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February 12, 2009

Posted by revrandy - 2009/02/12 20:03

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Hi Folks!

In preparation for the message on Sunday I have spent a lot of time with some ancient congregations. These were the church-folks from Ephesus, Pergamum, Thyatira, Philadelphia, Smyrna and Laodicea. Christ speaks, through the prophet John, in the Revelation to each of these churches. God scolds, comforts, advises and gives these churches all they need to become the church God created them to be. Don't you wish God would send a letter to Good News? Don't you hunger for the clear guidance of Christ so we'd be sure to get it right?

If these questions are up front in your heart I've got good news for you. These seven churches from Revelation are representative of the mistakes and the victories we share as God's witness in the world. Christ called that witness the Church and it is His plan A. We have not been told of a plan B, so I guess we've got to see and hear what God is saying to these "representatives" of the errors and the achievements God expects for us. In fact, these letters all end with the phrase (in some form) "He who has eyes see, he who has ears hear". So get your best Spiritual glasses and make sure your ears are clear, because God has something to say to us through these seven churches.

Warren Wiersbe calls these churches by adjectives that describe their character. Ephesus has been careless because they have lost their love for God and others. Smyrna (which means bitter) was commended by Christ but told not to fear in the face of the bitter trials they would suffer. Pergamum had allowed false teachers to "lord over" the people, taking them away from the center of Christ's teaching. Thyatira was corrupted by a seductive permissiveness that led the Church in the direction of the world. Sardis was fearful and feeble and was told to wake up! Philadelphia was the faithful church that God assured would have an open door to His blessings. Finally, there was the proud church that had everything they needed. Christ tells this "proud" group, "You make me want to vomit!" They had compromised the Gospel to the point they no longer were distinguishable from the world.

So there it is! The above gives us a preview to what Christ said to the Church then and what Christ is saying to the Church today. But there's one more statement Christ made in the epistles of Paul which I think is prescriptive for the Church today. I'm going to do a "where's Waldo" and let you find it. I'll give you a clue. It is in red letters and it is after Acts and before the Revelation. It tells us where to place our confidence and it applies especially to the times we are in today.

I hope to see each of you on Sunday and pray for God's blessings in your family, in your life and in your heart!

In Christ, Pastor Randy

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