

Jesus Describes Himself

Problems in the Church Part 2
Revelation 2-3 4-19-2015

Summary: Jesus starts the book of Revelation and each letter with a description of some aspect of His glory. The most important principle for dealing with problems in the church is to gaze upon the glory of Christ. The descriptions come as threats to cause fear and awe, and positive descriptions to make us hope in His goodness.

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Introduction: The Revelation of Jesus

I think I blew it in last week’s sermon. Last week we took somewhat of a jet tour through the letters to the churches in Revelation 2 and 3 to get an overview of what Jesus taught us about how to handle trouble in the church. I tried to summarize the best I could, but I realize this week that I neglected to point out the most important principle of all when it comes to dealing with trouble in the church. The reason I say it’s the most important principle of all is because it is the very first thing mentioned in every single letter. And I won’t keep you in suspense. I will just give you the bottom line conclusion of my sermon right up front – the most important thing to do when you deal with trouble in the church or in your own life is to fix your attention on the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The book of Revelation begins with a description of the exalted Christ. That is the great purpose that dominates chapter 1. Then, in chapters 2 and 3, Jesus dictates letters to His churches. He says different things to each church, but one thing all the letters have in common is that every one of them begins with some description of Jesus Christ that is taken from that glorious vision in chapter 1. So in chapter 1 Jesus says, “This is what I am like.” Then at the beginning of each letter, He reminds that particular church of one little piece of that description of His glory. And they aren’t random pieces. The aspect of his glory that he reminds each church about is the aspect that is most relevant for that particular church’s problems. So to each church Jesus is saying, “You have this problem? Okay, the solution for you is to focus on this aspect of My glory. Next church – you have that problem? Okay, the solution for you is to focus on this other aspect of My glory.” The fact that Jesus puts that first in the book of Revelation, and it is the first thing He talks about in each letter, is good evidence that this is the most important thing. In fact, the reason the book of Revelation is called Revelation is because of the very first words in the book.

Revelation 1:1 The revelation of Jesus Christ...

The whole book is designed as an unveiling of the glorified risen Christ.

I prepared a sermon on James this week, but on Thursday morning I believe the Lord led me to this instead. Even if some of us disagree on polity and procedures and policies and how to handle various things, one thing I trust we can all agree on is this: our Savior and Master, the risen, exalted Lord Jesus Christ, is glorious. And seeing His glory is the most important step in the solution to our problems. He is teaching us in the book of Revelation that He wants us to gaze upon His glory. He wants us to spend lots

of time considering what He is like. Nothing will do this church more good than that. What is the most important command? Love God. That is the greatest commandment. That's the summary of the law. And we will love Him more when we fix our attention on Him more.

One thing you will notice when you look at these descriptions of Christ is that some of them have a negative purpose and others have a positive purpose. The descriptions of Christ that we find at the beginning of the letters to churches 1, 3, 4, and 5 have a negative purpose. And when I say negative, I don't mean bad. What I mean is negative in the sense that it is a warning - designed to generate holy fear in our hearts. The positive ones are designed to create hope and joy in our hearts. And both of those are absolutely essential when it comes to drawing near to our Lord.

When you come to church here and sit down and listen to a sermon, I don't want it to be an experience where you are just being told a whole bunch of things you are supposed to do or not do.

"Time to go to church and discovered 10 more things I need to feel guilty about not doing."

What I want is for you to come here with a soul that is hungering and thirsting for an experience of the presence of God, and you will go away filled and satisfied. If you go away most Sundays thinking, "Wow, Darrell did a great job!" then I have failed. Success is when you walk out of here in awe of God's greatness, or delighted by His love, or guided by His wisdom, or strengthened by His comfort, or encouraged by His promises. So I would like to invite you to peel your eyes away from whatever is bothering you right now, and let's look, as one unified church, at the glory of our Lord.

Stand in Awe & Fear

We'll start with the negative descriptions – the ones that are designed to generate fear and awe in our hearts.

Lord of the Lampstands

Church #1 was Ephesus. There were some things about this church that Jesus really liked. He liked their hard work, He liked their perseverance, He liked their discernment and their ability to spot false apostles, He liked their hatred of sin and false doctrine, and He liked the fact that they would not tolerate evil men.

