

## Desiring God Pt.1-The Call of Christ to His Church, March 8, 2021

Tonight we start a new series. This overarching theme or idea behind this series the desire for God to “pour out His Spirit”. How many of us have heard the phrase before?

I personally have become highly involved in studying and pondering the “why” behind why we don’t see as many miracles today and signs and wonders as the church in Acts saw back in the beginning of the church. To immediately answer that question at least in part, I find the following observations helpful, at least from an American Perspective.

- 1) The birth of the church was a radical and supernatural act of God whereby He supernaturally empowered men and women to proclaim the Gospel and literally give everything they had for Christ and His call upon their life.
- 2) There was a hunger back then that I think we do not have today in Western Culture and this must change
- 3) In American particularly but in Western civilization in general, we have so much medicine, so many amenities, and so much to comfort us that we literally have NO NEED. We have created idols out of the things that were meant to be simple pleasure’s. We have traded a deep, intimate, spirit-powered life with and in God for things of this world in pursuit of personal pleasure and self-focused happiness. You may think this is how the world things, but this is how the church thinks too.
- 4) God is ultimately the one who gives gifts to His people for service in the church and evangelism, so we may only see certain gifts or certain things in the church because of this.
- 5) God is doing miraculous things in the world and we just don’t see all of it.
- 6) Here is where it ultimately hits the nail on the head. Christianity has undergone many political, cultural and religious changes. This created and still does create disunity. Why do you think we have so many Christian denominations? That wasn’t supposed to happen! Why do you think so many revival’s have happened in certain periods of time? Because every revival, no matter the denominational background had two things in common: repenting and believing in Jesus for salvation, and being filled with His Spirit!

There could be much more than these, but these are just some places to start. I can also mention, and I should, that a couple hundred years after Christ, the church under Roman rule was still spreading and supernatural things were still occurring. Just read accounts of the apostolic fathers.

This series is not intended to focus on the “why” but rather bring a Biblical focus on what God desires for His church, and what we see biblically as the results of intimate communion with Him, and what communion without Him also looks like.

This series is called: Desiring God

This series will be given in the following weeks as such:

- 1) Christ’s Call to His Church
- 2) Hungering for God and His righteousness (vertical relationship)
- 3) Living in Humility (horizontal relationship)
- 4) Throwing off doubt-miracles can still happen (prep for Easter)
- 5) Easter Break
- 6) Throwing off Doubt-He can use me! (The Risen Christ prepared His disciples for work)
- 7) Praying God’s Will

- 8) Praying in Faith
- 9) Connected to the Source-being filled with God's Spirit

Part 1-Christ's Call to His Church: The 7 Churches in Revelation

**Revelation 2:1-3:22 (READ)**

It is important to note that there is a treasure trove of information to dive into here. We could look at every church individually and why Christ said what He said, however what we are instead going to do is show the overall arching themes of what God says to all the churches.

\*\*7 is the number of perfection and completion in the Bible. There are 7 churches God writes to and while they were actual geographical areas in the middle east surrounding the Mediterranean, they ultimately represent every church alive today in the world.\*\*

\*\*\*There are two of these churches that I see greatly line up with American churches- Sardis and Laodicea. We will be spending specific time reading their accounts tonight.\*\*\*

(CHART)

Why this series?

-God spoke to me recently and gave me two words

1) Habakkuk 3:17-19

2) "I am going to strengthen what remains" (these similar words are found in Revelation)

I believe God is waking His people up all over America over the state of the church. All of us here tonight is a perfect example of that. I also believe that as His church wake's up, He is coming to strengthen her by His Spirit to deal with hard times coming, and/or to spread the Gospel like never before! To be empowered, filled with His Spirit, and ready to do whatever we are called to do!

Sardis-comfrotable and complacent-inaction

Reputation-the only reputation we should have is that we are obedient to God and fear Him above anything man may have to say of us

Works- our works are not complete! Our churches in America are full of idle people punching in and punching out of church services when we have needs to be met, the Gospel to spread, and people hurting in the church who need the gifts God wants to give those who could help them!

Remember-What was your first reaction coming to Christ? I cried. I was 7. I knew I was changed and I was glad!

Laodecia-one foot in the world, one foot in the church-acting according to the world-idolatrous

PRIDEFUL-Rich, Prospered, I need nothing...

God says we are potable, poor, blind, naked.

Riches and accumulation of "things" blind us to our spiritual state in an eternal picture.

Just ask Job how important things were...and He was righteous!!!!

How do we trade in our self-focus for God's riches? Through His grace and seeing the treasure Christ is!

In 4 out of the 7 churches Jesus tells them to repent.

Q: How do we view repentance?

In getting ready to close I want to give the best portrayal of what John is seeing and hearing.

**Revelation 1:9-20.**

**\*\*\*A Holy God was about to give a holy word (or a call) to His church\*\*\***

In the midst of these 7 churches we see encouragement, we see rebuke, and we see promises.

Let's end by focusing on some of those.

Sardis and Laodicea (the blessing of obedience)

**Rev. 3:3-6, Rev. 3:21**

White garments (purity), names in the book of life (eternally enrolled in heaven), sitting with Jesus on the throne (equal inheritance of glory and honor Jesus has).