell the ones that have been walking with the Lord throughout the years because you sense you're in the presence of somebody that is valued in the kingdom of God. It's very difficult to explain, but you just sense these people have actually influenced

the world, have not been influenced by it, but have influenced the world. That's what God's calling us to do.

(Revelation 3:5) “He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name...”

Now, what are they worried about? They're worried about their name. He says, “Why don't you forget about what they're calling you, and think about what I call you. I can give you a name that will never be forgotten, and I'm going to remember you as somebody worthwhile if you just come with Me. Just do the things the way I say.”

“... and I will confess his name...”

It's all about the name, isn't it?

“...before My Father...”

Who is it you're trying to please? Who is in heaven.

“... and before His angels.

(Revelation 3:6) ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’”

It's a great passage because it's really revealing to us that the church is not about fame. It's about the flame of God, and what should constrain us is us wanting to do His will.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for this word that really clarifies for us what the church is all about. So many things that have come into the church that is infiltrated that caused it to be, well, anything but a light, and yet You reveal not only to this church, but to us as individuals, the very things that are holding us back. We're being a difference in the lives of those around us. You've called us to be light in a dark world. Once we were darkness, but now we are light. You tell us, "Therefore, walk as sons of the light."

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, just examine your heart. What are you doing? What is really important to you? What name are you trying to get?