The Church That Needed Nothing

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Date: 15 March 2026

Preacher: Jeremy Sarber

[0:00] Before the preaching of this word from Revelation chapter 3.! Revelation chapter 3. We'll be reading one of the seven letters that Jesus wrote to these churches here in Revelation.

! The church in Laodicea. So we'll begin our reading in verse 14 of Revelation 3. This is the word of the Lord.
And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write, The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation. I know your works. You are neither cold nor hot.
Would that you were either cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing.
Not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire so that you may be rich.
[1:10] And white garments so that you may clothe yourself. And the shame of your nakedness may not be seen. And salve to cover your, anoint your eyes so that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline.

So be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him and eat with him and he with me.
The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.
If I were to summarize the sermon we heard from Pastor Colin last week, in just one sentence, here's what I'd say.
Wealth is a good gift from God when governed by wisdom. Dangerous when it captures the heart. Temporary in this life.
[2:13] Useful for kingdom stewardship. And ultimately surpassed by the eternal riches found in Christ who became poor for our salvation.

I hope that captures it accurately. So money, wealth, material prosperity are neither inherently good nor inherently bad.
If gained and used wisely, it is a very good thing. If gained and used foolishly, wealth can be a very devastating thing.
On the one hand, the Bible teaches us that wealth can be a tremendous blessing from God. Proverbs often speaks about riches that accompany wisdom and diligence.
But wealth can also deceive us. It can quietly take hold of our hearts and lead us away from the path of life into destruction.
[3:13] And the process is usually so slow that we don't even notice. It slowly gives us the illusion of security and independence.

And if we're not careful, we can begin to trust in our wealth more than we trust in the Lord. And this temptation only increases as our prosperity increases.
I remember visiting a small country church years ago. And when you walked into the building, you were hit hard right in the foyer with the smell of rotten eggs.
It wasn't quite strong enough to make you gag, but it was close. However, one sip from the drinking fountain, and I did gag.
Evidently, their water had a high level of sulfur. But I noticed other people drinking from the fountain without any trouble at all. I didn't see them gag.
[4:16] I didn't see them wince or make a face. They took a sip, and they kept right on going. I didn't hear anyone say one word about the taste or the smell. So after the service, I was talking with one of their deacons, and I said, so you guys must have a sulfur problem.

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And he looked at me like he had no idea what I was talking about. So I said, well, I noticed the smell in the foyer when I walked in, and I could taste it a little in the water. Then he said, oh, that.
It's been like that a long time. I don't even notice anymore. Well, that's precisely what happened within the Laodicean church. We might call it spiritual apathy.
They had grown so comfortable in their material prosperity that they didn't even realize how far they had drifted spiritually. On the outside, they appeared stable and successful.
They were well off. They thought everything was fine. But when Christ examined the church, he saw something very different. So let's look at what he says to them.
[5:27] First of all, Christ captures our attention from the start by declaring his identity to them. These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation.

So first of all, what does Jesus mean when he refers to himself as the Amen? Well, there's a lot more to that word than meets the eye. It's not merely the traditional way to end a prayer.
It's actually rich with meaning. The book of Isaiah refers to Yahweh, our God, as the God of truth. That's how it's often translated into English.
But literally, the phrase is the God of Amen. God, in other words, is the source of truth.
He's the embodiment of truth. It is not a stretch at all to say he is truth. When Governor Pilate rhetorically asked, what is truth?
[6:33] Believe it or not, his question has a legitimate answer. And the answer is God. God is truth. People spend their entire lives searching for meaning, searching for truth.

They debate philosophies. They write books and movies about the search for truth. And yet, people are still asking, what is truth? The answer is God.
God is truth. If we are to understand any truth, the search begins and ends with the Alpha and the Omega. The Almighty God who is the beginning and end of all things, but of certainly truth.
The Jews of the first century, they understood this about God. They understood it plainly, which is what made some of Jesus' claims so shocking, so controversial to them.
For example, he once declared himself to be the way, the truth, and the life. He claimed to be the truth in the same way that the Jews understood God the Father to be truth.
[7:46] So it is no small thing for Jesus to refer to himself as the Amen. He is the truth. What is he saying here? Have you noticed how many times Jesus will begin a statement with the words, truly, truly, I say to you.

