

Revelation 3:20 - "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person and they with me."

Many of us have heard this scripture spoken countless times out of context as a salvation scripture, opening the door to the Savior, Jesus, who offers us assurance of everlasting life. However, it is addressed to the lukewarm church in Laodicea with these words preceding the more familiar verse I just read:

"I counsel you to buy from the gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. Those whom I love, I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent."

This message is intended for believers who have grown complacent, who are neither cold nor hot. They may have "fire insurance" - the assurance of salvation through Jesus Christ - yet their hearts have moved away from Him. But the Lord is speaking of the "much more" that He desires when He tells us to pray "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done - on earth as it is in heaven."

He has saved us not just for eternity in heaven, but for Kingdom rule and reign here and now! He assures us in Rev. 3:21 that "To those who overcome, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on His throne." This is a now word! God wants to move us from simply receiving the grace that brings salvation to being governors in His Kingdom, His co-laborers for the Harvest.

He hasn't saved us to set us on a shelf, just waiting for the day when we will die and go to heaven. While the ministry of the church is to and for anyone, the ministry of the Kingdom is for "those who overcome," for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. The church's message of salvation by grace leads to heaven; the Kingdom message leads us right here and now before the Throne.

The desire of the church is for the abiding presence of Jesus within us; the desire of the Kingdom is also for Jesus to take His rightful place as the Head of the body of Christ. The testimony of the church is "I have Jesus." The testimony of the Kingdom is "Jesus has me - ALL of me." The Church operates through grace; the Kingdom puts grace into action as the members of the body take authority on earth.

When we enter the church, it is through the message of salvation, the finished work of Jesus on the cross. When we come into the fullness of His Kingdom on earth, it is by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is then that we can confidently take authority in the name of Jesus to heal the sick, raise the dead, and cast out demons.