

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



GIG191 – Open the Door of Your Heart

Hi, and welcome to this podcast. I hope you will enjoy the message today. I have entitled it, *Open the Door of Your Heart*. As I have done in several podcasts lately, I want to start by reading the takeaway notes for the podcast, so that there is an idea of where we are going. I know that many people have walked with the Lord for a long time; and one of the things that I felt so deeply in my own heart, the Lord meeting me the other day in my time of prayer and meditation, was about how often we as believers, as people who are in a relationship with the Lord and a walk with the Lord, refuse Him in what He is requesting of us. So, the first takeaway that I have for this message is, we have refused the Lord many times in our relationship with Him, but it really is time to stop doing that. I feel like we are coming to a place, just in the timing of the Lord in these days, when we need to be far more cautious about saying “No,” or just refusing. The second point I would make is, no matter our previous refusals, Christ comes again to plead with us in these last days. Lastly, it really is time for us to make a personal covenant of peace with the coming Messiah. We talk a lot about the new covenant, and I believe that there is a covenant, once again, that the Lord wants to make, and it is a very personal covenant with us.

I am going to begin by reading out of Revelation the third chapter, verses 14-22.

“To the angel of the church of Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this: ‘I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,” and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me. He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also 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.’”

We know this is at the beginning of the book of Revelation, when the Lord is addressing the churches. Of course, most of the time people do not want to be associated with this church of Laodicea, because of what is being said here about it – no one wants to be part of the lukewarm church, neither hot nor cold; nobody wants to be spat out of the mouth of the Lord. But I think that we need to open our hearts on another level and read it with a heart to understand. One thing I feel when I read these verses is the Lord’s love for us; honestly, that He would come to us time and time again. This church had become lukewarm over time, because of the way that they had related to the Lord. They related to Him in a heart of refusal to obey His commandments and His wishes, because they thought in their hearts that they were already rich, that they already had become wealthy and they did not really need His direction,

His leading. They did not need nor want the Lordship of Christ over their lives; and due to that, they, without knowing it, became wretched and miserable, poor, blind, and naked.

Whatever state we find ourselves in during these last days – and we know that this is the book of Revelation, so it expresses the fact that this is during the last days – Christ is coming to plead, once again, to the body of Christ, to us as individual believers, asking us to walk with Him in a different way. He wants us to come to Him. And to me, where this is really expressed in these verses is beginning at verse 20. He says, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock.” Again, the love of Christ that has not walked away from these people, from this church of Laodicea – He is still standing at the door, and He is knocking, He is pleading, He is trying to get in. And He says, “If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.”

Now, one thing that is interesting to me here is in the beginning, He is speaking and addressing the church, which we assume is a group of people. Maybe it is a mega church; maybe it is thousands of people. Maybe it is a smaller church, and it is only a few handfuls of people. But He is still addressing a group, and speaking to them as a church, as a group of people. But when He gets down to verse 20, something very interesting happens, in my thinking; and that is, He is now standing at the door and knocking, saying that if anyone hears His voice and opens the door, He will come in to that person and dine with him, “and he with Me.” And so, we see that He really is in the conclusion of where He is trying to take these people, coming on to a very personal address and a personal request. And this is where I feel we need to be in these times. It is not so much God addressing the church world, or the whole body of Christ. I feel like the Lord is knocking at the door of our hearts individually, and looking for a response from us individually. So, He says that if you hear His voice and open the door, then He will come in, and He will dine with you, and you will dine with Him.

I take this very much in a context of the Hebrew Scriptures, where we know that, traditionally, when people came to dine with one another, it was for the purpose and it was a part of making an agreement or a covenant with each other. Most of the time, that was the reason for individuals to get together and eat together; that was the establishment of a covenant. We know that the new covenant in Christ’s blood was made at a dinner, where they were sitting together, eating together. Christ took the bread and blessed it, took the wine and blessed it, and made a new covenant in His blood. And I believe that these verses are about the Lord looking to make a new covenant with me, a new covenant with you, on an individual basis. So He is knocking at the door of your heart, and He is wanting you to open your heart. No matter how many times we may have refused Him in the past, He is looking for us to open our heart, to sit down with Him, and to, in essence, negotiate a new covenant. And obviously, the people in this church needed a new covenant, because they were not following the mind of the Lord, or the will of God, in their lives, in their walk with Him. They had become wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, and maybe were not that aware of it. So, He wants to make this agreement, where you come to Him and you buy gold refined in the fire that you may become truly rich, and white garments that you might clothe yourself and cover the shame of your nakedness.