Jesus really was pleased with those things, but the thing that went bad in that church was so bad that Jesus was considering snuffing them out altogether as a church.

Revelation 2:1 ... These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands

5 If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.

Back in the days of the temple building, the Holy Place was kept well-lit around the clock by oil lamps. God is light, and so to teach us about that He made sure His dwelling place never got dark. And local church fellowships are now fulfilling the role of those lampstands. We exist, not only as light to the world, but as light within the dwelling place of God.

It was the priest's job to tend to those lamps and keep them burning. So when Jesus is described as walking among the lampstands in priestly garb, the idea is He is functioning like a priest tending to the lampstands. We will see in a minute that the oil is the Holy Spirit, and the fire is the work of God through the church. So the point of all the imagery is to show that the ministry of the Church, empowered by the Holy Spirit, lights up God's dwelling place, and Jesus Christ moves like a priest through the churches to keep them burning bright. Every church's lamp would soon burn out if it were not for the great High Priest who tends to the lamps. That is what all the rebukes and instruction and promises of these letters are – that is Jesus tending to the lampstands.

And the church in Ephesus was at risk of being removed as a lampstand altogether because they were declining in love. So Jesus wants to deal with them about that, and He tells them exactly what they need

to do, but before saying any of that He starts by reminding them that He is the one who is in charge of the lampstands.

The other image is that He holds the seven stars in His hand. The stars are angels. Evidently, there is at least one specific angel assigned to each individual congregation. So there is an Agape Bible Church angel who has been assigned the task of serving this particular fellowship. One of the reasons why we are to make sure we have proper honor and respect in the way that we behave ourselves in corporate worship is because of the angels (1 Cor.11). And in the vision in chapter 1 those angels are depicted as stars that Jesus holds in His hand. That's a comforting image. Jesus is walking among us, tending to us, keeping our light burning, and He holds our star in His mighty, omnipotent hand. He is tenaciously sovereign over the fate of this church and he is actively moving among us to make us fit to light up the presence of God. That's the emphasis in ch.1, but the emphasis here is on the negative side.

2:5 I will come to you and remove your lampstand...

Lit: "**I am coming**" (I'm on my way). Jesus was on His way to come remove them from the presence of God altogether. That is designed to strike fear in their hearts.

Lord of the Sword

Church #3 also got a frightening, sobering aspect of Christ's glory.

2:12 To the angel of the church in Pergamum write: These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword.

That's a pretty ominous way to begin a letter. Basically what he is saying is, "Dear Pergamum, let me just begin by reminding you that I am the Judge and Executioner." And the way He states it here, He emphasizes each word: "I'm the one with the sword, the double-edged one, which is sharp."

These people knew about swords. Pergamum was a city that was granted *ius gladii* ("the right of the sword"), which meant the proconsul of a city had been given the right to execute at will. And he used that right. He executed one of the members of this church.

So why does Jesus come to this persecuted church and say, "I'm the one with *ius gladii*"? Because this is a church that was facing judgment. So was church #4.

Lord of Fire

Revelation 2:18 "To the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze.

The eyes like fire represent His penetrating, searching, omniscient gaze of judgment. He has perfect insight into our hearts, our motives, our desires – He knows why we do the things we do when we don't know. He sees everything and understands everything and His penetrating gaze is like a laser that has a burning effect on the thing He sees. His eyes represent His attention, and when He sets His attention on something, that thing is perfectly evaluated and judged and what is unholy is burned.

And the bronze feet represent the crushing, devastating nature of the judgment that arises from His holiness. Molten metal is extremely dangerous and incredibly bright – you can hardly look at it. This shows not only that the awesome, glorious, resurrected and glorified Christ is dangerous in His wrath if He is against you, but also that He is pure and holy. No dross, just solid, pure, unmixed, beautiful, gleaming bronze.

