

Becoming An Overcomer, 1.20.06

Review

Overcomer's must climb the mountain of....

1. Spiritual Apathy
2. Suffering
3. Tolerance or Compromise of sin
4. False Teaching
5. Activity over intimacy (3.1-6)
 - a. Background of community – known as a wild, party town; living in the shadow of its fading glory; famous cemetery, large wool & fabric industry
 - b. Condition – it has a reputation of being alive...past moves of God...influence in the community...but the culture's influence on the church had made it impotent....they had activity, but no intimacy. I say that b/c of 3.4. There are those who are walking with Jesus (intimacy) and the culture isn't impacting their walk with God (dressed in white).
 - i. Two critical items:
 1. compromising with the culture which effects our intimacy with God. I spent time on that last week. Two specific sins of this culture: Popularity and prominence. You want to be liked and be first. Here's the problem with both if you truly follow Jesus you probably will be neither.
 2. having activity with no intimacy; Like a fruit tree that at one time produced fruit, but b/c there's been no rain and the weather is hot now there is no fruit...leaves, but no fruit. How do you know you have activity with no intimacy?
 - a. The things of God have lost their taste. You do them, but it's driven by habit rather than desire. If you find God and the

things of God dry & boring, it's not b/c
God is dry and the things of the kingdom
are boring

- b. You find yourself always tired and you just want things to be over. You're always looking for an escape.
 - c. You have a critical attitude towards people and situations (grace factor is missing)
 - d. There is no dynamic flow of the Holy Spirit – explain.
 - e. Sin doesn't bother you as much.
 - f. You get irritated at those who are zealous for the Lord.
 - g. Your world centers on you or your family. You don't have a lot of drive to help others.
 - h. Your language, actions, responses get looser.
 - i. Doing activity with nothing being poured back into your life. The orange tree has to have sun light, nutrients and water to maintain a healthy life-cycle.
 - j. The mistake is addressing the activity without addressing intimacy. Some people think stepping out of ministry is the answer to barrenness, but the truth is once you step out of ministry, you're still barren. Stopping the activity without addressing the influence of the culture on intimacy with Christ. Burn out comes from many places – lack of intimacy; serving in the wrong place; long hard stretch.
 - k. Qualify some of the above
- c. Jesus' words – Don't you love Jesus' words? (3.2–3) He is so direct; he will comfort our hurts, but not coddle our sins

(consider his response to Thyatira & Philedelphia) he confronts our compromise....tell him "Thank you." He's not our enemy...he's our truest friend!!! (Like Simon Cowell of American Idol not mincing words so the person doesn't live in a delusion that the person can become something)

- i. Wake up...twice in Sardis' history they had been overtaken by an enemy force b/c they went to sleep and thought no one could take the city. They might have been thinking the same spiritually.
 - ii. strengthen...turn resolutely in a certain direction. All hands on deck!!! The ship has been hit and is under attack and you need to get out of your bunk and begin addressing these issues.
 - iii. remember...The Word & revelations imparted to them.
 - iv. obey...Pray all you want, but we must put our faith into action by obedience. There's a time to pray and there's time to obey or clean house, ie, kings of Judah hearing the word of the Lord and throwing out the idols and confronting leaders in sin. Aggressive action. Do what the Word says; go where the Living Word says go; respond to his Spirit inside of you
 - v. repent – turn back to God
- d. Jesus' warning – removal of his presence at an unexpected time (3.3); we can't keep going back to previous moves of God we need fresh bread (living Words) every day. We thank God for the past, but we press ahead for His presence in the present.
 - e. Jesus' promise – the Message, "Conquerors will march in the victory parade, their names indelible in the book of life. I'll lead them up and present them by name to my Father and His angels."
6. Obedience despite hardship (3.7–13)
 7. Self-sufficiency – (I believe this church best represents the American church).

- a. Background of the community – rich banking type community(earthquake destroyed, but didn't need money from Rome to rebuild); famous eye ointment; located on a critical trade route; known for black wool; had no natural water supply and water supplied by aquaduct → they knew how to compromise b/c they couldn't defend their city from an invading force; NOTE HOW JESUS ADDRESSES MANY OF THESE THINGS
- b. Condition of the church – like all the other churches look how the culture negatively impacted the church. JESUS HAS NOT ONE GOOD THING TO SAY ABOUT THIS CHURCH, UNLIKE THE OTHERS . Jesus does say some good things but not about the believers
 - i. Hot & cold is in reference to the hot springs of Hierapolis & the cold waters from Colossae. Like the water flowing down the aquaduct they were lukewarm.
 - ii. Verse 17 is the key. Self-sufficiency. You think by having resources and financial prominence puts you in a better spiritual position. The reason you are lukewarm is because you are self-sufficient. Here's what happens: When by our actions or words, we say to the Lord I can do this on my own the Lord let's us experience life on our own and we have nothing to offer. Our lives become ineffective neither cold nor hot.
 - iii. Self sufficient Christians & churches
 - 1. Don't recognize their true condition without Christ...would admit they are sinner(s), but see themselves as having a spiritual cold rather than spiritual cancer.
 - 2. Don't have genuine humility...desire to have the praise and admiration of others.
 - 3. Don't give glory to God for His provision – talent, ability, resources, relationships
 - 4. Do many things without the permission of the Holy spirit; they do things in their own strength

5. Think that increase and acceptance by others are always signs of God's favor (the church Jesus favored most was the weakest & possibly smallest, Philadelphia). Equate outward success with God's favor.
 6. Think the life of holiness is in some way optional for them.
 7. Feel like they have a lot to offer, but don't see their blindspots.
 8. Find it hard to let go and rest in the sufficiency of Christ. No contentment...you have to keep moving...
 9. Solomon is perfect example of self-sufficiency. He started out humble and dependant, began to compromise, had great wealth & huge influence, and went further & further from God. The people who have difficulty with self sufficiency usually have one or more of these characteristics – educated, lots of initiative, wealthy and/or have prominence, that's like everyone in this room.
- iv. Poor not rich
 - v.
- c. Jesus' rebuke (3.17b-18)
 - i. Poor not rich -> buy from me gold
 - ii. Naked not clothed -> buy my clothes to clothe your nakedness
 - iii. Blind not clear sighted - > buy my eye medicine so you can see
 - d. Jesus' encouragement (3.19-20)
 - i. V.19 - Isn't this a great verse! It is a key in determining if you're a believer
 - ii. V.20 - This is to believers. By our self-sufficiency, we've booted Christ out of the church. We said, "We don't need you; we've got it under control..."
 - e. Jesus' promise (3.21)

- i. Authority to reign. A true place of prominence. The Spirit often gives you exactly what sinful desire you want and all the negative consequences. If we walk in self-sufficiency, we'll be walking by ourselves and you have nothing to offer. our spiritual condition