He is looking for these negotiations to transpire, where we stop refusing Him and we come to Him, we sit down with Him, and we literally negotiate an agreement, a covenant. It is time for a covenant. You say, “Well, we already have a new covenant.” But there are many covenants that you find as you go through the Scriptures. There are new covenants. There is the new covenant in Jeremiah 31:31, that happens with Israel and Judah. So, we see that God is into this idea of making covenants; and I think ultimately, the greatest covenant is the covenant that He has with you as an individual. The salvation

experience is really a covenant made on an individual basis. Salvation does not happen in a group expression; you must open your heart and you must ask the Lord to come into your heart. You must initiate the repentance and the invitation to Him to come into your life, and that requires the opening of a door. And I think that this is coming to a time in which He is talking to these believers; they are obviously believers, they are part of the church. And yet, at the same time, He is saying, "You know, we need to sit down and negotiate a new covenant, because there are things that you do not have due to your refusal."

I think this refusal that we experience in our lives, in our relationship with Him, may go a lot deeper than we realize. I wanted to read out of Matthew the twenty-third chapter, at verses 37-39. It says,

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'"

This is important to me, in this experience, because I think we need to recognize how often there has been a refusal of this deep heart of God that has been calling to us and wanting to gather us, wanting to draw us to Himself. This was Christ as He was seated on the Mount of Olives, looking back at the city of Jerusalem, and He was literally weeping over the people. You can say, "Well, He was weeping over the whole city of Jerusalem." But He was weeping over the individual hearts that He wanted to gather; He wanted to pull them to Himself, cover them with His wing, cover them in His salvation, and they were unwilling. They refused. This idea of refusal is something that we see time and time again in the Scriptures; and that is what is so amazing to me, that we can be reading again out of the book of Revelation and here is the Lord, still coming to us, saying, "I'm at the door. I'm knocking. I'm wanting you to come. I'm wanting to gather you to Myself. I'm wanting to sit down with you and make a covenant with you, make an agreement with you, an agreement between you and Me that is our agreement, it is our new covenant together that we are going to find. You are going to come to Me in an openness, and you are going to buy the gold, and the clothing, the things that you need, from Me." It is time for it to happen, and I believe that this is pointing to a very unique time in history where we are as the people of God. Because I think this is a special cry that we read about in Revelation to the end-time Church, to the end-time individuals, believers who are in a relationship with Christ that needs something new added to it. It needs a new covenant with Him individually.

I want to read out of Hebrews the twelfth chapter, and I will begin with verses 18-21. I know there are a lot of verses here, but I think they are important for us to grasp.

For you have not come to a mountain that can be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind, and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which sound was such that those who heard begged that no further word be spoken to them. For they could not bear the command, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it will be stoned." And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, "I am full of fear and trembling."

We know what this is addressing, this is talking about Mount Sinai. This is talking about God making a covenant with the people, the children of Israel. So again, we are looking at God coming down, touching down on earth on Mount Sinai, and negotiating, if you will, a covenant with the children of Israel. And Moses is on the mountain, brokering, in a sense, this covenant between God and Israel. So this is what is being referred to. And he is talking about how terrible the sight was, how much even Moses was in fear

and trembling because of what he was witnessing in this. So he says, "You are not coming to this atmosphere, you are not coming to the way it was at Mount Sinai."

Verses 22-24,

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

So again, he is talking about this new covenant. He is talking about the church of the firstborn. He is talking to those who are believers, and he is saying that we have come now to Christ as the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkling of His blood, which is better than the blood of Abel. Verse 25, "See to it that you do not refuse." See, when we come to this timeframe that we are in, it is no longer a time to refuse; and I think there is a carefulness that the Lord is trying to work in our hearts and spirits. We cannot refuse the fact that He is standing at the door, knocking, looking for us to take the initiative. Something has to happen. When we make a covenant, it is a bilateral covenant; it is a two-sided agreement. And so, He may be knocking at the door; He may be trying again to get into our hearts and make an agreement of peace with us, to make a new covenant with us individually; but it takes an effort on our part. And that is what he is warning here in Hebrews, that we not refuse this time.

Let me read this verse again. "See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven." So again, this is not a time to be refusing. Verses 26-29,

And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven." This expression, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire.