Truly, truly, I say to you. Or in the old King James Version, verily, verily, I say unto you. In other words, what I'm about to say is absolute truth.
He was not offering an opinion, and he wasn't speaking as a man who is prone to error. He was declaring the absolute truth of God.
That's what he means. That's what we mean when we say Amen. We are affirming the truth. Specifically, we are saying that is God's truth. That is absolute truth.
When we Amen a preacher, for example, we are saying, yes, brother, that is truth. What you have said, you have spoken rightly. Jesus is the affirmation of all that is true.
[8:56] He confirms it. He validates it. He is the last word, and that word is truth. Jesus is the validation of everything.

God has ever said and done. Therefore, he is the faithful and true witness. For a time, he was God's witness on this earth, and now he is God's witness in heaven.
And lastly, Christ identifies himself as the beginning of God's creation. Now, please, do not misunderstand or be confused by that statement.
Jesus is not suggesting that he was created by God. And we know that because he inspired John, the same apostle who wrote the book of Revelation, to also write these words in the opening of his gospel account.
In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.
[10:07] Jesus, the word who became flesh and dwelt among us, is co-eternal with God the Father. I know the doctrine of the Trinity doesn't seem to be as important to many people, to many Christians even, as what it actually is, but it is so very vital.

It's a foundational piece of the Christian faith. As John reminds us, all things were made through him, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ.

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Not just God the Father, but God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. In other words, all of God's creation essentially began with Christ.
It was through Christ that all things were made. Now, that speaks of natural creation, but we can even go further than that. We could take this concept further and discuss Christ's role in salvation. Do you remember what Paul wrote? If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. If you're in Christ, you are a new creation. And we could take it even further still and talk about Christ's role in eschatology, the end times.
[11:28] Regarding the end times, we look forward to a new heaven and a new earth, right? A new creation, if you will. We anticipate something new, something beyond what we currently experience, and who makes this new creation possible?

Jesus. Before Jesus left this earth, he told his disciples, I go and prepare a place for you. In other words, in every conceivable way, Jesus is the beginning of God's creation.
All things were created through him, and all things will be recreated or renewed through him. So this is someone we really want to listen to.
So now that he has our attention, Jesus says, I know your works. In other words, I know what you've done.
I know what you haven't done. I even know the motivations behind what you've done or haven't done. When we think of works, we typically think of what we do or perhaps what we don't do.
[12:38] But Jesus implies more than that. Of course, the Lord sees man not as man sees man. The man, we look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.

He sees deeper than what we can see. In fact, a lifetime of good works means nothing if the heart is far from God. Paul said of Israel, they have a zeal for God.
That's indisputable, but not according to knowledge. And Jesus said, in vain do they worship me. Yes, they worship him. Yes, they have an apparent zeal, but it's all in vain.
Why? The heart is not in it. The heart's not part of the equation. They're just going through the motions. So when Jesus refers to the works of the Laodiceans, I believe he has the totality of their faith in service in mind.
All of their works, all of their motivations, where their heart is, everything. Not just what they do or don't do. He sees it all, and he knows that in the case of the Laodiceans, they are neither cold nor hot.
[13:48] Now, I often say that every book of the Bible has historical context, and that's an important reminder here. All Scripture is breathed out by God, but he didn't inspire the books of the Bible to be written in a vacuum.

He breathed out these 66 books and their various parts through the personalities and the experiences and the circumstances of the human authors. And he also considered the circumstances of the original recipients of these books.
In short, someone wrote each book to someone else for some reason. And it's very helpful for us to figure out that context.
There is historical context behind it, and understanding that context helps us understand the message of each book, or in this case, this letter. And I'd say this is especially true when we read the letter to the Laodicean church.
You see, when we hear hot or cold, what we typically think of is something along the lines of passionate or not. We may even think of good or evil, but that cannot be what Jesus means here.
[15:06] Notice what he says next in verse 15. would that you were either cold or hot. In other words, I want you to be cold or hot, but not lukewarm.

