

## Examine Our Congregation

Text : **Revelation 1-3**

**A. With our last lesson we addressed God's command to examine ourselves.**

**S#1.**

**S#2.**

**II Cor. 13: 5** – Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!  
Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?

1. We looked at this command as an individual challenge.
2. The stated purpose of the command challenges us to see if we are “in the faith.”
3. The measure of pass or fail the faith test is if “Jesus Christ is in you.”
4. The goal of every Christian is to develop within himself the heart of Jesus.

**Eph. 4: 11-16** And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; <sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

**S#3.**

**B. Therefore, we concentrated on the importance of monitoring our hearts.**

**S#4.**

1. Our heart will lead us astray if not monitored and disciplined.

**Jer. 17: 9** – The heart is more deceitful than all else  
And is desperately sick; Who can understand it? ( Cf – **Eccl. 9: 3** )

**S#5.**

- \* 2. Our hearts often convince us that we are what we wish we were.
3. Thus, periodically we must undertake a diligent and comprehensive self-evaluation.

**C. Due to time constraints the scope of our lesson was limited to these 4 areas :**

**S#6.**

1. We are commanded to evaluate our motives and our beliefs.
2. We observed that there is a tendency to confuse activity with spiritual growth.
3. Monitoring is essential to survival because Satan and sin are very deceitful.
4. The only standard for monitoring ourselves is comparing ourselves to the scriptures.

**S#7.**

**D. Monitoring is one of the distinctions between having a goal and having a dream.**

1. Everyone would like to go to Heaven. ( *dream* )
  - a. No one wants to think of the alternative ... **hell.**
  - b. Most just assume because they desire Heaven, they will go there.
  - c. That is the very definition of a pipedream.
2. Few actually set Heaven as the goal of their life.

S#8.

This lesson will broaden the scope of our examination to the congregation.  
We ask, “As Jesus examines our congregation, what will he say to us ?”

## I. Jesus is aware of what goes on in every local church.

S#9.

### A. He walks among the churches.

S#10.

1. The “lampstands” are figures of the churches.
  - a. **Rev. 1: 20** – As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.
  - b. Compare ... **Matt. 5: 14-16** ... Christians are lights ... a city on a hill.

2. Jesus spoke from among the churches.

S#11.

- a. **Rev. 1: 13** – in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, ...
  - b. Compare ... **Matt. 28: 20** – ... I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

3. Jesus stays active in and among His churches.

S#12.

- a. **Rev. 2: 1** – The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this:

- b. Jesus has a vested interest, He purchased the church at the cost of His life. **Acts 20: 28** – Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

S#13.

- c. Jesus is an active head of His church. ( *Shows Him exercising His rule.* ) **Eph. 5: 23** – For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.

S#14.

### B. Jesus is aware of the conduct of individuals within a congregation.

S#15.

1. He was aware when one member was martyred for the faith.

S#16.

**Rev. 2: 13** – ... did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, ...

2. Jesus was aware of the activities of one woman in one congregation.

S#17.

**Rev. 2: 20** – But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.

3. Jesus was also aware of the activities of small groups within a congregation.

S#18.

**Rev. 3: 4** – 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.

**C. He is aware of the collective actions of the congregations.****S#19.**

1. For example, the church in Ephesus.

**Rev. 2: 2-4** I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; **3** and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary. **4** 'But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

**S#20.**

2. Jesus was aware of their positive actions and attitudes.

- a. Intolerance for evil and for false teachers
- b. Perseverance and endurance.

3. Jesus was also aware that their hearts weren't really in it.

- a. They had lost their love.
- b. Their fire had gone out and they were running on autopilot.

4. Jesus also knew the congregation at Laodicea was just going through motions. **S#21.**

**Rev. 3: 15-16** I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. **16** 'So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.

- a. Did you ever hug your wife when she was miffed at you ?  
She goes through the motions, but her heart's not in it. *It's not satisfying.*
- b. They were doing things, but their heart wasn't really in it. (*last week's lesson*)
- c. God wants our hearts above all else. (*He wants an embrace with warmth.*)

**S#22.****D. As Jesus walks among the congregations in this area, what will He say about us ?****II. Jesus is actively disciplining the congregations as well as individuals.****S#23.****A. Jesus disciplines congregations and individuals whom he loves.****S#24.**

1. **Rev. 3: 19** – Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline;  
therefore be zealous and repent **S#25.**

2. **Rev. 3: 15-16** I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. **16** 'So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. **2:5– remove lamp**

3. **Heb. 12: 5-7** My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reprov'd by Him; **6** for those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent. **7** It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? **S#26.**

**B. In this Christian era Jesus still deals with individual Christians who sin. S#27.**

1. To our Lord you are not just a face in the crowd. ( *Remember : Antipus, Philemon* )
2. **Rev. 2: 20-23** But I have *this* against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, **S#28.**  
 who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My  
 bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and  
 eat things sacrificed to idols. **21** 'I gave her time to repent, and she  
 does not want to repent of her immorality. **22** 'Behold, I will **S#29.**  
 throw her on a bed of *sickness*, and those who commit adultery  
 with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds.  
**23** 'And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches  
 will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I  
 will give to each one of you according to your deeds.