The image Daniel saw in his vision in chapter 2 represented the mightiest of human empires. It was huge and intimidating, but it had feet of clay and iron that were smashed, toppling the whole image. John is contrasting Jesus with that. He is like the mightiest of superpowers, except instead of a foundation made of iron and clay, Jesus' foundation is bronze. Bronze is very hard stuff. Even a hollow bronze

sculpture is basically indestructible. Jesus is never going to topple like the great kingdoms in Daniel's vision. He stands on immovable, indestructible feet. He is vulnerable to nothing. And if He crushes you under His feet, you are thoroughly crushed.

Why does Jesus introduce Himself that way to this church? They were a loving church. Thyatira was really the mirror image of Ephesus. Ephesus was really good in the area of discernment and never tolerating evil or evil people. But they were in trouble because they were declining in love. This church was the opposite. They were increasing in love. But they were weak in the area of tolerating evil. There was a sinful woman in the church who was influencing others. Jesus calls her Jezebel in verse 20, and He says, "I have this against you: you tolerate that woman." Tolerate unrepentant sin in the church, and Jesus will introduce Himself to us as the Lord of the fire.

Churches like these two churches (Pergamum and Thyatira) that are hesitant to carry out the Matthew 18 process and put unrepentant sinners out of the church – they need to understand this about Jesus. Because Jesus says if we do not follow the removal and restoration process, He will come with His fire and with His sharp sword that cuts both ways, and deal with those sinful people, and it's going to be a rough time for the whole church. He warns us and lets us know that as hard as the Matthew process is, we would be far better off to deal with the fallout from that than to deal with Jesus coming into our church with that sword to clean house.

Lord of the Oil

One more negative image – church #5.

3:1 To the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.

He refers to the Holy Spirit here with a very unusual phrase: **the seven spirits of God**. We see it first in Revelation 1:4, where we can see that it is a reference to the Holy Spirit.¹ It is an image that comes out of Zechariah chapter four. Zechariah has a vision of a lampstand that had seven oil lamps. There was a big bowl of oil at the top, and oil flowed from that down to the seven lamps. And from the wording in the Hebrew it sounds like each of the seven lamps had seven lights (wicks). So there would be 49 lights with plenty of oil flowing to each one. Seven is the number of completeness, so 7 X 7 is completeness squared – plentiful oil.

In verse four Zechariah wants to know what the vision means. So the angel explains it starting in verse six.

Zechariah 4:6 So he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty.

That is the meaning. God says, "It's not human power that accomplishes My work. It's My Spirit who accomplishes my work." The work at the time was the rebuilding of the Temple. And the people kept getting discouraged because of their lack of ability, so God sends this vision to tell them, "The only resource you need for this task is My empowering Spirit – which is flowing plentifully through My people."

That is the background. So back to Revelation – we are here as a lampstand. And above us is a giant bowl of oil, the Holy Spirit. Who is in charge of how much power flows from the Holy Spirit's bowl down to our lamp – the seven-fold Spirit? Jesus. When Jesus introduces Himself to the church in Sardis by saying, "Thus saith the one who holds the seven spirits of God," He is highlighting the fact that it is He who sends or withdraws the Holy Spirit, who is the only source of spiritual power for a church. He's saying, "If I send the Spirit, the church will enjoy a flood of divine spiritual power and ability to accomplish God's work. If I withdraw the Spirit from a church, that church will be left with nothing at all

¹ The number seven represented completeness, so calling the Holy Spirit "the seven spirits of God" may be a way of emphasizing the fullness of all that the Holy Spirit is (but not implying that there are actually seven separate persons).

spiritually. It might keep going with all its programming, but it will be like an oil lamp with no oil.” In other words, it is up to Jesus whether a church will be dead or alive. We will be alive or dead based on whether Jesus grants us oil from the Holy Spirit. It is totally up to Him. And why is that significant? It’s significant because

Revelation 3:1 ...I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.2 Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die

The one who controls the Holy Spirit is threatening to cut off the flow if they do not repent of their sin of tolerating evil people.

The Need for Fear

“How does all this help me draw near to God? All this is doing is making me scared to death.”

