

**Revelation 3: 21 and 22; “With Christ on His Throne”, Sermon # 29 in
the series - "The Faithful and True Witness", Delivered
by Pastor Paul Rendall on September 1st, 2013
in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

When we were last together in this text, I had asked the question, “How can we overcome lukewarmness in the Christian life?” Lukewarmness exists in a Christian's life when they allow themselves to become lax about everything that they know, and everything that they have been given, spiritually by their Lord Jesus Christ; the One who died for them. They do not let their knowledge motivate them to the activities of prayer and worship and evangelism; instead they rest in the knowledge of their own self-assessment; that they have believed in Christ, and therefore they assume that they are living the Christian life. They are not cold. That is what an unbeliever is toward Christ and the gospel and things of God. But they are not hot either. How can this change? This is the very condition which our Lord Jesus Christ reproves. This afternoon I want to speak to you about the things that are important to Christ; things which I hope and trust will become important to you when you hear of them. Christ in this passage is speaking to everyone who has come to realize their lukewarmness, to everyone who would receive the reward of sitting down with Christ on His throne, when He uses this phrase: “To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne.” And so, let us ask ourselves 3 questions in relation to these verses that we are studying. 1st – What is it to be an overcomer? 2nd – How are we to become overcomers? And 3rd – What will it mean to sit down with Christ on His throne?

1st of all – What is it to be an overcomer?

Verse 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.” In the context of this whole passage, the one who overcomes, overcomes their lukewarmness by repenting of it. Verse 16 says, “So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth.” And in verse 19, the Lord Jesus says: “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.” “Therefore be zealous and repent.” There is a promise here from our Lord Jesus; the ones whom He loves, he rebukes and chastens. This implies conversely that those persons that He does not love He does not rebuke nor chasten. Rebuke and chastening of the Christian are given to them out of Christ’s great love for them. He is displeased, but He will not give up building their faith or seeing their righteous character developed. He rebukes and chastens, and we as those whom He loves, respond to His loving words of reproof which lead us to greater self-denial, and those providential orderings which may go against what we would see to be our earthly gain. Christ knows that there is something that must most definitely be overcome if you are to receive the reward of the inheritance from He and the Father. The only remedy for lukewarmness we have seen a previous study, is to come and “buy from Christ”; that is, to come to Him and do spiritual business with Him; to transact with Him spiritually for the things that you are lacking, that he mentions in verse 18. You do this by your opening the door of your heart to His knock; to let Him come in, so that you can partake of the things which He has prepared for you; and He can partake of the things which you have prepared for Him. He has prepared much good spiritual food for you, in your sitting down with Him as it were and speaking to Him face to face about how you might serve Him; how you might better obey Him. You see, what was lacking in the lives of the Laodicean believers was the true spiritual riches. They were not storing up spiritual riches, but they were very much increased and heaped up in worldly goods. They falsely thought that because they had all these earthly things, that they had it made. Actually, in Christ’s sight they were wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. It makes you wonder whether this the description of a Christian or an unbeliever. But it certain that these verses were addressed to those whom Christ considered as Christians. He is addressing them this way out of His love to them, so that they will rightly respond to His concerns for them. Of course, if

they do not respond to His chastening, then ultimately they are none of His. They are illegitimate children as it says in Hebrews 12: 8 – ‘But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.’”

The answer to this question of whether a person or a church is truly Christian is whether they will respond to Christ’s word to them in repentance and renewed obedience. If they do, then truly they have received grace from Christ. Certainly there may be persons who may think that they are Christians, profess to other Christians that they are Christians, and yet not walk as a true Christians should walk; in obedience to God’s word. But a true Christian is one who receives God’s word with a good heart; a heart which has been changed by Christ’s grace not to love the world, or the things of the world. 1st John 2, verse 15 says: “Do not love the world or the things in the world.” ‘If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.’ “For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.” As Christians, we may not really know our true spiritual state before Christ if we are wealthy; if we are wealthy with every earthly and worldly thing, and if our trust and our boast is in those things rather than in Christ. We need to understand that many Christians may for a while tolerate such sins; sins such as covetousness and worldliness, in wanting to prosper in worldly things more than to see their souls prosper in spiritual things. But by staying close to the truth of the Bible, they will come to see it is all vanity without Christ’s blessing. This state of lukewarmness can never continue indefinitely. A true Christian must, and they will, repent of it. A false believer will not.

