

## Will Few be Saved? (To the Church in Sardis Pt.3)

July 19, 2018

### Revelation 3:1-6 ESV

1 And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: 'The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. "I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead.

2 Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God.

3 Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.

4 Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy.

5 The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.

6 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

### Is following Jesus easy or hard? And why only a few?

#### Luke 13:23-24 ESV

23 And someone said to him, "Lord, will those who are saved be few?" And he said to them,

24 "**Strive** (*agōnizomai* - labor fervently, struggle with difficulties and dangers, contend with an adversary, fight, enter a contest) to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able."

#### Matthew 7:13-14 ESV

13 Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.

14 For the gate is narrow and the way is hard (*thlibō* - press hard upon, a compressed way, trouble, afflict, distress) that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

### What makes the narrow gate so hard? Why do "few" find it?

#### Matthew 16:24-26 ESV

24 Then Jesus told his disciples, "**If anyone would come after me, let him deny** (*aparneomai* - to disown, abstain, deny, forget one's self, lose sight of one's self) himself and take up his cross and follow me.

25 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?

- "...take up his cross..." (Matt 16:24) or "...bear his own cross..." (Luke 14:27)
  - To follow Jesus, there is a cross that you, only you, and you alone must bear.
  - You must own this cross and embrace it as your own; no one can make the decision and take up this cross for you.

Matthew 26:42 ESV "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done."

Matthew 26:53 ESV "Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?"

- **To take up your own cross, to willingly choose to deny and die to self, means you forfeit ALL:**
  - *ownership*
  - *control*
  - *glory (credit)*
  - *desires*

**The choice to follow Jesus and surrender absolutely is a life decision, not an experiment. Don't start if you don't intend to finish.**

**Luke 14:25-33** ESV

25 Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them,

26 If anyone comes to me and **does not hate** (*miseō - hate, detest, to love less*) his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and **even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.**

27 Whoever **does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.**

28 For which of you, desiring to build a tower, **does not first sit down and count** (*psēphizō - compute, calculate, reckon, count with pebbles*) **the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?**

29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30 saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'

31 Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, **will not sit down first and deliberate** (*bouleuō - to deliberate with one's self, take counsel, resolve, purpose, determine*) **whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand?**

32 And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.

33 So therefore, **any one of you who does not renounce** (*apotassō - separate one's self, forsake, renounce, withdraw from, to say adieu*) **all that he has cannot be my disciple.**

**Colossians 4:14** ESV [AD 60-61]

14 Luke the beloved physician greets you, **as does Demas.**

**2 Timothy 4:10** ESV [AD 66-67]

10 For Demas, **in love with this present world, has deserted me** and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.

**To faithfully finish your earthly course is not only the decision to surrender absolutely, but also the required perseverance to endure and push through the life-long battle against the flesh.**

**Galatians 5:17 NASB**

17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

**Romans 7:22-23 NASB**

22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,

23 but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

**1 Corinthians 9:24-27 ESV**

24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it.

25 Every athlete exercises self-control (*egkrateuomai - to be self-controlled, exhibit self-government, conduct oneself temperately*) in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.

26 So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air.

27 But I discipline (*hypōpiazō - beat black and blue, subdue, keep under, keep in subjection, keep down, buffet*) my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

**1 Peter 2:11 ESV**

11 Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.

- *Enduring faithfully to the end of life is absolute surrender and victory over the flesh is one day at a time, one decision at a time.*
- *Backsliding is the inevitable result of entertaining the passions of the flesh, one decision at a time.*
- *Those who flirt with and entertain the carnal desires of their flesh and this world are gambling with the eternal salvation of their souls, and there is no guarantee - some may win but most will lose.*
- *It is far easier to control your abstinence, but it is impossible for you to control your flesh when it is inflamed by small indulgences.*
- *There can be no compromise and no truce with the flesh.*

**Luke 13:23-27 ESV**

23 And someone said to him, "Lord, will those who are saved be few?" And he said to them,

24 "Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

25 When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, open to us,' then he will answer you, 'I do not know where you come from.'

26 Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.'

27 But he will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!'

- **"We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets."**
  - *Jesus recognizes and approves of no other relationship but one of absolute surrender.*
  - *Without a relationship of absolute surrender, you are rejected by Jesus as a "worker of evil."*

## Is following Jesus easy or hard?

Matthew 11:28-30 ESV

28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

- Reaching and maintaining the place of absolute surrender (*taking up your own cross to die to self*) is hard; in fact, it is impossible by your own strength or effort.
- Once you reach and maintain the place of absolute surrender, His yoke is easy, the burden is light and He carries the full weight and responsibility of your life.

Romans 8:14 NASB

14 For all who are being led (*ago - to lead by laying hold of, attach oneself as an attendant, bring, move, impel, drive, carry*) by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

Hebrews 6:4-8 ESV

4 For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit,

5 and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come,

6 and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.

7 For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God.

8 But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.