Now, if Jesus means passionate, then we'd have to conclude that he would rather we lack all passion than to be halfway passionate.
Or if he means good or evil, we'd have to conclude that he would rather us be evil than somewhat good. And I just don't believe that's what he's getting at here. The city of Laodicea was not blessed with a natural water supply, at least not one that was great for the people.
So rather ingeniously, they built these underground aqueducts to pipe in water from some of the neighboring cities. They piped in hot water from one place, and they piped in cold water from another place.
The hot water was used for medicinal purposes. The cold water was used, of course, for drinking. The problem was that these pipes, as ingenious as they were, they had to run for miles, six, ten

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miles, depending on the source.
[16:19] By the time the water reached them from either the hot springs in Heriopolis or the cold springs in Colossae, the water tended to be lukewarm when it arrived.

And worse yet, the pipes would build up with these calcium deposits that would either clog the pipes or they would make the water undrinkable. It became so bad that the water, drinking it, could actually induce vomiting.
It was terrible. It would make a person nauseous. So that's the historical and geographical backdrop to this letter. In this context, both hot and cold water are good things.
Both are desirable. They both serve a practical purpose. Again, hot water could be used for medicinal purposes, for healing, if you will. And cold water was used for drinking, for refreshment.
The Laodiceans, better than anyone, knew that contaminated, lukewarm water was good for nothing. It was disgusting, and it would actually make you sick.
[17:28] Frankly, the church is not supposed to be lukewarm, but both hot and cold. Not one or the other.

We should be a source of refreshment, like a cold drink of water on a hot day. We should also be a source of healing, if you will.
So the issue here is not so much temperature, hot or cold, as it is distance from the source. That's the problem.
Distance from the source. And Jesus says, because you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.
The natural consequence of being lukewarm is rejection. If you take a drink of this calcified, lukewarm water, you won't be able to help yourself.
[18:26] You'll either spit it out or you'll swallow it only to throw it up later. You won't be able to stomach it, and neither can Jesus. So to reiterate, hot is good, cold is good, lukewarm is bad.

Jesus doesn't intend for his analogy to represent two opposite extremes where we must choose one or the other, hot or cold. That's not it. Both hot and cold are good for different reasons, which I think we all understand.
On a hot day, we want a cold drink, and maybe when we want to take a warm shower, we want that water to be hot. We want a cup of coffee or a cup of tea, we want that water to be hot.
Both extremes are good, but for different purposes. So when Jesus compares the spiritual condition of the Laodiceans to lukewarmness, he's not suggesting that they're somewhere between good and bad.
No, hot is good, cold is good, but lukewarm is bad. Again, the issue isn't temperature, but rather distance from the source, which consequently determines our usefulness.
[19:38] I think you'll see what I mean as we continue. Now, there's something else you should know about the Laodicean church. The Laodiceans were very wealthy, very wealthy.

It was a prosperous city. In fact, in AD 60, for example, an earthquake devastated the region, and in response, the Roman Empire offered financial support to the various cities to help them rebuild.
But the Laodiceans declined completely. They said, no, we don't need your money. Why? Because they didn't need the money.
They absolutely did not need the money. They had the financial means to rebuild the city themselves entirely on their own. They didn't need Rome's help. Well, notice what Jesus says to them here.
For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing. And to be clear, that is the problem.
[20:46] We don't know all of the ways this lukewarmness manifested itself in the Laodicean church. Jesus says, I know your works, but he doesn't describe those works for us.

He doesn't go into detail about what they were doing or maybe not doing. For all, we know they were doing everything right on the surface, but perhaps there was something amiss in their motivations, in their hearts.
Maybe there was something missing that could not be seen. We don't know exactly what it was, but we do know that at the root of the problem was self-reliance.
Now, is self-reliance really a problem? Well, in this context, the answer is absolutely yes.
Jesus says to them, For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

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[21:49] You see, the problem with self-reliance is that it tends to be accompanied by self-deception. We only think we are self-reliant when, in fact, we are in desperate need of help.

The Laodiceans were rich, they were prosperous, so much so, in fact, that they had come to believe that they didn't need anything from anyone, including God.
Isn't that interesting? They boldly proclaim, I don't need anything. We're good. No outside help for us. And yet, they lack the most fundamental resource for survival, which is water.
They lack water. Yet, they so proudly say, we don't need anything. We're good. Turn those spigots off, Colossi. Areopolis, let's see where they stand.
Just imagine this scenario. Let's say you're out on a lake in a rusty old rowboat. It isn't much to look at, but it floats, gets you where you need to go, and as you row along, you come across a man who's treading water in the middle of the lake, miles from shore.
[23:07] He has no boat, no life preserver, so you yell out to him, Sir, climb aboard! But instead of accepting the offer, he laughs and says, I don't need your help.

Don't you know that I own a yacht worth half a million dollars? Why would I need your lousy rowboat? So you call back, Sir, where is your half a million dollar yacht?
The man replies, well, it's at the bottom of the lake. It just sank before you got here. Now, that may seem like a very silly illustration, but it's not far from the truth of where these Laodiceans were. self-reliance and self-deception, they go hand in hand. The Laodiceans, they believed they were rich enough that they didn't need anything. They were self-reliant to the point that they felt no need for outside help, even though they lacked the most essential material possession of all, water. water. It's quite the blind spot. So, Jesus' response is entirely appropriate, isn't it?
[24:20] You are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. You don't even see it. You don't even realize it. Now, to be clear, and perhaps this goes without saying by now, this message to the Laodiceans really isn't about water.

The issue is that this church had become more reliant on themselves than on Christ. They should have been a source of healing and refreshment, but they weren't.
Why? Because they were too far removed from the only true source of healing and refreshment, Jesus Christ Himself.
just as they were too far from their sources of water. They were too far from the source of everything good, of everything needful, Jesus Christ.
So, maybe now you're beginning to see that the problem here isn't merely a lack of passion or zeal as we often think of lukewarmness. This is far more serious.
[25:31] These people shared the spirit of the Pharisees in many respects. Those men who rejected God's Messiah because they didn't feel they needed a Savior. In their minds, the Pharisees believed they were righteous enough to merit God's favor and His grace, a right standing before God all on their own.

But the situation here is even further complicated by the fact that the Laodiceans evidently had received Christ.
They had accepted Christ. They belonged to a Christian church. And yet they had become so self-reliant that they had lost their dependency on Christ.
This point becomes even clearer in the next verse. Jesus says to them in verse 18, I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire so that you may be rich and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen and salved to anoint your eyes so that you may see.
Now, I've already talked about the Laodiceans' wealth, but I didn't mention a couple of other things that this city was well known for at the time. Laodicea was known for its textile industry.
[27:00] They produced high-quality wool fabric which they exported widely throughout the world. Specifically, they were famous for producing black wool fabric.

The city was also known for training physicians who specialized in, guess what? Eye care. The Laodiceans are rich, right?
But Jesus says, I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire so that you may be rich. He's denying their claim to wealth. They produced this beautiful black wool and yet Jesus says, you need white garments from me so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen.

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And then the Laodiceans had this reputation for their superior eye care, but Jesus says, you need myself to anoint your eyes so that you may see.
So Christ is chipping away at every last thing that has given this church a false sense of security. He's addressing every single thing that has caused them to drift away from the only true source of security, Christ himself.
[28:18] As I said before, I don't know exactly how this problem manifested itself in the Laodicean church. I don't know what it looked like, maybe on the outside, but I suspect that these manifestations were quite subtle.

You'll notice that Jesus doesn't condemn them for any blatant sins, unlike his rebuke of some of the other churches here in these seven churches in Revelation. He doesn't accuse them of tolerating heretics or false doctrines or anything like that.
at the same time, he doesn't commend them for anything either. He doesn't have a positive word to say about this church, not a single one. That likely means that this problem is not only subtle, but deadly serious for them.
This isn't time for niceties here. Jesus goes straight to the issue, not necessarily the manifestation or the symptoms, but he goes right to the root problem.
And he says, you have great material wealth, but spiritually you're poor. You have some of the finest garments, but you're naked.
[29:31] You have salve that can heal the eyes, but you are in fact blind. All of these things that they may have placed their trust in are in reality meaningless.

They're worthless. Have you considered that they could be gone tomorrow? All of them could be taken away in an instant.
Where will your faith be then? Do you remember the parable of the sower? Jesus said, as for what was sown among the thorns, this is the one who hears the word.
But the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. Material wealth is not the most fertile ground for the word of God.
That's a warning the Bible repeats over and over again in numerous ways. Now, to be clear, the Bible never condemns wealth.
[30:32] It doesn't denounce wealth. But contrary to what we hear from, let's say, prosperity preachers, who claim that if only we're faithful enough, we'd all be healthy and wealthy.

Scripture warns us again and again about the inherent dangers of wealth, in fact. The more comfortable we become, and this is the problem, the more comfortable we become, the more complacent we become.
The more we have, the more we tend to trust in what we have. The more we rely on what we possess materially. And once we've been comfortable long enough, we begin to lose sight of the fact that all of these material things, our wealth, our possessions, are fleeting.
It's all temporary. It's all corruptible. It can all be lost. And worse yet, our dependency on God and His grace gets lost somewhere along the way.
Again, it's very slow, and it's very subtle. The deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful over time, that is.
[31:48] Just as you cannot become a Christian without sacrificing any notion of self-reliance and self-worth and throwing yourself at the mercy of God, we cannot continue to walk with God if we lose our dependency on Him and begin to trust in ourselves or in our material comforts instead.

Now, surely by now you see just how relevant this letter is to first world Christians. Man, are we prosperous. So is it a blessing or is it a curse to be rich?
Is it a blessing or a curse to have nice clothing? Is it a blessing or curse to have access to some of the greatest medical care the world has ever known? Well, these are not necessarily black or white questions.
It's not quite that simple. Personally, I believe they are blessings. I think they're tremendous blessings, but they can quickly become a curse if we're not careful.
people. Paul gives us this somewhat strange advice in 1 Corinthians 7. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it.

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[33:28] For the present form of this world is passing away. Now, I realize Paul addresses more than just material goods in that passage, but it's a very helpful perspective nonetheless.

He's not suggesting we deny reality. That's not the point. If you're married, yes, you are certainly married. If you are mourning, you are mourning.
He's not telling us to ignore or to deny these realities. Instead, he wants us to hold on to whatever we have in this temporal world loosely because it can't last forever.
The problem isn't that we're rich or that we're prosperous. The problem is that sometimes we care too much about our riches.
The problem comes when we invest too much into our riches. The problem comes when our riches stand in the way of our dependency on Christ.
[34:34] Keep in mind, again, this problem is very subtle. The thorns don't choke out the word overnight, but the threat of this problem is always pressing. It's very real for us.

It's a very real and extremely dangerous issue, always. Jesus says, those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.
Now, what if Christ were to stand in this room here this morning and say to us what he has said to the Laodiceans? Would we maybe think his words were a bit harsh? We shouldn't because he's speaking out of love.
Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline. That's the language of sonship, like a father speaking to his children. Jesus is correcting the Laodicean church as his children.
He wants only the best for them, but children are immature. They have to learn some lessons from those who are older and wiser. They have to be disciplined at times.
[35:47] Hebrews 12 reminds us God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

Christ speaks somewhat harshly to the Laodiceans because he loves them. He disciplines those he loves. I guess it was a couple of years ago, a woman had asked me to preach her grandmother's funeral.
And she said, I have a lot of family who are unbelievers and I would like you to preach hellfire in brimstone if you think it's necessary.
And I was taken aback because most people tell me to avoid that kind of thing. Can you kind of keep it light on the Jesus stuff? So I asked her, why hellfire and brimstone?
And I loved her response. She said, because I love my family that much. She said, if you have to step on their toes before they'll turn to Christ, you step just as hard as you think is necessary.
[37:01] love. It hurts to hear that we might be wretched, poor, pitiable, blind, and naked.

Those words sting. And they're certainly hard to say to someone else. But sometimes that's the most loving thing that could ever be said.
In fact, love demands truth always, even when it's difficult, difficult, especially when it's difficult perhaps. And then in verse 20, Jesus says, behold, I stand at the door and knock.
If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him and eat with him and he with me.
Now I love the word behold because in Scripture it's like a word that prompts us to brace ourselves, right?
Behold, something potentially shocking is coming. It's often followed by a surprising revelation and this one here is particularly jarring.
[38:06] Jesus says, behold, I stand at the door and knock. Now maybe we've heard this verse so many times throughout our lives that it doesn't seem that shocking.

But I really want you to think about the context here. Jesus is speaking to a Christian church that no doubt meets at least every week in his name.
He's speaking to a church that regularly gathers around a table to share the Lord's Supper with one another. They talk about Christ, they preach Christ, they sing Christ, they are there because of Christ.
Have you ever gotten that feeling that you're just forgetting something? usually it happens when you leave the house and you get in the car, you can't quite put your finger on it, but something's missing.
Well imagine, you're sitting down with your church, maybe to share the Lord's Supper. You've got the hymn books, the Bibles are open, the pastor is present, the bread and the cup are on the table,

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and all of a sudden you hear a knock on the door.
[39:18] And everyone looks around. Well, who could that be? I think everyone's here. Yeah, we don't need anything. I have no idea who could that be. And you realize then that someone's missing.

Christ. Christ isn't there. How do we know? He's standing outside knocking on the door. That's what makes this revelation so shocking.
Behold, Jesus says, I'm not in the church. I'm standing outside. Without realizing it, they had slowly but surely pushed him out the door.
And so there he is outside. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. It reminds me of the Jewish practice of unsynagoguing a person, banishing them from the synagogue.
Jesus himself was unsynagogued in places like Nazareth during his ministry. Well, without realizing it, the Laodiceans had unchurched Jesus.
[40:24] They were meeting together in his name to worship him. And according to Christ, he's not in there with them. He was standing outside waiting for them to come and open the door.

I can't help but wonder how many churches in this nation of prosperity, of wealth, of material comfort, are meeting week after week in the name of Christ to worship Christ, not realizing that he's actually standing outside the door.
They're too comfortable. He's knocking, but they don't hear it. They're too self-satisfied to realize he's missing. Do you see the subtlety of this?
More importantly, do you see the danger of this? Paul writes, examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith.
Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves? That Jesus Christ is in you unless, indeed, you fail to meet the test.
[41:38] Jesus says, the one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne as I also conquered and sat down with my father on his throne.

That is a remarkable promise. In other words, those who persevere in faith, those who don't turn, those who don't turn into self-reliance or turn away from self-reliance and cling to Christ, will share in his victory and in his kingdom.
Just as Christ overcame and now reigns with the Father, so those who belong to him, who remain with him, will one day share in his reign. Now, some of you may hear this passage and you just might recognize something of yourself in it.
Your life may look stable and comfortable on the outside. You may even attend church regularly. But comfort added with religion can easily create the illusion that everything is fine between us and God when in reality Christ is not truly the Lord of our lives.
We're not depending on him for everything. That was the tragedy of the Laodiceans. They believed they needed nothing, yet Jesus said they were wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.
[43:04] They possessed everything the world values while lacking the one thing they truly needed. Only Christ can give us what we lack.

He alone provides the riches, the righteousness, the spiritual sight we cannot obtain for ourselves. So, if you recognize today that you have been relying on yourself or you have become complacent in your prosperity and in your comforts, rather than relying on Christ, hear his invitation here.
Turn from your self-reliance and come to him in faith. He gives freely what we cannot provide for ourselves, namely salvation from our sins.
wealth. You won't find that in your wealth. And I'll leave you with his words. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.
Let's pray. Father, your word searches our hearts and reveals what we often fail to see in ourselves.
[44:25] You see beyond appearances. You see beyond our outward works. You know the true condition of our hearts. And we confess how easily we become comfortable in this world.

When life is stable and prosperous, we're tempted to rely on ourselves or our things rather than on you. So, I ask that you would forgive us for the ways that we've trusted in our possessions and in our comfort, maybe in our own strength instead of depending fully on Christ.
Guard our hearts from the deceitfulness of riches and this slow drift into spiritual apathy. Keep us close to the true source of life and refreshment.
Your Son, Jesus Christ, make us a people who are useful in your kingdom, bringing refreshment to the weary and healing to the hurting. And Father, if there are any among us today who realize that

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Christ has not truly been Lord of their lives, we pray that you would open their eyes, help them to see their need to turn from self-reliance and to trust in Christ alone for the forgiveness of their sins and the salvation of their souls.
And we ask these things in the name of our faithful and true witness, the Amen, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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