We are coming in to the days of the Kingdom, and before the days of the Kingdom, He is going to shake everything that can be shaken. But also, He comes and He knocks once more at the door; and He believes for us to open that door and come to Him, and make an agreement with Him, before this terrible time of shaking on the earth that is going to take place. And not only is the earth shaken, but also are the heavens. Now you may say, "Well, I have gone through so many things. I have been in a relationship with the Lord, and this has happened to me and that has happened to me." And that may be part of what was behind the church of Laodicea, where they were lukewarm towards the Lord. They were not in a deep relationship with Him, they were not being obedient and having Him as Lord over their lives; and possibly it was because of what they had experienced in their relationship, their walk with God, their being a part of the church. Whatever that experience was, it had turned their hearts to be cold. And yet, here He was begging them to open the door to Him, and to have something different take place.

I want to read a similar experience out of Job. This is Job the forty-second chapter. If you are familiar with the book of Job, you know that it is at the end of many events that took place that Job was put

through, and they were terrible things. He lost his family; everything was wiped away from him. And so, he would be one who would be in a place where he could want to refuse God calling to him in his life.

We are in chapter 42, starting at verses 1-3. It says,

Then Job answered the Lord and said, "I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted. 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know."

You see, whatever we have been through, there is really a lack of understanding; and wherever it has turned our hearts cold to the Lord and made us act as those in Laodicea, we need to recognize that our perceptions, our paradigms, are very, very incorrect, and the Lord is trying to get to us. And maybe He is putting us through many things in order to get us to the place where we really are broken enough and humble enough to open that door of our hearts, when He comes knocking once again.

So Job goes on to say, verses 3-6,

"Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. 'Hear now, and I will speak; I will ask You, and You instruct me.' I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You; therefore I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes."

When he came to this place of opening the door of his heart, all that he had been through, all the pain, the suffering, all that had been removed from him in the experiences that he had just had, really became unimportant. And he said, "I have known about You on one level, from the hearing of the ear; but now I am seeing You." And see, that is I think what the Lord is after. He wants us to open the door. He wants to come in to us. He wants to sit down and sup with us, to make an agreement, a covenant together with Him. He is looking for something to happen on a level that is beyond what we, as believers, have ever known or ever understood before. And as this happens, we will find ourselves being very humbled, very much in repentance before the Lord, and opening our hearts in a way that maybe we were not able to open our hearts before.

This is what I am hoping we will experience. I am hoping that we will hear that knock on the door of our hearts, and that whatever we have been through – maybe we have been through difficult times, maybe we have been through times that seem unfair. Whatever it is that you have gone through, maybe it is health issues, maybe it is financial issues, maybe it is relational issues; maybe it is those who have betrayed you, or whatever. It does not matter, if we will open the door and let the Lord come in, and sit down with us, and make a new covenant with our hearts.

When we look at the new covenant of His blood, we see that that is what we are to do: we are to eat and drink the Communion in a worthy manner, looking to our hearts to see, what is it? We do not come in pride when we receive the Communion. Paul talks about this in First Corinthians 11, starting at verses 23-28. He says,

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of

the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

This I think is what the Lord is talking about when He is speaking in the book of Revelation to the church of Laodicea, and then He talks about knocking at the door and having someone open it; and when they open it, then He will come in and sup with you. He is going to come in and have a communion with you, that which will bring forth a new covenant between you and Him. And in that, there will be an examination of our hearts, an examination of ourselves, and an examination of our relationship with the Lord that we have experienced up to that time. We want to be those who are not refusing, and therefore eating and drinking judgment to ourselves. We want to be those who are opening our hearts, and being released in to the time of His Kingdom.

Verses 31-32 say, "But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world." Yes, there is discipline. Yes, the Lord has taken us through things. But ultimately, He comes in love and knocks upon the door and says, "Let's sit down together. Come now, let us reason together, and let us find that place of brokenness in your heart where there can be true repentance," and true hunger to relate to Him in a new way. Because that is what He is hungry for, is a relationship with us, individually, that literally creates a new covenant with us.

It is time for a new covenant. But for that to happen, we first must take the initiative to open the door of our heart, to let Him in, to sit down and to covenant with Him together. And as we see the Lord, we will be like Job. Yes, we have heard about things of the Lord before; but this is an experience beyond anything we have ever known. As Job said, "But now, my eyes see You. And therefore I retract and repent in dust and ashes." There will be a brokenness, but there is also going to be the joy of experiencing His love, of having a personal covenant with Him in His blood that is so necessary in these times. I know that the end-time walk, and those of us who are in these times, will experience many difficulties. But never let it overshadow the reality that He is standing at the door of our hearts, knocking, knocking, waiting for us to open the door and to let Him in. And by faith, we do that today.

Amen.