Christ seeks to awaken you, dear Christian, so that you might not lose your eternal reward. The lukewarm believer who wants to overcome his lukewarmness must come and ask Christ to refine him spiritually; to convict him in relation to all the commandments that he is presently not keeping. And then he should also pray and ask that the Lord would bring the right combination of providentially ordered circumstances into his life which would show him how he should live and what he should spend his time doing. The true Christian prays to be shown what they should repent of, in the way that they are currently living their life. They may have been spending much of what they have received from Christ in grace, on nothing other than their own worldly pleasures, and somehow this must change. They have been interested in recreational pleasures but not so interested in finding the spiritual pleasures at God's right hand. They may have been accustomed to living the Christian life in their own strength and wisdom rather than praying for grace to please God. They may have been attempting to live the Christian life in accordance with the wisdom of this world rather than according to the wisdom which is from above. All of this must change. The true Christian will strive to overcome the world, their flesh, and the schemes of the Devil. They will find that they really will change when they will come to the Lord Jesus and really begin to have fellowship with Him. 1st John 1: 12-14 say: “I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His sake.” “I write to you fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning.” “I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one. “I have written to you fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning.” “I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.” Then it says: “Do not love the world, or the things of the world.” This leads us to our second question.

2nd – How are we to become overcomers?

“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.” The ability to overcome the world, the flesh, and the Devil, comes not from ourselves; it comes from Christ having gone before us, and His having overcome all of our spiritual adversaries on the cross. It is the working His precious grace into our hearts which gives us the power to overcome the world. It begins for you, when you, the person whom God is seeking to save, is born again. Listen to 1st John 5, verse 4. “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world.” “And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.” When we

believe in Him, then He comes into our heart and life, and He begins teaching us His good and holy way through the preaching and teaching of His word in a local church which we are willing to join. Yes, it is true, He also uses our own private Bible study and prayers, but He would teach you to overcome the world's love of being independent, and living independently of all ecclesiastical authority. It is in conjunction with your willing submission to God in this matter, along with your mutual submission to the other believers in a local church, that you will learn to overcome the world's philosophies and ways of thinking. This involves unlearning both following the crowd, which is the broad way that leads to destruction, and your simply following your own desire to be independent of all authority. By your joining with other believers in being submissive to God's authority, which He has placed in the church, you then overcome the world's way of thinking. "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him." "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments." (1st John 5: 1 and 2) Practically speaking, when your fellowship with Christ deepens, and you come to understand that it is His supply of grace which is giving you the strength and the wisdom that you need to glorify Him in the various situations of your life, then you overcome.

Therefore, when Christ would help you in overcoming the world He will move you, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to consider His own example, and how He overcame. Notice that he would motivate you to overcome by His telling you that He has already overcome and has sat down on Father's throne. In other words, there was a reward for His perseverance in keeping all of the commandments of God. It was, that He is now seated at the right hand of the Majesty on High. And the Father has let Him sit down on His throne. That is, He has given the Lord Jesus all power and authority in heaven and earth. He has exalted His name above every name. He rewarded the Lord Jesus for His perfect obedience. It is something that Christ wants you to conscientiously pursue, as you would a relationship with a close friend, remembering that the Lord Jesus is far greater and more important than any earthly friend. He is your Lord and Master; not merely like any earthly friend. He has expectations for you, but He wants you to know that He loves you at all times, so faithful were His wounds for you. He wants you to remember that your overcoming and your persevering in your faith are not going to be perfect. He wants you to understand that your overcoming and perseverance are resting upon His death, resurrection, and continual intercession for you. He does not want you to think that you can lose the salvation which He has suffered so greatly for, in order to give it to you in the first place. He simply wants you to understand that you are totally dependent upon Him for grace. It is because Christ overcame, dear Christian, that you will overcome.

