

The Testimony of Jesus and the Word of God

Opening Prayer

For a word of prayer before we read the Word of the Lord. *We are so grateful, Lord, that we can be here. We thank You, Lord, for Your presence. We thank You for Your promise, Lord. And our prayer is that Your Holy Spirit would in some way be in charge of this time and reveal the Lord Jesus to us in the Word of God. Would You lead us, Lord, as You even promised by Your Holy Spirit, into all truth? We need to hear from You, Lord. Would You speak to us? We pray for enabling, for speaking, for translating. We pray for enabling, for hearing for all of us. We ask it for Your glory, in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Reading from Revelation

Vision on Patmos

I want to read some verses from Revelation. If you would turn to Revelation, Chapter One, starting from verse nine: "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."

Before we continue to read the chapter, I would like to highlight those last two phrases in the verse: the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus. By the Lord's grace, we want to come back to those.

Verses 10-20: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet, 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." Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; 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. His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. 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. 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. 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, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. "Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things. "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."

Messages to the Churches and Final Visions

And if you continue into chapter two, we just want to read a few verses from that chapter. Verse 1: “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this.” Verses 4-5: “But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Therefore, remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.”

Verse 7: “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.”

And in the middle of the book, chapter 12, just one verse, 17. And you will remember that this is in the context of that vision of a woman in labor, about to give birth, and the dragon enraged, attempting to devour the man-child as he was going to be born. But the man-child was rescued, delivered, and caught up to the throne of God. After that vision, you read these verses.

Verse 17. “So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.” A similar phrase that I just pointed out. But instead of the word of God, you have an alternative version, if you may call it, pointing to the same reality with a specific emphasis: the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus.

Finally, chapter 21, just three verses. And I will remind you that this is the final vision of the book, the vision of New Jerusalem, which is the bride of the Lamb. And in verse nine we read, “Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, “Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.”” Verses 23-24: “And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.”

Introducing the Theme of Recovery

Introduction: Gratitude and the Theme of Recovery

Brothers and sisters, I am grateful that we can be here this time. Our brother was opening yesterday, and he mentioned the privilege of being here. I could not agree more. Actually, my sense is that it is such mercy that we can still gather together in a late hour as the one in which we live, I am so grateful for the privilege of being together before the Lord this time.

Now, as you know, we have been occupied in this conference with the matter of recovery and possessing. And I was asked to consider the matter from a practical point of view. I decided to go to the Book of Revelation. I know, it is counterintuitive, is it not? And yet, well, the book is of prophecy, telling us all things that are going to happen, which is how it opens. We did not read that part. And yet, as interesting as those things

may sound, what is going to happen and the prophecy that is there, there is something related to recovery in this book, actually should be very obvious.

We want to start by posing two questions as we go. We will try, by the Lord's enabling, to answer, to address them. Number one, what does the Book of Revelation have to say on this matter of recovery? What does Revelation have to say on this matter of recovery, our theme for the time? Number two, can we find in this book something that helps us to see recovery from a practical point of view? The counterintuitive part: I believe that, surprisingly, the answer to both questions—well, at least to the second one, the answer is yes. There is something that is very, very practical in this matter of recovery.

And in a way, that is the burden, it is the spiritual message that the Book of Revelation is conveying to us. You would like to see these things as we go this morning. Our brother already mentioned, our brother Kenny, a few sessions back, that you are going to find that phrase that I pointed to, the second part of the phrase, the testimony of Jesus. He already told us that it appears no less than six times in the Book of Revelation. It is quite an emphasis. It is not a long book. It is twenty-two chapters. All of them are truly short. Six times, sprinkled throughout the book, you are going to find that expression, that phrase, the testimony of Jesus.

And you find it amazing virtually every time. It is every time a companion phrase, the word of God, with some variations. I just read one of the variations for you, those that keep the commandments of God standing for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. In another passage, the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy. There is something in that prophecy. I am not going to get into that, but somehow it points back in some way to the word of God as well. And in the other four instances, the word of God is quite explicitly mentioned in connection with the testimony of Jesus.

In a way it seems, and I am saying this without any proof at the moment, but it seems that at the very core of the message of this book we find the matter of that testimony of Jesus being recovered, and the Word of God being an indispensable key in the matter in some way. And that key should give us something that is very practical, an actionable item almost, if you will, something that can help us in a practical way as we pursue being aligned with the Lord in what He is doing, even in this matter of recovery.

That is a lot of things to say without proof. I am just stating it up front. What is in my heart is that throughout the session, as the Lord enables, that can be seen not just stated as an axiom but even seen in the Word of God. How are those things? And I trust that you are going to be a good Berean and check. That is fine with me. Is it indeed like this? I like what somebody said one time: if they did that to the apostle Paul, because that is the context when Paul was preaching the word to them, the Bereans were going there and said, "Let us see if this is really so," and of course, it is not with a spirit of suspicion. But if that is something that applies to an apostle Paul, I am completely fine if you are all good Bereans. And we are trying to check, is this really so? Is this book about

the recovery of the testimony of Jesus? Is this a central theme throughout the book? Is the Word of God indeed this indispensable key if this is ever going to happen?