There are different kinds of fear. One kind is when you are afraid someone will harm you or do you wrong. And that kind of fear makes you withdraw from the person you are afraid of. But there is another kind of fear. There is a kind of fear that actually satisfies a deep appetite within the human soul. We all have a built in craving to be under a great, powerful, firm, loving authority. We think we want freedom to do what we please, but you don’t have to do whatever you please for very long before you discover that it will ruin your life. And you finally realize, “I don’t want to be the god of my life. I need someone who is smarter than me, a lot more powerful than me, a lot better than me, someone much greater than me to be in charge. Given total freedom, I would drive my life right off a cliff. I need someone with a bird’s-eye view of all things putting some guardrails on my path.

I need someone telling me what to do who is awesome in wisdom, and who knows the future and will guide me through it. I need someone who, if I go too far off the rails, will be able to bring a rod of discipline in my life that is capable of getting my attention and producing a harvest of righteousness in me. I need someone whose firm, loving hand I can fear. I need someone whose presence is so sweet and satisfying to me that being alienated from Him is terrifying.”

There is something in the human soul that has a craving to be dwarfed by something much greater. People pay to go stand by the Grand Canyon or Niagara Falls. We love seeing awesome things – even though they make us feel tiny. And all the greatest things in the creation are only illustrations of awesome – God is the only thing in existence that is ultimately awesome.

If you want intimacy with Jesus Christ, the first thing you need to know about Him is His greatness. He is no one to be trifled with. The first step to intimacy is to tremble before Him. No one appreciates the ability to crawl up into His lap as much as the people who have first trembled in holy fear at His feet.

Hope in His Goodness

The Lord of Life

But now that we have trembled, let’s look at the positive side. Go back to church #2. Church #2 was a suffering church. They get no rebuke at all from Jesus. They were being unfairly slandered, which is always hard to take. They were in deep poverty and financial straits. And things were about to get a lot worse.

2:10 Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer.

Let those words sink down into your ears for a moment: *You are about to suffer*. If I am in Smyrna sitting in church Sunday morning, weak and lethargic for lack of food, my kids crying, my home ransacked...and Jesus says, “You are *about* to suffer.”? Excuse me, but I thought I already was! Is this supposed to be comforting? Jesus never tries to comfort us by denying reality. He is honest about reality,

but then He gives true comfort. The comfort is not in how circumstances will get better. The comfort is in *who He is*.

2:8 To the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again.

The attribute that Jesus wants to emphasize in the letter to this church is that He is the one who conquered death. He was dead, and now He is not dead. And that was His doing. He is the Lord of life.

That is the greatest encouragement to a people whose lives are being threatened. Jesus: “Listen folks, before you read this letter, I want to remind you that *life comes from me*. It starts when I say it starts, it ends when I say it ends, it is enjoyed by those I chose to give it to, and it is removed from those I take it from. The people who are hurting you – they aren’t in charge of your quality of life; I am.” All the components of life – perception, growth, strength, appetite, health, energy, liveliness it all comes from Him.

Having more spiritual life means you become spiritually stronger, able to accomplish more, able to endure greater suffering. Your appetites for spiritual nourishment through Scripture and prayer and fellowship increase. Your spiritual health is strong – all the various parts of your soul are in working order – your emotions and drives and spiritual gifts and compassion and discernment – it is all running like a top - firing on all cylinders. You are growing and increasing and progressing - More and more fruit of the Spirit, more and more righteousness and Christlikeness - Greater and greater capacity to experience God’s love. It is all increasing as you grow. Energy increases, motivation, hope, joy, passion – all increasing. And sensitivity and sensation and alertness increase. You become more and more aware of the real world – the spiritual world. And you see more and more clearly the way things really are. That is life.

What did the poor, suffering church need? Life! When you are suffering and the thing causing the pain goes away, but you are still just as depressed as ever, why is that? It is because you got relief, but you didn’t get what you really need – more life (more strength, more joy, more hope, more vitality). If you got mistreated, persecuted, impoverished, imprisoned, and executed, but the whole time the Lord was supplying you with more and more life, you would be much happier than if you got riches, comfort, and ease but declined in life. What the people in Smyrna needed, and what you need and what I need, is life.

Jesus knows that, and so He starts His letter to those people with these words:

8 These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who was dead and came to life again.

First and Last points to His self-existence. He has the power of existence in and of Himself. That is His divine nature – first and last, beginning and end, self-existent. He is the source of all life. He gives it to us in measure now, and when He returns, He will give us the crown of life, and then He will take us to a place where there is a *river* of life!

