

A Case of Affluenza

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Preacher: Jason Webb

[0:00] The book of Revelation, chapter 3, for our scripture reading this morning. Revelation 3, and I will be reading verses 14 to 22.

! I wish that you were either one or the other. So because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

You say, I am rich, I have acquired wealth, and do not need a thing. But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked.

I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so that you can become rich, and white clothes to wear, so that you can cover your shameful nakedness, and salve to put on your eyes so you can see.

Those whom I love, I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. Here I am. I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.

[1:31] To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my father on his throne.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Well, Midwest churches face a variety of challenges.

Some churches are located in affluent communities, and there's a temptation to pursue the peace and the comfortable lifestyle that that goes with.

Some are stained by sexual scandal. Some are stigmatized as aloof by their neighbors. Some are doctrinally precise.

And yet, somewhere in the middle of all the theological battles, they've lost their love for people.

Some are all image, no reality. And others are tiny minorities struggling to hold on in a whole society that despises them.

[2:41] These Midwest churches sound a lot like 21st century churches here in the Corn Belt of America. But actually, I'm describing the seven churches of the Midwest in the Roman Empire that John wrote to in the book of Revelation.

And Laodicea was affluent. And Philadelphia was struggling to hold on amidst all the pressure of society.

And Smyrna had sexual scandals. Well, today we're looking at the church in Laodicea. And the reason we're doing that is because I think this might be the one Grace Fellowship is most like.

But probably not for the reasons that you're thinking right now. And that should perk your ears up. Jesus' most stinging letter is written to a church that is a lot like ours.

Laodicea was an affluent church. Grace Fellowship Church is an affluent church. We're not richer than all the other churches. But we're richer than most. The people in Laodicea were employed.

[3:55] They didn't struggle with unemployment. They were prospering. They had jobs. And there was danger precisely because of that. And so are you.

You're in danger for precisely the same reason that they were. So Laodicea was a banking city. It was a merchant city. Three great crossroads.

Three great merchant roads. Great trade routes crossed. Intersected in Laodicea. And so the money was rolling in. About 30 years before Revelation was written to the church there, an earthquake had happened and had basically flattened the city of Laodicea.

Maybe you've seen the pictures, I'm sure you have, of Japan or New Zealand and just cities destroyed. Well, that's what it was like in Laodicea in 60 AD. And things weren't much different back then than they are now.

The other cities in the area around them, they declared a state of emergency. And then the federal government in Rome swung into action and said, well, we'll send funds to help you rebuild your cities.

[5:04] And so that's what all these other cities did. But get this. Laodicea said no. Nope, we don't need that. They refused government money.

They said we're just doing just fine. Thank you. We appreciate the help, but we don't need it. And so the people of the city rolled up their sleeves. And with their own money, they rebuilt the city. With their own two hands.

Well, Laodicea was a wealthy town. There's a couple other things about it. It was an area, in the area they had lots of black, this fabulous black sheep.

And they took from that this wonderful dark black wool. And that's what most of the people wore in the city. And they actually exported this wool all throughout the empire.

Laodicea had a famous medical school. If you had any eye problems, Laodicea was the place to go. They had discovered the secrets of the Phrygian stone.

[6:03] I don't know what that is, but they had discovered the secrets of it. And with it, they were able to heal the blind or the people with eye problems. It was a great city. Prosperous.

Affluent. But it lacked one thing. It lacked a fresh water supply. No fresh water in Laodicea.

Laodicea is in the middle of the Lycus Valley. And there's three main cities in this little valley. To the south, there was Colossae.

And you know about Colossae because Paul wrote a letter, the letter of the Colossians to them.

Colossae had these cool, cold, fresh water springs. You know, it was the kind of water that you pay \$2 a bottle for at the supermarket.

That's what they had there. This cool, refreshing water. And then on the other side of Laodicea, to the north, was the city of Appia. And Appia didn't have cold water, but they had these hot, mineral springs.

[7:09] It was just fabulous, hot springs. And maybe you've been out to Yellowstone, and, you know, that's just minerals, and they're boiling. Well, you can't drink that water.

But, as you know, most people thought that kind of water had medicinal effect, and so they used it for medicinal purposes. And so people from all over the empire would come to Appia to take the cure.

You know, to sit in the hot springs and to have their ills healed. And so you had cold springs on one side, you had hot springs on the other, and then you had Laodicea in the middle.

Laodicea had to pipe in their water from five miles away. And so it would come down the aqueduct, and you couldn't drink that water.

It was disgusting. They actually have, they found remnants of the aqueduct in the pipes, and they're just completely almost closed with mineral deposits from the water.

[8:18] So not only was it lukewarm, it tasted terrible. Maybe some of you have this problem, or maybe you know someone that does, that out of your well it comes this orange water.

It's rusty. It's mineral. It's sulfur. It tastes disgusting. You can't drink it. You don't want to brush your teeth with it. You just, ugh, it's gross. That's what Laodicea dealt with every day.

This water that was piped in, it was disgusting. You couldn't drink it. Cicero, the great Roman senator, he was a governor of that area for a while, and he said that Laodicea has the foulest water in the entire empire.

Well, that's the church that Jesus writes to. They're wealthy. They're self-sufficient. They're well-dressed. And they are altogether compromised.

They are just like the city that they live in. Just like the city they live in. And Jesus writes to them, and his letter has three points, and we'll have three points.

[9:25] The first is Jesus' diagnosis. Jesus' diagnosis. So the doctor comes in. He looks over your chart. He asks you some questions. He examines you.

And he gives you a diagnosis. And that's what Jesus has done. That's what Jesus did in chapter 1 of Revelation. He has been walking around the churches. He's been examining them. He's walked around Laodicea.

And in verses 14 through 17, Jesus gives his diagnosis. This is what I have seen here. And he says, it's serious. Serious.

You have a raging case of affluenza. You're sick with money. And his diagnosis is startling.

Startling. It's hard to believe. And that's why he begins his diagnosis with the words that he does. These are the words of the amen. Amen. The faithful and true witness.

[10:25] The ruler of God's creation. When Jesus had something to say in his earthly ministry, you remember what he always used to say before. He had something to say that was going to blow their minds. It was going to be really hard to believe.

He said, Amen, amen. Verily, verily. Truly, truly, I say to you. And Jesus comes to this compromised, worldly Laodiceans and says, what I am saying is true.

No. It's true because I am truth itself. I am the true and faithful witness. I see the truth because I am the truth.

I look past appearances. Revelation is all about looking past appearances and seeing things for what they are. And Jesus says, I've looked past appearances. And everything is not what it seems. Others may lie, but I'm telling you the truth. I know your deeds. I know you. You're neither hot.

[11:22] You're neither cold nor hot. I wish you were one or the other. Because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I'm about to spit you out of my mouth. So what is Jesus saying?

Well, Jesus isn't saying that they're lukewarm or spiritually lukewarm. He's saying that they're just like the city that they live in.

They've compromised. They've taken Laodicea's philosophy, Laodicean thought, and that's the way they've started to live. They've compromised with the city's pursuit of wealth and the city's desire for more.

And to some degree, they have achieved it. A lot of people think that Jesus is just complaining that they aren't zealous, that they're complacent, neither hot nor cold, just tepid.

And, you know, they might be complacent, but that is not actually what Jesus is talking about here. The problem with that interpretation that you see and hear very often of these people are just sort of lukewarm, not very zealous, they're sort of tepid Christians, is that Jesus says, I wish you were one or the other.

[12:36] I wish you were hot or cold. And the question that you should think about is, why in the world would Jesus want someone to be a cold Christian? That doesn't make any sense.

A lot of people have come to this passage and they've put that interpretation on it, but then they just skip over these words. Jesus is saying, you're like the city you live in.

You're not hot. You're not cold. You're useless. You're disgusting. You're just like them. And people, when they interpret Revelation 3 with the idea that you're just a tepid Christian, you're not blazing hot for God, they sort of skip over these words.

If you're lukewarm, at least you're not cold. And it's better to be just only a little excited about Jesus than not excited at all. So Jesus is saying, you're just like your city's water.

You're just like your city's water. You aren't cold. I can't come to you and have a cool drink. And you're not hot. I can't go to you for medicinal reasons.

[13:43] I can't come to you and take the cure. You're useless. You disgust me. You make me sick. You know that feeling that when you drink that big glass of water, that's what I feel like when I come to you.

I just want to spew you out. I want to spit you out. That's how I feel about you. And so what is Jesus so disgusted about? Well, he tells us in verse 17, you say, I am rich.

I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing. What is the spirit of the city of Laodicea? It was self-sufficiency. Oh, we don't need your help. Thank you very much.

We can rebuild on our own. We don't need your help. We don't need your money. We have plenty of our own. And that's Laodicea. And that is the spirit of the Laodicean church.

I'm rich. I have acquired. I have what it takes to get things done. So my question is, why did the church in Laodicea think she was so rich?

[14:44] Why did she think she was so rich? Because she was financially well off. She was affluent. And she was measuring herself by her wealth.

So how is the church doing? Well, let's go look at the budget. The budget seems to be doing very fine. We're doing very well. Well, how are you doing? I'm doing very well. I got a raise. I'm doing very well.

Or I'm poor. I lost my job. In either case, they were measuring themselves by the standard of the city around them.

They were just like them. And what does John say? First John, what marks the world? It boasts about what it has and what it has does.

What it has and what it does. And what were these people measuring themselves by? By what they had. By what they had done. And the sad thing is, is that Jesus was on the periphery.

[15:48] He was on the outside. They weren't rich because they had Jesus. They were rich because they had money. So let me ask you.

Are you rich? Are you rich? Are you financially rich? And you better say yes. You better feel yes. Because 90% of the world's poor looks at the poorest among you and says they live like kings. And you say, yeah, right.

I don't feel rich. I don't feel rich. Well, when was the last time you went grocery shopping at the garbage dump? And when was the last time that you went to the doctor with diarrhea because you had so many parasites infesting your intestines?

Because when you adopt a child out of Ethiopia, when you adopt a child out of Rwanda or any African country, it's nearly a given that you're going to be fighting parasites for the first three or four months because that's how they live.

[17:00] And so are you financially rich? Yes. Now let's change the question. Are you spiritually rich? Are you rich because you have Jesus or are you rich because you have money?

And I want you to look at yourself and ask yourself, look at your stuff. Would I be rich if all my stuff was gone? Would I feel rich if it was gone?

My house was gone. My car was gone. I had one outfit. Would I feel rich? And don't just say, yes, I'd feel rich. Yeah, I'd be rich. I have Jesus. I'd be rich. Because if you just say that, then you need to be able to back it up.

If you say yes, then you'll have no problem selling what you have to give food to one of the 26,000 children that die of starvation every day.

You'll still have Jesus after all. And so it won't be a problem for you to sell your car and to move down into a smaller house if you're rich. If you have nothing but Jesus and He is where your riches is coming from, then your pocketbook will show it.

[18:21] And so let me ask you, are you rich in the things that count? The test is how generous you are. The test is not how much money you have.

It's the question of how generous you are. The test to see if we're like the church in Laodicea is not, you know, whether we share this common faith, that's true, but it's how much we give away.

The church in Laodicea could not give away their things because they were rich. They had acquired. This is how they're measuring things. This is the standard. And so if they were to give away the things that they had, they would no longer be rich.

And so the question is, are you generous? How much are you like Jesus? And how much are you like the church in Laodicea? Because if you haven't noticed, there's a big difference between the two.

Jesus became poor to make others rich. Have you ever done that? Even somewhat?

[19:24] Have you ever impoverished yourself in order to make a poor person rich? Jesus lived with the poor. He had mercy on the poor. Why didn't Jesus have a pillow or a home?

Why did foxes have a home and He didn't? Our Lord was homeless because He chose to be.

Because if He was going to make other people rich, He was going to have to be poor.

But what about responsibility? What about responsibility? We have to provide, don't we? We have to take care of our own needs. We have to take care of our family. And the question that I would ask and that I ask myself is how much house do you need to take care of that need?

And how much of a car do you need to have a nice car or to have the transportation you need? How big does your yard have to be? How many clothes do you have to have to be clothed?

We call it responsibility. And a lot of times, I think Jesus would just call it folly. So a man has this bumper crop. Huge crop.

[20:36] He says, I'm going to build bigger barns and enjoy the rest of my life. And God said that very night, you fool. You fool. Jesus calls our worldly pursuit of money folly.

And in here, in Revelation 3, He calls it disgusting. He calls it disgusting. You're so compromised. I want to spit you out of my mouth. You're so ensnared.

With the American dream, you make me want to throw up. You think you're rich because you have a lot of things. But you know what? You're wretched. You're pitiful. You're poor.

You're blind. And you're naked. You say you're rich, but you're poor. You say, look at my clothes, but you're naked. You say, I'm healthy, but you're sick. You can heal any one of their eye diseases, but you are blind to your own poverty.

And you can dress the whole empire with your fabulous exports, but you yourself are naked. And for all your wealth, you're wretched. And I look at you, and I see a leper with spots, and you stink, and you're naked, and I want to spit you out of my mouth.

[21:48] And so, brothers and sisters, Jesus is turning us on our head. He's turning the Laodicean church on their head. And if we are like them, he's turning us on our own head.

If we are happy because we're doing financially well, and we measure ourselves by what we have and what we don't have, and if we're proud when we see someone and we say, well, I have more than they do.

Or I look up and I see this person has more than me and I'm envious. And you can't tell me that you're not doing that. It's the American way.

It's the sinful way. It's what drives the American dream. And you can't tell me that we are free from that. We're always looking around saying, oh, I want to impress them.

I'll impress them. Oh no, what will they think? Jesus is telling us the truth. Things are not what they seem. Things are not what they seem.

[22:51] Outwardly, Laodicea was doing great. The persecution that other churches were dealing with, they weren't dealing with it. There's no persecutions, no problems, no unemployment, but inside, greed was killing them.

And it was making them totally useless. They weren't hot, they weren't cold, and I'm afraid that that's what's happened to the American church. For all of our money, we become effectively useless.

We build bigger and bigger. And we sit in air-conditioned buildings, and we don't think for a minute about the poor, about millions of people dying and going to hell.

We don't think about those things. Why should we? We're well-dressed. I have food in my mouth.

How far away from Jesus have we come? I'm not speaking just of us, but to the degree that we are like that, I am speaking to us.

Jesus took upon Himself the form of a servant, and He served to the point of death. He gave, and He gave, and He gave, until there was only one thing left to give, and that was His life, and He gave.

[24:04] And so, I want to ask, when did our selfishness become so tolerable? Where we look around and we're okay because we're just a little bit better than everyone else.

And that's Jesus' diagnosis. And here's Jesus' remedy. I counsel you to buy from me gold, refined in the fire, so that you can become rich.

Where do true riches come from? Well, they come from Jesus. You buy them from Jesus. And Jesus said, buy. Now, buying is a simple idea.

You do it all the time. You go to the store, and you give up something that you like, money, for something that is more valuable at that time. Clothes, food, something.

You make this trade. Buying is giving up something in order to have something better. And Jesus says, buy from me real gold. You guys have been playing around with fake gold.

[25:09] You've been playing around with monopoly money, and I'm here to tell you, buy from me real gold. Well, how do we do that? Well, we have to give up something that we like. We have to give up our things.

We have to give up our pursuit of more wealth, of more of the stuff of this world. And we have to give up those things. The Laodiceans and Grace Fellowship can't keep measuring and thinking about riches like the world outside.

They're going to have to give it up. And brothers and sisters, this isn't radical. This is what Jesus said from the very beginning. In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has, everything he has cannot be my disciple.

So do you get that? If you want Jesus, you can't have anything in your hand. You can't have anything that you call your own.

everything belongs to him or you cannot be his disciple. You're not worthy to be his disciple. Your dreams have to become his dreams.

[26:25] And your car is his car. And your house is his house. And your family is his family. And your checkbook is now his checkbook.

He gets it all or you don't get him. The price of following Jesus is absolute poverty. It's absolute poverty.

Isn't that what Jesus said? Everything. You have to give everything. Jesus gets full control or you don't get to be his disciple. But Jesus is saying, listen, church in Laodicea, you're not going to be poor for buying from me.

You're not going to be poor for giving up these things to get what I'm going to give you. I'm going to give you something far greater in return. I will make you richer than your wildest dreams.

I will give you pure gold. I will give you refined gold. I'll give you white clothes to wear and white clothes and Revelation is the clothes of victors, of champions.

[27:37] The conquerors wore white and I'll cover you in white. I'll make you a conqueror to cover up your nakedness, your emptiness. Now I will make you so rich. You'll finally be rich.

And that's Jesus' remedy. He says, come to me and buy. Give up your things for me and I will give you everything in return.

I love you. So repent. Jesus' words are so hard in Revelation 3 and my words I know have been hard. But Jesus is coming to us and He says, I love you.

I don't want you to be poor. I don't want you to be blind and naked and wretched. So repent. I want you to be rich in the things that matter.

So be in earnest. Stop compromising with the world. Stop thinking about everything the way they're thinking about it. Stop compromising with their headlong pursuit for more.

[28:41] Repent and come straight to me and I'll give you. I'll be everything for you. I'll be your rock. I'll be your protector. You've heard what Jim Elliott said.

A man is no fool to give up what he cannot keep. to gain what he cannot lose. And young people, that's Jesus' words to you. Older people, that's Jesus' words to you.

There is no real sacrifice here. There is no sacrifice at all. So you sell your house and you move into a smaller house and you give away the difference.

Are you going to be poor for that? Jesus says, I'll give you a hundred houses here in this life and afterwards, I'll give you eternal life.

So you sell your clothes and you wear the same five outfits. Jesus says, I'll clothe you in robes of victory. I'll make you a conqueror in heaven.

[29:46] Young people, so you give up your friends. Do you think anyone is poor for buying from Jesus? Jesus says, I'll give you better friends here.

I'll give you a hundred fathers, a hundred mothers, and afterwards, eternal life. No man is a fool to give up what he cannot keep.

In Grace Fellowship, all the things that we have in this world, we cannot keep it. It is going to go away. We are going to lose it by death or destruction or the fire at the end.

It's going away. And so the question is, are you going to use this brief opportunity? This is an investment of a lifetime. you have a chance now to give up just a teeny bit of something that you can't keep to gain something that you cannot lose.

You can't keep your clothes. You can't keep your houses. They're all going away, so why don't you use them to buy something that will never go away? Treasure in heaven. So buy from Jesus and he'll make you fabulously rich.

[30:54] That's the remedy for affluenza. It's not gritting your teeth. It's not just giving it away and hurting. It's buying something more valuable. Investing in something better.

That's the remedy for affluenza and that's the remedy that we need. Well, third, Jesus promises. Jesus attaches two promises to those who are earnest and who repent.

First, he says, I'll come and eat with you. I'll eat with you. This is a very familiar passage. Behold, I stand at the door and knock.

If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with them and he with me.

Now, I want you to think about that passage with maybe some new eyes. Where is Jesus in relationship to the Laodicean church?

He's on the outside. Doesn't that scare you? It's possible for a church to effectively keep Jesus out because they love money.

[32:09] The love of money will do that. When you bring in money and you trust in money and you measure your riches by money, Jesus is shut out. And here, Jesus is graciously saying, I'm standing at the door.

I'm knocking. And if anyone hears my voice, I will come in and we'll eat together. There's a wonderful English word that's called companion.

It's from two Latin words. Come with, that means with, and pon means bread. A companion is someone who eats bread with you.

And Jesus is saying, if you hear me and you open the door and you kick money out, I will come in and I will eat bread with you. I'll be your companion.

I'll eat with you. I'll live with you. I'll be your everlasting friend. I'll be everything for you. And brothers and sisters, the promise is for those who open the door.

[33:11] It's for those who hear what he has to say to the church in Laodicea. Those who kick money out, they get the promise. And it's a promise to anyone who does that.

Anyone who does that. And that should be special. That should come home straight to your heart. Maybe, I hope not, but maybe no one here will hear the words of Jesus to the church in Laodicea. Maybe everyone else, there'll be no difference. They'll go on their merry old way. But if you hear Jesus and you open the door for Jesus, he will eat with you.

Regardless of what happens with everyone else, this promise is for you. For all those who are obedient, who are earnest and repent, Jesus says, I'll come in and I'll eat with you.

And if you say no to the American dream and yes to Jesus, then Jesus will be your friend forever. He'll eat with you. And that's His promise to you as an individual. But we need to make sure that we get this picture right.

[34:18] Jesus is not only, Jesus isn't coming to the church in Laodicea as a beggarly homeless man looking for a home. Invite me in.

Let me in. I'm knocking at the door if you'd just let me in. This is the coming Lord. This is the coming Lord.

How many times in the parables did Jesus talk about a bridegroom returning? Or a king returning? You saw it all the time.

Some heard and were ready and some didn't hear and they weren't ready. And when Jesus comes in all those parables, does the bridegroom say, oh, I didn't know you were ready.

Here, take one more hour. Fill up your lamps. I'll give you another break. One more hour. No. He comes. This picture is Jesus standing at the door and He's ready to enter in judgment.

[35:23] He comes. And that's the implication of the promise. that if you don't hear and you don't answer the door, Jesus is still not going to be on the outside.

Eventually, He is going to come into the church. He is going to come in. If you hear Him, Jesus will be your friend. But if you don't hear Him, Jesus will be your judge. Jesus is coming into the house whether you're ready or not.

He's coming in. Whether you bring Him in or He has to break down the door. And so the question is, will you receive Him or will you delay?

Will you reject Him? Will you personally? Will we as a church, will we hear or will we be destroyed? And Jesus ends with the second promise to those who overcome. To those who overcome. To Him who overcomes.

[36:24] To them who overcomes this compromising church spirit, this compromising worldly spirit that's infected the Laodiceans.

If you would overcome that, then you will triumph. Do you see that? Do you see that the American dream, the pursuit for more, the desire for nicer houses and a nicer TV and a nicer car is something that you have to overcome if you're going to be saved?

The American dream of self-sufficiency and pursuit of my own personal dreams, I'll use my own hard work and I'll get my own money and I'll pay my own way and I'll earn my bread and I'll enjoy what I've earned and I'll do it for myself and I'll live for what I can get now.

That has to be overcome in our lives or we won't enter the kingdom of God. We will shut ourselves out if we hold on to that dream.

You won't sit on the throne with Jesus. But here is Jesus' glorious promise. Not only will you eat with me, you'll reign with me. If you overcome, if you deal with me, if you make the trade, if you buy what is real gold, if you walk away from this world and all of its painted promises and all of the

things that they're saying and the way that they're thinking and you find in me, in Jesus, everything, then you will reign with Him.

[37:57] You will walk past the highest angels, up the steps, and you will sit down with Jesus and you will rule and judge the angels and you will judge the twelve tribes of Israel.

If you overcome, Jesus is saying, if you overcome just as I had to overcome, then you'll reign with me. Shall I be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease while others fight to win the prize and sail through bloody seas?

So, are we just going to float into heaven? Just float into heaven's harbor when Jesus Himself had to sail through the storm.

And all of His people have to sail through the storm. Jesus set His face like a flint. He wouldn't be moved. He was going to the cross. He was going to lay down His life.

He was going to sacrifice everything for His people. Everything that He had. On the cross, He was naked. He was naked for us. And He stayed the course.

[39:04] So the question is, are you His disciple? Disciple is someone who walks behind someone else. Are you His disciple? Are you running behind Him? Or are you on the sidelines?

Cheering on. As the runners go by and you say, wow, that's a great way to run. Great way to run.

That's sacrifice. Jesus writes to the church in Laodicea and says, stop compromising.

Get into the race. Start running. If you don't overcome, you'll be lost. But if you do, there's a crown. There's a crown.

So let's end with some application. Three application questions. Do you see the danger that you are in? Do you see the danger that you are in?

You're in the middle of affluence. You're in the middle of affluence and you live in a society that lives for affluence. What's on everyone's mind?

[40:09] It's not Jesus and the coming king and how the church is doing. It's the economy. We're tied to our affluence. And if you aren't extremely careful, you will be seduced.

And you will be destroyed. You'll be seduced and destroyed and so see your danger. You have to overcome. You have to conquer this or you will be lost.