Our brother not only mentioned the bite marks on your message. Thank you, David, for that pearl. I have a few of them. Our brother Kenny also mentioned not only that the testimony of Jesus is found six times throughout the book, but he also mentioned how the Bible begins. In the opening statement of our handbook, I do not know if you are remembering that it says that the Bible, I am sorry, I do not have the complete quote, but something like the Bible is from beginning to end a story of recovery. And our brother already pointed out that the Bible begins with God. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." Something happens. Whatever you make of verse two, there is darkness, there is chaos, there is emptiness, and void. The Lord steps in, in verse three, to recover. That is the rest of chapter one of Genesis. The beginning of our Bibles is an account of God recovering.

And of course, our brother also mentioned that Revelation ends with a new heaven and a new earth. The symmetry is impossible to miss. In the beginning, God created heavens and earth. The first one, Genesis 1:1; Revelation 21 and 22: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth." God has recovered everything perfectly at the end, and Revelation ends that way. Of course, the answer to the first question, "Does the book of Revelation have anything to say about recovery?" should be pretty obvious.

Revelation as a Book of Recovery from Beginning to End

Now, there is something more than just being the end of the whole Bible and by symmetry with the beginning. Indeed, you see that the Bible is a book that spans this theme of recovery in the most literal conceivable way that I can imagine. That is, it. But there is more than that in the book of Revelation. I believe that when you zoom in on the book of Revelation itself in isolation, just that book, the book itself is about recovery from beginning to end. That is what we would like to see in a little more detail.

All right, it is more than just the conclusion of the Bible, which it is. But besides that, something that in itself, beginning to end, is about recovery. Now, how do we see these things? Good Bereans, let us try to see it. The book begins, as we read, with that wondrous vision. When the apostle John hears a voice behind him, he turns around to see. He sees first seven lampstands, golden lampstands. Then he sees in the midst of those seven golden lampstands, one like a son of man. That is how the book begins, that vision. The seven golden lampstands and one in its midst, like the Son of Man.

We are told quite explicitly at the beginning that the seven golden lampstands are the seven churches. And seven, being the number of completions in the Bible, somehow seems to represent, to stand for the whole church, not just seven geographical churches there in Asia Minor, which was the case, but there is more to that. They represent the whole church through the ages. And something that becomes very, very clear as we see as we continue to read those opening chapters, chapter one and then two and three, we see that if a lampstand exists to give light, which is the case, remember back in those

days there were not antiques, as maybe you may have, if you are a fancy person, you may have a lampstand in the corner of your living room. So beautiful, it is like a piece of furniture, it is not there to give light. You rely on something else. Back then, the function of a lampstand is to give light.

But if that is the case, those seven lampstands, those seven churches represented by the lampstands, are not quite fulfilling their purpose. They are not giving light. Or let me put it differently, maybe you see some light there. Yes, the Lord has some words of commendation in those seven churches, for sure. Oh, but there is so much smoke going on. There is so much heat going on. Actually, the light is almost becoming dim. If you read all those seven letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3, which we do not have the time to do, but how dim that light is becoming, you are going to agree with me. We hardly have to labor on that.

Just to refresh your memory of some of the things that are said in those seven letters, you see a church that has abandoned her first love. We just read about it in Ephesus. You see a church that is in such mixture with the world that in Pergamum, the Lord says, "I know where you live, where Satan has his throne." But there is a mixture going on. Things of the world, of which Satan is the prince, are being allowed, tolerated. And the Lord says, the one that has that sharp two-edged sword in His mouth, He is going to have to separate those things. There is something not quite right there.

You read of a Jezebel, a false prophetess being tolerated and bringing in all sorts of idolatries and immoralities. You see appearance without reality. You have a name of one who lives, and yet you are dead. That is Sardis. You see a lukewarm attitude towards the Lord, an apathy, complacency. I have everything I need. I am rich. That is Laodicea. Of course I am rich, I am fine. I have everything. I am always amazed at how often our own estimation can differ so diametrically from the estimation of the Lord. I am rich, I am fine. I have everything. The Lord says you are miserable. You do not know it. You are poor, you are wretched.

Brothers and sisters, do I need to labor on the point? The lampstands are not really fulfilling their purpose if they are there to give that light. It is getting really hard to see it. Let us put it this way: the lampstands that we see in Revelation 2 and 3, they are in need of recovery. Something went off track. They need to be restored. And the Lord Jesus has to say, time after time after time, repent, repent, repent. It is just two churches that He does not have to say that. Do you see something that needs to be recovered? That is how Revelation itself, I am zooming in, no longer looking at it as the conclusion of the Bible, just look at Revelation.