And this leads us to our 3rd Question – What will it mean to sit down with Christ on His throne?

It will mean that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, you will have overcome. It will mean that you will have persevered in the work of faith, you will have been steadfast in hope, and you will have faithfully labored for your Master, your Lord Jesus Christ, out of love for all that He has done for you. But you say, I did none of this perfectly. Just so. But Christ did. He completely obeyed in everything that you were deficient in, in the sight of His Father. My proposition to you this afternoon has been that when you pursue this most important of relationships, of communion with Him, that He will impart grace to you in the form of spiritual strength. He will impart spiritual wisdom to you, so that you will be able to overcome all of your spiritual adversaries, and be able to love others of God's saints. And so, over time, He will also lead you to see that when the interaction between your soul and Himself is regular, when you are truly learning from Him, then the church that you are a part of, will also be strengthened to bring glory to Christ in the various ways that we serve Him together. Let us understand that the Day of Christ is coming, and it will be the Day of rewards given. Even now, Christ is sitting on His throne in the heavenly places, but

when He returns, He will sit upon the throne of glory, and we shall sit down together with Him there; and we will receive the reward of the inheritance which He purchased by laying down His life. To sit down with Christ on His throne is not something that we as believers will be able to do literally until the last day; the day of judgment. In Matthew 25: 31 it says, "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of his glory." "All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate the sheep from the goats." Will the throne be so great in size that all the true believers will come and literally sit on the throne with Him? I do not think that this will be the case. In our text in verse 21 it says, "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne." Christ is sitting at the Father's right hand presently, until all His enemies are made a footstool for His feet. He has overcome and is interceding for His people. He is awaiting the time when He will return in His 2nd coming; when all of His enemies and ours will be made a footstool for His feet. When we overcome our lukewarmness and live to the glory of all that Christ has died to bring to us, when we suffer with Him in this life, "we shall also reign with Him", it says in 2 Timothy 2: 12. That reigning with him will take place after His 2nd coming.

Why will we be able to receive the reward of the inheritance on that blessed day? Was it because we persevered in our own strength, and now we are rewarded because of our efforts. No, it will plainly be seen on that day that our perseverance was the result of Christ's grace. It was He who undergirded us with His strength to overcome and to persevere. The outcome was never in doubt because the outcome was never suspended upon your perseverance. It was determined by Christ's obedience, His sacrifice at the cross, and His intercession on your behalf. Listen to Jonathan Edwards in Vol. 18 of his works, page 277 – "Tis not fit in a covenant that is distinguished from the first covenant as a covenant of grace, wherein all is of mere free and sovereign grace, that the reward of life should be suspended on man's perseverance as dependent on the strength and steadfastness of his own will." "Tis a covenant of works and not a covenant of grace that suspends eternal life on what is the fruit of a man's own strength." "Eternal life was to have been of works in these two respects, viz. as it was to have been for man's own righteousness, and as it was suspended on the fruit of his own strength." "For though our first parent (Adam) depended on the grace of God—the influences of His Spirit in their hearts—yet that grace was given him already, and dwelt in him constantly and without interruption in such a degree as to hold above any lust or sinful habit or principle." "And eternal life was not merely improvement of that grace, his preserving by his own strength with that grace which he already had: for, in order to his perseverance, there was nothing further promised beyond his own strength; no extraordinary occasional assistance was promised." "It was not promised but that man should be left to himself as he was." "But the New Covenant is of grace in a manner distinguishing from the Old in both these respects, that the reward of life is suspended neither on his own strength or worthiness.""Christ came into the world to do what mere man failed of." "He came as a better surety, and that in Him those defects might be supplied that proved to be in our first surety, and that we might have a remedy for that mischief that came by those defects." "But the defect of our first surety was that he did not persevere; he wanted steadfastness." "And therefore God sent us, in the next place, one that could not fail; one that should surely persevere." (End of quote) This is how we overcome and sit down with Him. It is because He first overcame and sat down on His Father's throne on our behalf. Remember Colossians 3: 23 and 24 - "Therefore, whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ."