

INSIGHTS

THE TALE *of* TWO CITIES

BY DR. DENNIS BURKE

When Jesus spoke to the churches in Revelation,

He addressed seven ministry leaders in seven cities where the early church had taken root. Jesus began by saying to each individual church, "To the angel of the church of..." (v. 1). The word 'angel' in the text could have been translated 'messenger' as it was in other places. The messenger to each of the churches referred to the leader or pastor of each church.

All of these churches were located in what was then Asia Minor. Today, they are all in western Turkey which is truly the Cradle of Christianity.

In 2008, I had the privilege of traveling to 5 of the 7 cities as part of a research team with my good friend Rick Renner. We stayed 5 days in Colosse, and from there we went to each of these cities.

Jesus' message to each church is so relevant to the churches and leaders today. One of the most

eye-opening discoveries for me was when we went to the ruins of Laodicea. While excavation was not complete, we could clearly see the city center with its thousand-meter-long main street made of large marble slabs. The street was lined by sidewalk arcades on each side laid with mosaic tiles and filled with hundreds of shops. Laodicea was a very wealthy city.

It was located on the route connecting Rome with Persia; consequently, there was constant traffic that produced great wealth through commerce and trade.

While I stood on the acropolis of the city, Jesus' statement from Revelation came to life. "I know your works, that you are neither cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:15-16).

Having been there, I saw that several ancient aqueducts had been built from the famous hot mineral pools of Hierapolis all of the way across the Lycos Valley to the city of Laodicea.

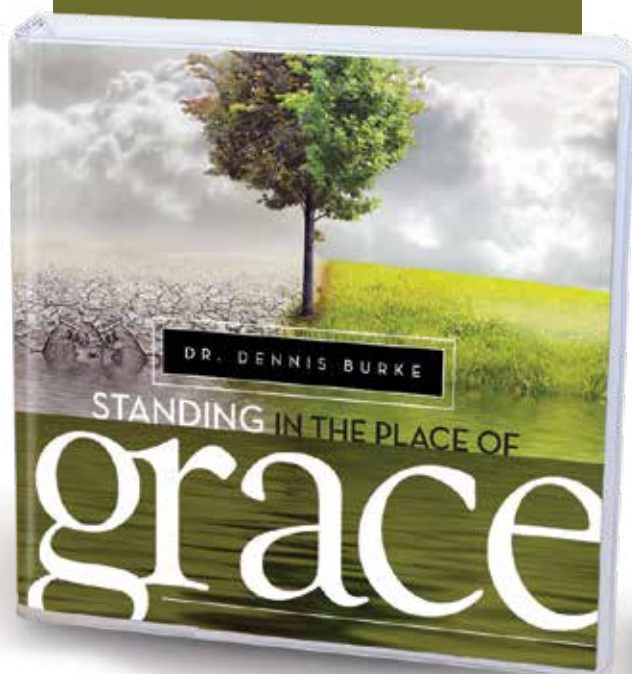


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The rich Laodiceans did not want to travel six miles to soak in the pools of Hierapolis, so they paid laborers to build aqueducts that brought some of those “healing waters” to their city.

Of course, by the time the hot water traveled across the valley it went from hot water to lukewarm and useless. The lukewarm water brought none of the healing properties with it.

Continuing to address this church, Jesus said “you are neither hot nor cold.” Jesus was referring to the cool river fed by the melting snow coming off the nearby mountaintops. The river brought the cold waters that would refresh anyone on even the hottest day.

Healing and refreshing.

Jesus has paid the price to bring both healing and refreshing to anyone who will receive them. He has provided His healing power and refreshing presence for every person, and the church is the vessel for this ministry.

The message was clear, these Christians in Laodicea were not bringing the ministry of Jesus to anyone. What had once been a voice of help and healing had become a church organization without the power or presence they were designed to possess. They were lukewarm and nauseating.

We can certainly learn and benefit from this rebuke. Remember, Jesus does not condemn people, but He does correct. This was a very powerful and pointed correction for the Laodiceans, and we need to hear it today.

Our assignment is more than to receive the goodness of God. Like Jesus, we are also to reveal the goodness of God.

The gifts of His Spirit within us bring powerful results.

The fruit born within each of us reveals the love of God in its many variations. These are all to be active in our lives.

God is raising up this generation to walk in greater power to bring healing and refreshing to people. We must make the decision to be His vessels who are both hot with healing and cold with refreshing.

Jesus also addressed the church at Philadelphia. His message to this church was very different. “He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens...” (Rev. 3:7-8).

Although He went on to say their strength was small, He commended them for not wavering.

“I know all that you’ve done. Now I have set before you a wide-open door that none can shut. For I know that you possess only a little power, yet you’ve kept my word and haven’t denied my name” (v. 8 TPT).

The Philadelphia believers kept a guard over their hearts and stood against the corrupt culture around them. They did not let go of their identity in Christ, nor run from the pressures they faced. They stood up to persecution and pressure as believers.

Denying Jesus can take on several meanings which are all very relevant to us.

For example there are some, not many, who have been Christians and turned totally away from their faith. They have rejected Jesus and apologize for leading others astray. While that is nearly impossible to fathom, Jesus warned us that some would be deceived. Don’t let your love for Him grow cold.

UPCOMING MEETINGS



GILBERT, AZ | OCTOBER 9

Living Word Gilbert | 202 S. Gilbert Road
Gilbert, AZ 85296 | 480-964-4463

MAYSVILLE, KY | OCTOBER 16

Victory Christian Center | 719 US 62
Maysville, KY 41056 | 606-759-7211

CADDO MILLS, TX | OCTOBER 29 (Ladies' Meeting)

New Life Church at Covenant Ranch
3636 FM 36 South | Caddo Mills, TX 75135 | 903-527-3099

CONROE, TX | NOVEMBER 13

Harvest Family Church | 303 Post Oak Drive
Conroe, TX 77301 | 936-756-6565

MCKINNEY, TX | NOVEMBER 27

Genesis Church | 5780 Virginia Parkway
McKinney, TX 75071 | 972-562-9333

HOUSTON, TX | DECEMBER 4

Houston Faith Church | 5757 N. Eldridge Parkway
Houston, TX 77041 | 281-870-1010

TESTIMONIES

"We were so very privileged to have Dr. Dennis Burke with us this year. From the very beginning, it seemed as though the Lord had connected us in a genuine way for a purpose. These messages were timely for a lot of folks. Many took a bold step of faith to tear down wicked strongholds in their lives as they allowed Holy Spirit to lead them into His divine peace. What a tremendous set of meetings! I am very thankful that Dr. Burke was able to be with us to impart such beautiful revelation and minister to the people. On a personal note, it was a great honor to make this Kingdom connection with Dr. Burke. I love to hear an amazing message from the pulpit and see the Lord moving in a church service, but as a pastor, I highly value being able to meet and cultivate relationships with some of the more seasoned voices in the Body of Christ today and glean from their years of wisdom and experience. Dr. Burke was so generous with his time as I could tell that he was truly interested in getting to know me and the heartbeat of our church family so that he could minister to us in an effective and compassionate way. I will never forget that and look forward to other times the Lord will, I believe, have us come together to fulfill our Kingdom assignment here in the earth."

—Anthony Wade | Lead Pastor
Faith Building Church (Lebanon, OH)

Denying Jesus' name can take on another different yet more common meaning. To deny means to "not accept, to reject, or even to refuse something offered."

Refusing to yield to His influence and embrace His identity in our lives is also denying Him. The church in Philadelphia guarded themselves and would not give up ground.

Denying Him can also mean that we never see ourselves as He sees us, and therefore limit Him in our lives. He has opened the door into the very presence of the Father. Now we are who He says we are —

righteous in His presence. And we can do what He says we can do. He has commissioned us to go in His name.

Jesus said to the church at Philadelphia that He opened a door before them. The door is also opened before us now. No one can shut what He opens.

He shut doors that no one would be able to open.

His words to this church hold so much power:

"I'm on my way; I'll be there soon.

Keep a tight grip on what you have so no one distracts you and steals your crown. I'll make each conqueror a pillar in the sanctuary of my God, a permanent

REFUSING TO YIELD TO HIS INFLUENCE AND EMBRACE HIS IDENTITY IN OUR LIVES IS ALSO DENYING HIM.

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position of honor. Are your ears awake? Listen. Listen to the Wind Words, the Spirit blowing through the churches” (Rev. 3:11–13 MSG).

Those who conquer life’s battles are those who find their identity, impact,

and influence in Christ. They hold the line and are not giving up the ground they have obtained by faith.

The Spirit is blowing the wind of His Word through the church. Each of us in the church have the door opened

before us to step through.

So step up and step into all His name reveals. Healing, help, and hope are in you and bursting to flood through you. All is available in the power of the Name — Jesus!

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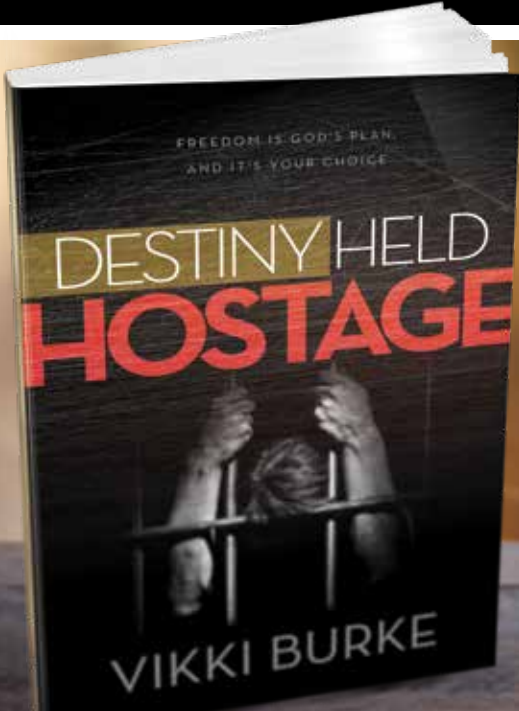
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