From Needing Recovery to New Jerusalem

That is how Revelation begins, with something in need of recovery. But then you come to the last verses. We just read them, and I am going to point to them again. That wondrous description of New Jerusalem, the bride, is when the recovery work of the ages has been completed, perfected for eternity, beyond even the possibility of things

going wrong. I remember one time reading a comment from Brother Sparks, and he says, one of the great blessings of that New Jerusalem is that we are beyond—when you get there, you are beyond the possibility of going wrong. Sin has been destroyed; death, the great consequence, destroyed, overcome. It is not that you are there and say, but what if things take a turn for the worse again? It is beyond the possibility for eternity. Recovery completed.

Listen to what it says. There are two verses that we read I want to point out to you. Chapter 21, verse 23: “And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp [with a p] is the Lamb [with a b],” the Lord Jesus. Do you know what that means? There is no mention of a lampstand in New Jerusalem. When you read this, it means that the whole city became a giant lampstand for all eternity. And Christ the Lamb is the lamp that is going to be expressed without hindrance, without anything that detracts, in fullness. That is the glory of the New Jerusalem. Do you see that the lampstands were restored at the end? Do you see the recovery of, inside the Book of Revelation? What a hope we have, brothers and sisters.

We know that if that is ever going to happen—I think the verse that our brother read yesterday morning or evening, I do not remember when David shared—oh, the one who made the promise, He is faithful. That is where we stand, brothers and sisters. He began the work; He is going to complete it.

Remember, the vision of the New Jerusalem is not, “I have a dream,” “I have a dream, and I wish that things were this way, that way.” That is not the vision. It is the Lord taking John, the Eternal One that is above time, outside time, taking John to that same plane, outside of time, and allowing him to see the end. “See what I have accomplished” is not a vision in the sense of a wish: “It may happen, it may not remain; that is my dream.” No. The Lord recovered everything: new heavens, new earth, the lampstands, the New Jerusalem, the Bride for eternity restored.

That gives me so much hope, brothers, and sisters, so much encouragement. I wish I could express it in a better way. I am talking about lampstands here. I want to switch a little bit, which is not really a switch, to that expression. I said we want to concentrate on two phrases, the testimony of Jesus and the word of God. Think for a second on the testimony of Jesus. It is important to notice, to have it quite clear before us, that the expression or phrase, the testimony of Jesus, is closely related to the lampstand.

The Testimony of Jesus and the Lampstand

The Lampstand and the Testimony of Jesus

In a way, you could say that the testimony of Jesus is the spiritual reality that is represented by the lampstand. Do you get that? Two things that point, they are exactly almost equivalent. One is the reality, the testimony of Jesus. The other is the symbol that represents that reality. In a way, you think in the lampstand or the testimony of Jesus, we are talking about the same thing, one in picture, the other one as a reality.

Here is part of my burden, brothers, and sisters, and why, as I consider this, I took the risk. Yes. Should I go through something practical through Revelation of all books? It is worth the risk. I believe it for the following: If the last book in the Bible, if the Holy Spirit closes Scripture with this book, and He is emphasizing this matter of the testimony of Jesus being recovered through the symbol of the lampstands that are being recovered and are recovered at the end, if that is His emphasis, I think we have something of the uttermost importance in this matter of the recovery of the testimony of Jesus.

It is as if you can think of it this way: History is a long story of recovery from the very beginning of time to the very end. When you come to Revelation, you come to the last stage of that recovery, the last phase of that recovery before the coming of the Lord. How important that must be. I ask you to consider it: how important this matter of the testimony of Jesus being recovered must be.

We want to ask: it is the spiritual reality represented by the lampstand, but can we be a little more specific? A specific word, maybe. I realize that sometimes these things can be pretty fuzzy, pretty abstract. The testimony of Jesus, and the Lord is after a recovery of that. But what exactly is that testimony of Jesus? How are we going to understand it?

Two Grammatical Senses of “The Testimony of Jesus”

I am going to just make a little interlude here. I was not planning to say this, but I think I must. Because if you are like me, probably this may have kind of intrigued you at some point. Grammatically, when you read that phrase, “the testimony of Jesus,” there are two ways to interpret it just grammatically. It is true in the original language, Greek, it is true in English, and it is true in any language.

The testimony of Jesus can mean the testimony of which Jesus is the subject. We have plenty in the Word of God that speaks of that, do we not? Think of the Mount of Transfiguration, think of His baptism, the Father opening the heavens, His voice being heard: “This is My beloved Son.” Do you see a testimony of which Jesus is the subject? This is the Son, the Father Himself testifying.

That is one way of interpreting, understanding the testimony of Jesus, which is absolutely true. Usually, when I see those things in Scripture, when you can go both ways, that is not an accident, that most likely both things are true and both aspects of that are for our instruction. That is one way of looking at this. The testimony of Jesus could mean the testimony of which He is the subject. That is not what I want to speak today. I want to go to the other side, which is the testimony that Jesus Himself is giving. That is another way grammatically to understand that: the testimony of which He is the subject, or the testimony that He Himself gave.

There is a mass of Scripture that you can put under either of those two categories. That is why both are absolutely true. We do not have the time to go over that. My burden today is more on the second aspect. The testimony of Jesus can be understood in its most literal sense as the testimony that Jesus Himself bore and is still bearing.

