

Prayer Meeting Address given by Mr Jabez Rutt at Lamberhurst on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Reading: Revelation 3, verses 1-6

Here we have letters that the Lord Jesus commanded John to write to the seven churches and this is a very short but searching letter that the Lord Jesus writes to the church at Sardis. As he says in another one of them, "I have *somewhat* against thee." "And unto the angel of the church in Sardis," they had a minister, "These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." What a solemn condition to be found in and this seems to have been what you might say, the general condition of the church at Sardis, they had a name to live. There were many believers, many church members but there were not many who were truly born again, that were really truly brought to living faith in Christ, that were really brought to that place, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." We can only look at it in that light, "thou hast a name that thou livest," Christ is the living one, Christ is the life of his people. "I am the way, the truth and the life." So they had the name of Christ, they had the name of a Christian, many of them, but they actually did not know him. I do not want to be left to speculate but were there many there with just a head knowledge, perhaps just been brought up in the truth? They were quite satisfied with that head knowledge that they had been brought up in, they did not really know the Lord. They had not been born again, they did not have faith in the living one, in the Christ of God in his resurrection. "thou hast a name that thou livest," they passed as church members. They had made a profession of his name, "thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." Very solemn thought is it not?

"Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die:" it was obviously in a very, very poor condition spiritually, this church, "for I have not found thy works perfect before God." But he gives them space for repentance, he says, "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." Solemn warning is it not, we do not know the hour or the time that the Lord comes. But then we have this lovely word. "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments;" I suspect there were some very defiling doctrines that were held in this church, possibly perhaps there were many who were living very loose lives and yet passed as Christians. Their practice was not that of Christians. "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis

which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy."

I often refer you to those words in chapter 7 of the Revelation, "[Who] are these which are arrayed in white robes?" Who are they? They are the saints of God. They are those who have been born again of the Spirit and brought to living faith. A person that is united to Christ by living faith has the righteousness of Christ, he is washed in the blood of Christ. Perhaps in an experimental way they do not know that, they love him, they desire to follow him. They would seek a fuller knowledge of him, but, friends, it is very clear from the word of God that those who live by faith in Christ are made righteous in Christ. They are justified in Christ, they are clothed in that glorious everlasting robe of the righteousness of Christ, they are made ready. They are washed in his precious blood. Maybe these are the things that you desire, you desire an experience of it, a knowledge of it, an understanding of it. Not just in the head but in the heart so that you can really truly say, my beloved is mine and I am his.

"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh," we are instructed in the word of God that we overcome through Christ. They overcame him through the blood of the Lamb and through the word of their testimony what a mercy, the word of their testimony. "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." He will confess his name, Christ will, Christ the mediator, Christ the great high priest. He "will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."

What a wonderful thing. The high priest had a golden breastplate hanging round his neck on a golden chain, There were twelve precious stones on that breast plate and they hung over his heart. The high priest is a type of Christ. He has all his people, all his children, they hang close and near to his heart. This is what is represented in the high priest going into the holy place once a year but he had that breast plate upon him and it represents the whole church, all the election of grace. I remember reading a long time ago now, I believe it was Dr Gill, and the same in John Owen, that when the Son is before his Father, they said, let us not run away with the idea that he is constantly up and down on his knees in front of his Father. They said, it is not like that, he is always represented as sitting at the right hand of the Father. But what it does mean is that when a poor, guilty sinner comes confessing the name of Christ,

confessing their sinfulness, their wretchedness and that their hope "is built on nothing less Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;" he looks on his Son and he receives that poor sinner in the glorious person of his Son, their great high priest, the mediator. What a wonderful picture that is of our great high priest, our Lord Jesus Christ who is passed into the heavens and sitteth at the right hand of the Father and the Father receives the church in the precious blood and righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels." What a wonderful precious truth that is. There is a piece in Matthew chapter 10, verses 32 and 33, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." What a solemn thought, if we deny Christ, but here it is if we confess Christ. Christ will confess all the names of his people, that is what it says here, but we also confess his name here upon earth, when we speak of his love to us, his everlasting love. If we deny him, "But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."

In the epistle to the Romans 10, verse 8 it speaks there concerning confession and confessing the name of Christ, "But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." May the Lord add his blessing to these few remarks that we have made.