- a. A whole generation of young people have been killed by denominationalism.
- b. Legalistic or authoritarian presentation causes people not to develop love for truth.

**II Thes. 2: 10** – and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, **S#30.**  
 because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.

\* Sermon title : “*You’re Going To Hell Because .....*” ( *Moses* “Must we give ..” )

3. The function of each individual in the church is to draw people to Christ.

**C. Jesus knows the reaction of the congregation to sin. S#31.**

1. Ephesus **S#32.**  
**Rev. 2: 6**– Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans,  
 which I also hate.
2. Pergamum **S#33.**  
**Rev. 2: 15–16** So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching  
 of the Nicolaitans. **16** 'Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you  
 quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.
3. Thyatira **S#34.**  
**Rev. 2: 20** – But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel,  
 who calls herself a prophetess, and ... leads My bond-servants astray

**D. Jesus is aware of each congregation’s circumstances. S#35.**

1. Smyrna **S#36.**  
**Rev. 2: 9** – ‘I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich),
2. Laodicea **S#37.**  
**Rev. 3: 17** – Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have  
 need of nothing,” and you do not know that you are wretched and  
 miserable and poor and blind and naked,

\*3. ( **Sardis** ) Jesus holds us accountable for how we use what we receive. S#38.

**Rev. 3: 2-3** 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. **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, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you. S#39.

- a. We are responsible for how we use our physical blessings. ( \$34K = top 1% )
- b. We are responsible for **how we use every lesson** we have ever heard or read.

S#40.

### **III. Jesus promises rewards to congregations and individuals who remain faithful.**

S#41.

A. Philadelphia - Jesus rewards Christians by giving them fruit for their labors.

- 1. **Rev. 3: 8** – I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name. S#42.

\* 2. We have little power, BUT **God can make us grow.**

- 3. The Apostle Paul gave us the formula for numerical church growth.

**I Cor. 3: 6** – I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.

B. Every church who would repent & remain faithful was promised a reward: S#43.

- 1. Ephesus ... Eat of the tree of life which is in the paradise of God
- 2. Smyrna ... Will not be hurt by the second death.
- 3. Pergamum ... I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone,
- 4. Thyatira ... I will give authority over the nations ... I will give him the morning star.
- 5. Sardis ... I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name
- 6. Philadelphia ... I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God,
- 7. Laodicea ... I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.

S#44.

### **IV. What would Jesus say if He sent a message to this congregation, to each of us ?**

S#45.

A. Would He approve of the works we are doing ? ( Take up his cross daily .. **Lk 9:23** )

- 1. Are our deeds incomplete like Sardis ?
- 2. Have we done well with limited resources like Philadelphia ?
- 3. Are we improving and increasing like Thyatira ?

B. What would He say about our zeal for Him and His word ? S#46.

- 1. Are we growing in love or cooling off like Ephesus ?

2. Are we lukewarm like Laodicea ?
3. Or zealous like the brethren at Philadelphia ?
4. He told the church at Sardis that they could fool others, but not Him. **S#47.**  
**Rev. 3: 1 – I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.**

**C. Would Jesus approve of our stewardship of the faith ? ( *Sharing it* ? )** **S#48.**

1. Do we test the teaching we hear and refute error like the Ephesians ?
2. OR, do we compromise with the denominations like those in Pergamum ?
3. Do we tolerate evil ( *just get along* ) like the brethren at Thyatira ?

**S#49.**

**D. What are we doing that would impress Jesus and motivate Him to praise us ?**

1. He told Philadelphia they were doing so well He would keep them from testing.
2. He also told Philadelphia they had done so well He was opening doors for them.

**CONCLUSION :**

**S#50.**

**A. This lesson is not to condemn or to praise ... just to motivate self-examination.**

1. Together and individually we have both strengths and weaknesses.
2. Are we using our strengths and strengthening our weaknesses ?

**S#51.**

**B. Jesus walks among the churches so He knows us better than we know ourselves.**

1. Because we love Him, we want for Him to be proud of us.
2. It is easy to become complacent if we are not challenged.
3. We come together each week to challenge each other.

**Heb. 10: 23-25** **Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, S#52.**  
**for He who promised is faithful; 24 and let us consider how to**  
**stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking**  
**our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but**  
**encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day**  
**drawing near.**

**C. If sufficiently stimulated, is there anything God can't use us to do ?** **S#53.**

1. Let us honestly examine ourselves as individuals and as a group.
2. Based on this examination, let us then set some goals for God's glory.
3. God willing, that will be our next lesson.

**INVITATION :**

**Lesson Text :****Revelation 1: 1-20**

**1** The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated *it* by His angel to His bond-servant John, **2** who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. **3** Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

**4** John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, **5** and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood— **6** and He has made us *to be* a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him *be* the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. **7** BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen. **8** “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

**9** I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance *which are* in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. **10** I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like *the sound* of a trumpet, **11** saying, “Write in a book what you see, and send *it* to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.”

**12** Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; **13** and in the middle of the lampstands *I saw* one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. **14** His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. **15** His feet *were* like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice *was* like the sound of many waters. **16** In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.

**17** When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, “Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, **18** and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

**19** “Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things. **20** “As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.