Interpreting “Testimony” in Revelation and in Christ Himself

Hopefully this can become clear, here is the thing, I think a good, usually, interpreters of Scripture, they will tell you that a good principle for sound Scripture interpretation is to try to interpret a phrase or a word first and foremost from its context right away in the vicinity in the chapter where you are reading it. If something in the context illumines that word, that should take a lot of weight in the deciding factor. If not, you can look at the book where it is being written, and the book is going to show you the context. If not, you can look at the author of that book, how he uses that word or expression elsewhere. That is always something that should take priority.

Interestingly enough, I believe that the book of Revelation will point to you, to both aspects of that testimony, both understandings. Jesus is the subject of the testimony. If chapter five of Revelation is not that, I do not know what in Scripture is. Do you see a testimony about Jesus being given by the Father, who is worthy to take the scroll, who is worthy to unravel it, to determine the destiny of this universe that belongs to God? He never relinquished that; it has always been in His hand. Usurpation of Satan, rebellion, whatever you make of Genesis 1:2, the fall of man—that never took the scroll out of the hand of the Father. In Revelation 5, there is a proclamation: Who is worthy? Only one was found worthy. Have you seen a testimony? The Father gives that scroll to the Son. Do you see a testimony of the Father that is there in the very book of Revelation?

It is not my subject today. I want the other side. I want the emphasis on what is the testimony that Jesus is giving, you see how many times in the book of Revelation itself. I am not even going to go into John. If we go into John, we will not finish. Let us stay in the book of Revelation. How many times you are going to read, you are going to have that idea. Let me just give you a few verses in the spirit of being good Bereans. Chapter one, before what we read, verse five. This is the greeting of the whole book. It is from the Father, the one who was, who is, who is to come, from the seven Spirits before His throne. Verse five: “And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness.” Remember, every time you see the word witness in your English translation it is exactly the same word as testimony. It is the same word in the original. Jesus is the faithful witness. He is the one that faithfully testifies.

There are a number of other verses, but I am going to give you just one more at the end of the book and ask you to think about it for a second. This is the last thing in Scripture that the Lord Jesus says. The very, very last thing recorded in Scripture that He is saying. Chapter 22, verse twenty. “He who testifies,” the verb. That is the same root as the noun. The testimony of Jesus is the same word. “He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming quickly.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.” That is how our Bible closes: Jesus as the one that testifies, as the testimony of Jesus that He gives during His days in the flesh. He was doing that at every turn, everywhere. Even now, as the risen Lord, He is still the faithful witness, the one that testifies.

There is a definition, as we try to understand, to find the underlying cause of this matter of testimony. There is a definition that really helps me with what is, at the end of

the day, what is a testimony, what is a witness, what they are doing. You can find this in a good dictionary. This is the idea: a testimony is someone that sets the evidence of something. If you just think about it for a second, you see that this is true even in human affairs. What is a witness in a court? What is that person doing? He sets evidence, he presents evidence. Of course, as evidence, what is implied here is something that is a firsthand experience. It is not enough to go into court and say, I heard about it. I was at the corner; I did not see what happened. Oh, but my neighbor told me that what happened was this, that, and the other. I am sorry, I do not think that is going to count before the judge, before anybody.

If you saw something, if you had first-hand experience, you could set the evidence about the matter. The testimony of Jesus has to do with that. If you go, at its core, it is setting some sort of evidence. Of course, we want to understand what that evidence is. How do we apply that to the Lord Jesus if we consider Him as the one that testifies the testimony of Jesus that He gives? How does the Lord Jesus set that evidence?

Let us put it this way: He set the evidence of divine reality. Think of your Lord in His days here on this earth. He set the evidence of divine reality. Everywhere people met the Lord Jesus, they were immediately in touch with God. Did you realize that even enemies, it does not matter if you accept or reject the evidence, it was there undeniably, even the enemies? The parable of the so-called evil vine-dressers brings that to light very clearly.

Remember what they say in the parable, "Oh, this is the heir." They know it. This is the heir, let us kill him. We are going to grasp that inheritance; it is going to be ours. They knew that he was the son of the owner, even enemies. Jesus set that evidence in a way that is inescapable. You cannot avoid that. Thanks to the Lord, many accepted, were transformed, were saved; some rejected. Whatever is the case, Jesus is the one that set that evidence of divine reality.

There is a picture from the Old Testament that can help us to visualize this matter. Remember how in John chapter one, in that initial wonderful prologue of the Gospel, we read in verse 14, "And the Word," speaking about the Lord Jesus, and the Word, the one that was in the beginning with God and was God, was in the beginning (John 1:1-2). In verse fourteen, it changes. It says, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us." The word in the original, as probably many of you know, in the original the word is "tabernacled among us." Immediately it points your attention to that tabernacle in the Old Testament.