Secondly, do you understand what overcoming affluence will look like? Overcoming is not occasionally giving to ease your conscience. It's living with heaven's values in your mind every day. You should be asking yourself every day, what can I give away now so that I can get some more in heaven? So that I can store up treasure in heaven? So that I can gain more then?

Your life, my life, should make no sense if heaven is not real. It should make no sense. Overcoming takes serious Jesus' words.

[41:21] Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven. Overcoming takes seriously Jesus' words to the rich man. Go and sell all that you have and give to the poor and come follow me. Overcoming doesn't come up with a hundred excuses why he's talking about that man and not me.

Because we are rich. We are rich. Just like that rich young ruler. And if those words apply to anyone, they should apply to me and they should apply to you. And so we will take seriously what can I sell, what can I give in order that I can gain heavenly treasure.

My third application question is this. Are you ready for Jesus? Are you ready for Jesus? Jesus is knocking. He's coming.

He's coming. And He's coming whether you're ready or not. And soon He will come in. And so are you ready? Are your sins taken care of?

Jesus came to save sinners. But Jesus will come again to judge sinners. And to be damned by the One who came to save you is to be doubly damned.

[42:33] And so young people, are you ready? He's coming. Brothers and sisters, are you ready? He's coming. William Borden was the wealthy son of wealthy parents.

Maybe you've drank some of Borden's milk. That was his company. His parents' company. His family business. And at 16, God put it on William's heart to become a missionary.

And all of his friends said, you're throwing away your life. And in response, Borden wrote in his Bible, no reserves. No reserves.

And he took seriously Jesus' words. Any of you who does not give up everything, he cannot be my disciple. He took those words seriously and he said, no reserves. I'm holding nothing back. There's nothing here in my hand that I'm going to bring.

Nothing in my hand that I'm going to keep just for me. It's all yours, Lord Jesus. Well, he went to Yale and after graduation, he was offered several high-paying jobs within his father's business.

[43:41] And he turned them all down. And his father said, you're never going to work for me again. Never. So he gave up money and then he gave up his family.

For Jesus. See, Borden wasn't seduced. He wasn't taking a step back. And so under the word, no reserves, he wrote, no retreats.

No retreats. We're going forward. So Borden graduated, did some graduate work at Princeton. And when he finished his studies, he sailed for China. And along the way, he stopped in Cairo, in Egypt, because he was hoping to work with Muslims and he wanted to learn Arabic.

But while he was there, he contracted spinal meningitis. And at 25, a month later, after he arrived at 25, William Borden was dead. He'd given up everything for Jesus.

So was Borden's untimely death a waste? Well, prior to his death, Borden had written two more words under, no reserves, no retreats.

[44:55] He had written, no regrets. No regrets. So no reserves, no retreats, no regrets. A man is not a fool to give up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.

Well, let's pray. Our Lord, your word comes to us and it's like a prod, cattle prod, and sometimes it hurts.

But, I pray, Holy Spirit, that that pain would drive us to Jesus. That it would drive us to the cross to find forgiveness and grace.

Lord, you know our need. You are here and you know our danger. Will you please make us to see the danger that we are in living in this affluent society?

We are in the middle of Vanity Fair and we could lose our own souls. I pray, Lord, that no one here would be seduced, would be blinded, would be rendered useless because of money.

[46:28] But I pray, Lord Jesus, that you would show yourself so glorious and your promises would become so real to us, so tangible to us, that we will really do what you have said and give, sell, that we would give away our things that we could have heavenly treasure.

Lord, begin again in us to revive us, to refresh us, to show us what you expect from us, what you envisioned discipleship to be.

Give us eyes to see you and give us eyes to see your word and to make it real to us. Lord, I know some here are totally entangled in the things of this world.

It's wrapped around them, they cannot move and they are bound and on the brink of hell. Please untie them, please pull them back and please save them.

Lord, we do pray that your word would be powerful in our lives to change how we act and how we think and how we feel and what we do.

[47:43] Lord, do it for Jesus' sake. He is worthy to have a bride that is ravenous for him, that wants him above everything else and that will not compromise in the least for him.

make that in us. Put that in us and give us grace to throw away everything that entangles us and run. Run the race that set out before us.

In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen. Amen.