Revelation 22:1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. 3 No longer will there be any curse.

A crown of life, a river of the water of life, the tree of life - everything we eat and drink and enjoy will give us more and more life! And every bit of that life comes from Him – that is what He is like.

The Lord of the Keys

There was one other church that got no rebuke at all - #6 (Philadelphia). Look at how Jesus introduces Himself to them:

3:7 These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open.

holy and true

The Author of this letter is one who can be trusted absolutely to do everything perfectly right. And He **holds the key of David**. Keys in Scripture, illustrate authority and control.

What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open.

This is a reference to Isaiah 22.

When God decided to take the power away from Shebna and put Eliakim in charge of Israel, He announced His intentions in Isaiah 22:20-24.

Isaiah 22:20 In that day I will summon my servant, Eliakim son of Hilkiah. 21 I will clothe him with your robe and fasten your sash around him and hand your authority over to him. He will be a father to those who live in Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. 22 I will place on his shoulder the key to the house of David; what he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. 23 I will drive him like a peg into a firm place; he will be a seat of honor for the house of his father. 24 All the glory of his family will hang on him:

They had locks back then, but they were much larger than our locks, and so they had great big keys. The one who had authority over the palace would wear that key on his shoulder as part of all his kingly regalia to remind the people of his absolute authority. Also, the people back then didn't just stop at Wal Mart to get a few copies of a key to give to those who needed access. Most locks had just one key. That key is to David's kingdom (the Messianic Kingdom), so the key signifies entrance into the Kingdom. So Jesus identifies Himself here as the one who controls exclusive access to every part of the Kingdom – including the treasury, the palace, etc. He alone decides who gains entry and who does not.

So to this church Jesus introduces Himself as the ultimate authority in the kingdom of God. From there He follows His normal pattern of describing their deeds, and after that to give encouragement. But here he breaks the pattern. He just can't wait to give the encouragement, so He prematurely injects a word of encouragement right in the middle of His statement about their deeds.

8 I know your deeds. (Behold, I gave you an open door that no one can shut.)

There are a lot of doorways in this world marked "joy." There are some single people who look at the doorway of marriage and see a big sign over it that says, "joy and fulfillment." There are others who look at money and see a door marked, "happiness and fulfillment." Another doorway with that sign hanging over it is education. Some others are leisure, alcohol, career, friends, and thousands of others. Thousands of doors marked, "joy," and every last one of them is a lie except for one. The only door you can pass through that will guarantee joy and fulfillment and satisfaction of the appetites of your soul is the doorway to the blessings of the kingdom of the Messiah. That is the only one that actually delivers what it is promising. And there is only one key in existence, and that key is on the shoulder of the Lord Jesus Christ. If Jesus opens that door for you, all the angels and all the demons and six billion human beings in the world could put forth every bit of their energy to try to prevent you from having joy, and they wouldn't be able to do it. No one but Jesus can shut that door. And no one but Jesus can open it. If that door is shut, you can have billions of dollars, the best spouse in the world, the best job in the world, and all the rest and none of it would satisfy.

Later in the book we read about those who are shut out of the New Jerusalem. There are some people who are thrust out into outer darkness, and who will never, ever be allowed to enter. To them the door is locked tight, and there will be no access. But for this church the opposite is true. The Lord has thrown open the door to His kingdom, and they can freely enter.

The Lord of Creation

One last church – Laodicea. The one church Jesus has no praise for at all. How does He introduce Himself to them?

3:14 These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation.

The only other place where someone is called "Amen" is Isaiah 65:16.

Isaiah 65:16 He who takes an oath in the land will swear by God amen.

God is referred to as "**God Amen**" there because He is the one who makes something "amen" (a certainty). We see a similar thought in 2 Corinthians 1:20

2 Corinthians 1:20 No matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

Christ makes God's promises "yes" and "amen." They are a certainty in Him.

3:14 ...the faithful and true witness

To make a good witness, a person must...

1. Have seen with his own eyes that which he tells about.
2. He must be absolutely honest in reporting it.
3. He must have the ability to accurately communicate what He has witnessed.