What was that tabernacle? Remember that when God asked Moses, I want to dwell among you, among the people, I want you to build Me a tabernacle where I can dwell. They built the tabernacle exactly according to specification. There was no deviation. There was no room for that. Everything according to a pattern. Remember what happens when the tabernacle is finally ready. That is the end of Exodus, Exodus 40. The glory of God, the presence of God comes upon the tabernacle, fills the tabernacle. That glory and presence of the Lord is visible. This is what our brother was sharing with us

yesterday, that was Jerusalem, according to rabbinical tradition, the place you go when you can see the presence of God.

Brothers and sisters, the Word became flesh. He tabernacled among us. Wherever He goes, the glory, the presence of God can be touched. He sets the evidence of who God is, undeniable, inescapable, so clear. That is our Lord Jesus. That is the testimony of Jesus. Wherever He goes, there is evidence of God. I did not read to the end of the verse, but of course, in the case of the tabernacle, there was a Shekinah glory, a cloud that was visible. There was something in that cloud that you would see, something glorious. You would see a divine presence.

In the case of the Lord Jesus, you are not going to see something external, you are not seeing a halo, you are not seeing a cloud on top of Him. Oh, but there is a spiritual reality. That presence is brought in a spiritual way, in a moral way, in a way that is undeniable. We beheld His glory, is that not what the rest of the verse says? He tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory. Glory is the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. A glory expressed in terms of grace and truth. Anyone that was in touch with the Lord Jesus touched that, the testimony of Jesus.

If you see the Lord, if you hear the Lord, you are in touch with divine love, with the Father's righteousness, with the Father's holiness, with everything that the Father is. He testifies of the Father. He testifies of Himself, which is, in a way, to testify of the Father. Is that not something interesting? There is no other way for us to ever know God. How would you and I ever understand, comprehend the transcendent, infinite God? He is beyond us. It is impossible. When God became flesh, you can touch Him. You can see what He is like. The Father, completely, revealed in the person of the Beloved.

When He testifies, this is something interesting to me. Because the Lord Jesus is all the time, which is something that no other human being—it is wrong for anybody else to say, I am. I am. I am. You would say, how dare you? He is always saying that I am the bread of life. I am the light of the world. I am the way, the truth, and the life. I am the resurrection and the life. I am. He testifies of Himself. In that way we can know the Father. Do you see? The testimony of Jesus, He testifies of what true humanity is supposed to be. The Son of Man, that expression, you know that that is a Hebraism, in a way. If you are the son of—the Son of Thunder. Remember the two brothers, that they lost their cool quite often and wanted to thunder upon people. It simply means that you are like thunder. It is like father, like son. That is really the idea.

The Lord Jesus is the Son of Man. True humanity, humanity as God intended. He testified to that. The testimony of Jesus, let me put it this way, Jesus was the very embodiment of what He testified. Here we are touching something as we are trying to explore the idea of testimony, to understand that. Unbelievably, I am still trying to get to a practical point. Jesus was the very embodiment of everything He testified. That is an essential idea of testimony in the Bible. A witness becomes the embodiment of what he or she testifies. That is, it. He is not talking about something outside of himself, something. It is not a knowledge that you have that you can pass to others. That is not

the idea of testimony. Even if it is true, if it is sound, all the rest of it. No. A testimony is something that became the embodiment of what he is testifying.

Consider in the case of our Lord Jesus. Remember John chapter 14. He is talking to Philip and the disciples and says, "He who sees Me sees the Father." Talk about embodiment of something. He testifies of the Father, but He can say, "I am so one with Him; to see Me is to see the Father." Think on Hebrews chapter one. He is the exact representation of His being, the embodiment of the testimony in the person. He is that. That is why He can testify of that. He is the perfect expression of the Father.

This is the testimony of Jesus when you think of Him personally. Of course, the testimony of Jesus is not simply the testimony He bore personally. There is another idea that you are going to find in the Book of Revelation. There is a continuation of that testimony in the church. That is the lampstand. That is what the lampstand is for, to express, to reveal itself. No, to express Christ. If the Lord Jesus says, "He who sees Me sees the Father," the church should be able to say, "If you see me, you see Christ, you see Jesus." It is the continuation of the testimony of Jesus in the church.

The Lampstand, the Church, and the Recovery of the Testimony

Therefore, there are some interesting expressions that are in the book of Revelation. I think Brother Lance makes incredibly good points on this in some of his messages. The verbs that are used about the testimony are interesting to observe because in Revelation often you are not going to find that you are bearing the testimony, but you read about those that hold the testimony of Jesus. Actually, the verse that we read at the beginning, there are at least two verses in Revelation that use that verb. The verse in chapter 12, it says that Satan was enraged, or the dragon, and he went off to make war. This is 12:17. "So the dragon was enraged with the woman and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to [have] the testimony of Jesus." They have the testimony of Jesus.

