

What the Book of Revelation Teaches You About Friendship With God

We have been covering one of the most important emerging issues of all time—the sounding of the seventh trumpet in Revelation. “Our God Reigns”—this is the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom. Even though much from this prophecy has yet to be fulfilled, according to the unfolding timeline, we are coming to the time for this last message to go forth across the earth. What we do not know is how long this will take to unfold or be completed.

Last week, we covered how the basis of this gospel is the King Himself. We are not just proclaiming the coming of a new system, but we are proclaiming the coming of the Lord Jesus Himself. This is crucial to keep in mind. If the coming kingdom gets reduced to a system, or just principles, then we fall far short of the message. We can have the best form of government, but we can still have bad government if good people are not in it. The Lord builds on people, not just systems or principles. The method He demonstrated from the time He walked the earth is to not just seek to change people’s behavior, but to change hearts so that people do the right thing for the right reason. As the historian Will Durant observed, “Caesar sought to change men by changing institutions, but Jesus changed institutions by changing men.”

For this reason, it is important to understand what the Lord is doing. Even more important is to understand why. This is where we grow into true friendship with God. We want to be obedient to Him as our King in all things, but He is looking for more than just obedience from His friends—He is looking for us to be of one mind and heart with Him.

We must have faith in Him, and in the power and authority of His kingdom, to demonstrate the power and authority of His kingdom. We must always keep in mind that we seek to build people's faith and trust in Him, not us. The first-century apostles did this by preaching "Jesus Christ and the resurrection from the dead." That was their whole message. It is the apostolic message, yet it has rarely been preached since their time.

The message of the gospel is about a person, not just concepts and principles. It is also about His overcoming death. The devil controls men by fear, and the ultimate fear is the fear of death. If the fear of death is broken, then all the other yokes of fear will be easy to break. These yokes must be broken for a person to come under the lordship of Jesus. If fear is controlling us, then fear is still our lord in place of Christ. So the purpose of our message is to compel men to believe in the Lord and live by faith in Him in place of the controlling fear.

Of course, this begins with us having faith in Him and freedom from fear. These are both things that we grow in. In 2 Corinthians 13:5 (NASB), we are told to "Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith." How do we test ourselves this way? There are ways that we evaluate our spiritual growth, and there are ways that we evaluate relationships. These do not need to be complicated, but if we really care about something, we will do this.

A primary way we know that we are getting close to a person is that we know their voice. I could give you all of the technical details about my wife's voice—she is a soprano, speaks in so many decibels, with a certain tone and so forth.—but I doubt that you would be able to pick her out of a group of women talking just by knowing these facts. However, she can be talking in a group of dozens of women, and I will know where she is because I know her voice so well and we have spent so much time together. That is the only true way that we

can get to know the voice of the Lord, too—spending time with Him.

Knowing His voice is crucial. He said in John 10 that His sheep follow Him because they know His voice. In Romans 10:17 we're told, "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The faith to do His works comes by hearing Him. Just as Jesus only did what He saw the Father do, the faith to do the works of Christ come from getting His orders to do them.

This is why a core devotion of our ministry has been to help all believers know the voice of the Lord. We do this by being resolute in our main purpose as human beings to love Him. If we love Him we will be driven to get closer to Him and do His will. {eoa}

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