That makes Jesus the ideal witness for God. That means if He speaks about the present or the past, His words are faithful and true, and if He says something will happen in the future, that statement is "Amen" – written in stone. Bottom line – anything that comes out of the mouth of Jesus - you can take it to the bank.

3:14 ...the ruler of God's creation.

Your Bible might say **beginning** instead of **ruler**. The word is *arche*, and it can mean either *beginning* or *ruler* depending on the context. Whenever John uses this word it always means beginning, so I think that's the right translation here.² Jesus is the beginning of God's creation. Now don't misunderstand that. That is not to say Jesus *had* a beginning. He is the beginning. There is a huge difference. Jesus had no beginning. He was never created. He has always existed. He is the beginning, which means he existed prior to all things, He is over all things, and He Himself created all created things. In Revelation 21:6, God the Father is called **the Alpha and Omega, the beginning (arche) and the end.**

The point is that the Lord Jesus Christ is absolutely supreme in every way, and so the only thing that matters ultimately in life is where you stand in relationship to Him. No matter what else you are, no matter what else you accomplish, the only thing that really has any significance is Jesus Christ's assessment of you.

Conclusion

When there are problems in the church, or problems in your house, or problems in your heart, it is so easy for all of your attention to become fixed on the problem. And just about the only attention we give to God is when we look up for a moment and cry out, "Help!" There is nothing wrong with asking God for help, but there is something very wrong if that's the only kind of attention we pay Him. Sometimes we ask God for help, and what we really mean is, "Remove the problem." Anything other than removal of the problem isn't the sort of help we are asking for. But so often that kind of help would be the wrong kind of help. There are so many times when God knows that removal of the problem would hurt us more than help us. He might remove the problem, if the time is right, but that's not the most important kind of help. The most important kind of help is when God simply allows our eyes to be opened so that we can see greater glimpses of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some devastating problem comes into our lives and we cry out, "Lord, help me!" and His answer is, "Okay, I will help you. Just open your eyes. Just look

² The word appears 55 times in the New Testament, and almost half of those are in John's writings. It is a very common word in John's vocabulary, and every time John uses it elsewhere, it clearly means "beginning." That includes the two other uses in Revelation (21:6, 22:13)

away from that problem and look at Me. Just open up your Bible and I will send the Holy Spirit to show you some things - not things about how to handle your problem; things about Me. I will show you some things about My holiness. I will give you some new insights about My power. I have so much compassion for you right now in your suffering, and so I moved in My heart to grant you some greater insights into My mercy. If you get away by yourself, and seek hard after Me, I will grant you a much greater experience of My presence than normal.” How many times does God answer our cry for help that way, and we never see it? We never get it. The answer to our prayer is right there, but we miss it because we can’t get our eyes off the problem. It is not an accident that every single one of those letters to the churches starts out, before anything else is said, with Jesus saying, “Let Me begin by describing Myself.” He just gave all those same descriptions in chapter 1, but He wants each church to understand that step one in dealing with every problem is to look at Christ. Contemplate His attributes. Learn what He is like. Is anyone besides me here in this room right now sick and tired of looking at your own sin, and the mess of your own heart? Is anybody burdened with the constant reminders of the failures of your past? Is anyone overwhelmed with your inability to handle what’s facing you right now or what’s coming tomorrow? How about you take a break from looking in the mirror for a while? You are not going to find the solution to your problems there. But you take a break from brooding over the problems in your life for just a little while, and turn your face toward Christ.

He is the author of life.

He holds the only key to joy.

He is the perfect dad whose rod of discipline will keep you from destroying yourself.

He is the one walking among His church, tending to us, nurturing us – keeping our light burning.

He is the beginning and the end.

He is everything.

Benediction: Colossians 3:1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

Application Questions (James 1:25)

1. What problem, past, present, or future, do you need to take a break from looking at and turn your attention to Jesus Christ?
2. Which are you most in need of right now – greater awe, greater fear of Him, or greater understanding of Him as your only source of good?
3. Name one attribute of God that has helped you in a trial recently when you have turned your attention to that attribute? Which attribute would be most helpful in your current struggle?