You would say, would it not be better to say they bear the testimony of Jesus? No, they have it, because part of the idea is that that is something that is in them. The way our brother says, in his unique way, I would say, is this: a lampstand, the testimony of Jesus? What do you mean? That we hold the testimony of Jesus. We have the testimony of Jesus. It is this: a lampstand holds the lamp, period. That is what the church is supposed to be, something that holds Christ. Guess who is seen; it is Christ. It is not the lampstand. Think of it in this way: your body holds your head. It is a little crude to say, but that is exactly the idea about which we are talking. Your body is supposed to be a vehicle for your head with its thoughts, its intentions, its plans, for your head to express itself. That is what your body is. Your body holds your head just like the lampstand holds the lamp, and just like the body of Christ is supposed to hold the testimony of Jesus to express the Lord Jesus.

We know that as we are talking about this matter of the testimony of Jesus now continued through the church, we know that that begins in the day of Pentecost. You

could say that in the day of Pentecost, the testimony of Jesus is being transferred in a way from Christ personally, because He had that testimony; it is transferred. That is not even the right language. Bear with me. Because He is still the faithful witness, but now it is Christ corporately that also gives the testimony of Jesus. That is why you find in Revelation that it is not just Jesus testifying, but you have the lampstand, the church, and they hold the testimony of Jesus, believers. That is the idea: it is Christ now being expressed.

You know that on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came down, was given, the church was born. You could say that the Lord Jesus was like the tabernacle in His person, the portable presence of God that set the evidence of His presence, of His glory, of His reality. The church became that. That became the spiritual house, the spiritual temple. On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit comes down, just like in the tabernacle of old, and fills the house. You read the book of Acts. Was the evidence of Christ set? Read the book. He is evident at every turn through the church. They hold the testimony of Jesus.

If a witness, let me go back to this idea. If a witness is supposed to be the embodiment of that which he or she testifies, that is missing in the church when you read Revelation 2 and 3, is it not? Can you honestly say that you see, if the church is supposed to express, testify Christ, can you see an embodiment of Christ there? I will remind you very quickly because that is the basic idea of those seven letters. Remember the glorious vision of the seven lampstands and one like a son of man, glorious in all His features. Now, read the letters to each church. He presents Himself with some of the features from that vision. It is almost as if the Lord Jesus is expecting to find Himself, to find that feature of Himself expressed in that church. Is that the case? You see that the lampstand is in need of recovery. The embodiment of that, of what a witness is supposed to be, a testimony, is not quite there.

Before I get to the practical point, before I run out of time, let me just mention one more thing. I suspect that this matter of the recovery of the testimony of Jesus, which is front and center, I would say, is the spiritual message of the book of Revelation. A book of prophecy, yes. I am not saying that it is not. No, it is. It is showing us the things that must take place soon. Yes, it is. There is a spiritual message there. It is the recovery of the testimony of Jesus. It is a matter that is more important than we may realize.

Sometimes we think that it is a matter of geopolitics—who is going to conquer, who is going to, that one day the world will become Christian or something like that. The point is a little different. When I read the book of Revelation, the conflict, which is actually, let us face it, a scary book. A lot of people read the book and they are absolutely terrified. If you read that in one trumpet, at the sound of one trumpet, a third of humanity dies, perishes. One third. I do not think we are there yet, brothers and sisters. I believe, as the book begins, saying things that must take place soon, it is pretty terrifying, is it not? I do not think we can put rosy glasses on that. I do not think we can even hide and say, “Well, but do not worry, the church will be raptured before that.” Oh, I would never hide behind something like that. Let us face it, there is terrible conflict in the book of Revelation. Intense, very, very scary at times.

The matter is not about geopolitics. It is not about who is going to conquer at the end of the day. I think that the verse that we read in Chapter 12 gives you a hint of this. At the end of the day, this conflict rages around the testimony of Jesus. I am not going to go into that vision of Chapter 12, except to mention one thing. There you have that woman that is in labor. Something is going to happen. Something is coming to completion within her. There is a small part, a remnant, you would say, that is being formed. When that remnant, that man child, is fully formed and born, something happens that changes the equation of power, if you will. The man child goes up immediately. The dragon and his angels are cast down. You read the chapter by yourself, and you hear that voice. Now the kingdom has come, brothers and sisters.

You read about that man-child. He is a corporate man-child that they have overcome. That is a man-child that is in heaven now. Saved, delivered. Satan was dragged out, cast on the earth. You read about that man-child, that they have overcome because of the blood of the Lamb, because of the word of their testimony. There was a testimony in there that was real. Brothers and sisters, why is the matter of the testimony of Jesus being recovered so crucial, so important, and so contested? All the rage of the enemy is against that testimony. Again, read chapter 12. Why? It is because the testimony of Jesus ushers in the Kingdom. When that testimony is recovered, even in a remnant, even in a small part of the whole church.

I believe, just to be clear, that the whole Church will follow eventually. The remnant is always that, in the Old Testament, in the New, wherever you look, it is always a pioneer, it is always someone that stood with the Lord. When the majority fall apart, they are falling apart; they are standing with the Lord. Through that little remnant, the kingdom comes. Do you not think that the enemy knows that? Are we surprised that the conflict is sometimes so unimaginably intense?

Thank the Lord, because he will not prevail, the enemy with all his rage, because the Lord said that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. The Lamb has overcome. He took the scroll. We rest on that. But this matter, brothers, and sisters, you could ask, if you overcome, are we not done here already? No, no, no. Because He overcame. He wants that victory to be expressed, to be expressed through a lampstand, through a testimony on this earth, the testimony of Jesus.

The Word of God as the Key to the Testimony

I want to use the final minutes that we have to consider the companion phrase to the testimony of Jesus, the Word of God. Which brings us to the practical aspect that has been in my heart all along. In which way is the Word of God related to the testimony of Jesus? Why is it always paired together? We have a key there. Again, if you want to take notes, I will give you the reference. If you want those passages, then remember the Word of God. There are some variations there. I think that always the Word of God is in view. You have Revelation 1:2, Revelation 1:9, Revelation 6:9, Revelation 19:10, and I am skipping one, Revelation 12:17. All of them, the Word of God, and the testimony of

Jesus, they are paired. There must be a key for us in this matter. How is the Word of God related to the testimony of Jesus?

Christ as the Tabernacle and Ark of the Testimony

Just very briefly, consider extending the type of the Lord Jesus as the tabernacle for a second. You know that the tabernacle in the Old Testament is called the Tabernacle of the Testimony. That is super significant, isn't it? Because if He dwelt among us, if He tabernacled among us, He was that testimony. He set the evidence of the reality of God wherever He went. The Ark is also called the Ark of the Testimony. Remember how it works. You have the tabernacle, the whole tent. Then you have an inner part of the tabernacle. The innermost part of the tabernacle is the Holy of Holies. Right at the center of the Holy of Holies, you have the Ark of the Testimony as well.

The Ark always points in typology to Christ Himself. It is where the presence of God is enthroned; it is the place where His glory, the Shekinah glory, is actually on the Ark, in the Holy of Holies. The lid of that Ark is the mercy seat where the blood is sprinkled, which speaks of our Lord Jesus, His redemption for us. That is not what my burden here is. I want to go inside of the Ark. What you find inside of the Ark of the Testimony, a third thing that is called testimony again, the tabernacle of the tent of the Testimony, the Ark of the Testimony. Inside the Ark of the Testimony, you have something that in Exodus is called the tablets of the Testimony, right inside.

What are the tablets? The Ten Commandments. The two, the unbroken Ten Commandments. The first tablets were broken, remember, at the foot of the mountain. The Lord commanded Moses, I am going to give you another set. Go up. He receives that, and he puts that inside the ark. Brothers and sisters, how do you explain the Lord Jesus being this testimony of the Father? If He is the Ark, what is in the innermost of His being? The Word of God. The Word of God and the testimony of Jesus. We can say that in a way, it is the Word of God, when received, when digested, when absorbed into your being, it makes you the very testimony. You see, I am not talking about mental knowledge of the Word of God. Let us memorize a bunch of verses. We are done. No, no, no, no, no. That is not the point. It is the Word of God assimilated to you, and the word becomes flesh and blood, if you will. That explains our Lord Jesus in His perfect humanity. The word of the tablets inside the ark. The Word of God written upon His heart.

The man that could say, remember when He is tempted, He said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." You know what He is saying. You know what His testimony is right there? I live by the Word of God. That is My lifeline. Again, I am not talking about simply mental knowledge. Even though that is necessary, we must say it. I do not want you to go to an extreme and say, "I am going to be relaxing on my corner the rest of the summer, and it is a matter of revelation, it is not? The Lord will send me an angel to reveal to me the Word of God." It is not how it works, brothers and sisters.

As we read the Word of God, as we depend on the Holy Spirit, as we have that right heart before the Lord, He will reveal it to you. But the Word of God is there. The tablets of the testament. That is how it worked in the Lord Jesus.

Morning-by-Morning Listening to the Word

I want to take you quickly through a verse, Isaiah, chapter 50, verse four. It is a verse that is Messiah talking in this verse. You have a key here in this matter of the Word of God in relation to the testimony of Jesus. Listen to what Messiah says in Isaiah 50:4: “The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of disciples, That I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple.”

This is Messiah Himself speaking. This is His testimony. Do you know that our Lord Jesus, He went through a training program, through a discipline? Before you tell me, “No, are you sure He is the eternal Son of God? He did not need that. Is He not automatically the testimony of God?” No. In His humanity, remember what Hebrews says? He had to learn obedience through the things He suffered. Hebrews says more than that. He says that now He is leading many sons to glory. In other words, the same learning that He had, He is leading us in the same path we are learning. Here you have one vital aspect of what He learned.

Our Lord Jesus went through that discipline of the morning-by-morning appointment with God to listen. What did He listen to? His Word. My dear brothers and sisters, let me ask you, are you going? It is not just His experience. This is for you and for me as well. Are you going through that discipline, the morning-by-morning appointment with God in His Word? Are you allowing that to speak, speak to you? Are you having your ears open to hear? If you ask, how am I going to hear? There is no question about it. It is the Word of God. That is what we are going to hear. That is what is going to speak to us.

I believe that the point of the Word of God being paired with the testimony of Jesus is simple. The Word of God as it is listened to, as it is received, submitted to, digested, absorbed—there is the complete process. It is like digestion. It will convey you into that testimony. It makes you into that testimony. Of course, in a way you are by birth. It is your birthright. Yes, yes, yes, I understand that, of course. It is just like an athlete. Let us say a guy was born, he is going to be the greatest athlete ever, and he is a little baby. Are you going to say that everything is done? The potential is there; the right DNA is there. Yes, thank God for that. If that person does not grow up with the right diet, with the right discipline, the potential can become frustrated, can never fulfill itself.

Do you see that, in a way, as believers, when it comes to this matter of the testimony, it is the same principle? The right DNA, if you are born of God, is there. Born of the Spirit, the life of Christ is in you. Oh, but now we need to go through that diet, that discipline of hearing from the Lord morning by morning. This may seem quite simple. That is really the practical aspect that I want to share. That is my burden.

Everything else, in a way, as important as it is, I am trying to set a stage. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

Here is the thing. Personally, I can hardly think of something that is more practical than those morning-by-morning appointments. Starting your day in the presence of God, learning how to seek Him, how to hear His Word, nourishing yourself from Christ, feeding on Him, morning by morning, is going to constitute the testimony. I can hardly think of something that is more practical, hardly something that is more important, and hardly something that is more contested than that. You know how contested that is. You know the age at which we live. Tell me, is there not a temptation to wake up and say, “Let us see what is going on”? That is, it, we are off track.

Do you see how easy it is? He wakens My ear morning by morning. That is our Lord Jesus. That is how He—that—that is how it worked in His life. You have His life in you by His grace. That is our training program.

Walking Wisely in an Age of Distraction

I am going to close with a pair of verses from the sister epistles, Ephesians and Colossians. It is amazing how much they mirror each other. It is amazing how, in that mirroring, with sometimes small, tiny variations, there is a world of meaning for us. Ephesians, chapter 5. We live in these days, brothers, and sisters, when it is the age of distraction that can derail the testimony of Jesus.

It seems basic, and it is. I think I can hardly think of something more foundational in our spiritual experience. Remember, no Word of God, no testimony of Jesus. There is a reason they are paired. There is a reason the testimony, per excellence, Christ Himself, has those tablets in His heart in the innermost recess of His being. Now listen, in this day of distraction that we live, Ephesians chapter 5:15-16 says, “Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise.” I hardly need to make a point here on how easy it is to be foolish in this day and age. Listen to how Paul is applying this: “Making the most of your time.” See how you can be wise versus unwise? How do you use your time? Are you sanctifying those first hours of your day to be with your Lord? To allow the Word of God to nourish you so that that testimony can be established? You can be constituted into that, “Making the most of your time, because the days are evil.”

Verse 18: “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.” There is something typological in the matter of wine. When you go to the Old Testament, often it speaks of the joy of this world. Paul is not saying that you are not supposed to experience any joy in this world. It is not what he is saying, but he is saying that you should not be drunk with it. There is a vast difference between those two, and the words that really, I really like this particular translation that I am using here for this word. Why? Because there is dissipation. What a word. The Lord may give you much grace He can speak His word to you. We have, all of us, the capacity to dissipate that, to let that leak by getting drunk with things. He said instead of that, you should be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Filled with the Spirit, Filled with the Word

Now get to the sister epistle, Colossians, chapter 3, verse 16: “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you.” I did not read the context, because Paul continued and says that, in Ephesians 5, that we should sing in psalms and give thanks to the Lord, submitting to one another. If you read in Colossians, you have the parallel passage: “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God,” is the parallel of, if you continue, Ephesians 5:19 and onward. Here he is using a variation: in Ephesians, “be filled with the Spirit;” in Colossians, “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you.” The two go hand in hand. Brothers and sisters, you cannot separate one from the other. That is how the Holy Spirit is going to speak to you.

Is that not the message in the seven letters? Let him who has an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the churches. How do you think the Holy Spirit is going to say something? It is going to be based on the Word of God. If it is not, if you think that the Holy Spirit—listen, of course there is such a thing as a small still voice, thank the Lord for that, of course—but the Lord or the Holy Spirit will never lead you in a way that contradicts His Word.

Quite often it is exactly the opposite. He will speak something to you, and then a Word of the Lord will remind you. It is like Hebrews chapter three. To me, it is the perfect example: “As the Holy Spirit says,” remember chapter three, verse seven, and he quotes Psalm 95. That is how the Holy Spirit speaks to us, brothers, and sisters. It is His sword, the Word of God. The Word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

May the Lord be gracious to us. *Lord, we pray indeed that Your Spirit may give us the revelation that we need, the understanding, the knowledge of the Lord Jesus, that in this matter that we believe is so critical in Your Word, the testimony of Jesus being recovered. O Lord, open our eyes. Help us to give ourselves to You so that, in Your faithfulness, You can do that work in us to restore it, that Your Word may have that place in our lives where it can form us into that testimony. We pray it in the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.*

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