

What type are you?

You are the church. We, you and I together, make the church. A body that congregates to worship God. The dictionary gives the definition: a body or organization of religious believers and as the whole body of Christians.

Acts 11:26 (New International Version)

26and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

A building does not make a church. Without you a building is just a building, if empty it can become a home, office or community center. A body of believers is what makes the church. So if you and I are the church, what type of church are we?

Jesus told Peter, upon this rock I will build my church. At that moment Jesus prophesied over Peter and anointed him to be a leader. Paul writes to several churches in his epistles giving them encouragement and discipline. Just as Jesus encouraged, but disciplined Peter along with the other disciples during the three years they followed Jesus.

John in Revelation gives a message from God to seven churches or Lampstands. These are Holy Spirit churches that Jesus wants to get this message he's sending through John--not just any church that calls themselves a church. Some he gave encouragement and some discipline. Not only do you have behaviors as one person, but a body of people will adapt behaviors as a group.

Jesus starts by identifying the church, letting them know why he's proud of them. Then tells what their missing and, lastly, he tells them what needs to happen in order for them to get things right in the body. If they don't he will remove the holy spirit from the church. If we do listen he gives us sure promises.

We are going to make an outline of each Lampstand listing ability, behaviors, practices, corrective action and his promise to each one as we read through them.

In Revelation 2 we start with:

The Church at Ephesus. The Loveless Church.

Ability:

He who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands.

Behaviors:

I know your works, labor, patience

You don't tolerate evil

You identify false apostles

Persevered and not lost patience in working for me

You've endured hardships and not given up

Practices:

You've lost your first love – You're not doing these things anymore because you love me

Favor:

You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans = Prideful in position the apostles had placed him in and started his own religion.

Corrective Action:

Repent

Promise:

To him who hears and overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God

This church was making sure they did things according to what was right and wrong. That was good, but they had forgotten to have agape love behind what they were doing. They were getting caught up in the do's and don'ts. But the one thing Jesus was proud about was they had not become prideful in their do's and don'ts. Jesus asked them to get back to their first love. It's OK to do things correctly, but don't forget why you're doing it.

The Church of Smyrna. The Persecuted Church.

Ability:

These things says the First and the Last, who was dead and came to life.

Behaviors:

I know your works, tribulation and poverty

I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not—they're of Satan

Practices:

Feared suffering and persecution

They were allowing circumstance to rule their lives and church

Future:

The devil will throw you into prison that you may be tested

You will have tribulation ten days

Corrective Action:

Do not fear suffering

Promise:

Be faithful and hang in there you will receive a crown of life

Overcome and you will not hurt, you will be with me

John said in verse 9, “but you are rich.” Jesus wanted them to get out of the poverty mindset and think on God's provision. Jesus further said, in verse 10 “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.” He was saying Don't focus on the persecution, it's going to come and he gave them the length of time to give them hope. He was saying focus on hope not the ten days you will have to endure the persecution. In verse 11 Jesus says, “He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.”

The Church at Pergomas. The Compromising Church.

Ability:

These things says, He who has the sharp two-edged sword.

Behaviors:

I know your works and where you live—where Satan's throne is

Holding onto Jesus and did not deny the faith even when Antipas was killed by Satan

Practices:

You have some holding onto the doctrine of putting stumbling blocks before other Christians
To do things they shouldn't and are encouraging them to commit sexual sins
Your encouraging the doctrine of the Nicolaitans – which Jesus hates

Corrective Action:

Repent or I will fight against them with the sword of my mouth, says Jesus

Promise:

To him that hears and overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat, I will give him a white stone and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.

This church was not correcting those that were encouraging sin. They were not drawing a line between sin and righteousness. They were encouraging things that they shouldn't and, explicitly, sexual immorality and had become prideful in their leadership positions. Remember the Nicolaitans were making more of their positions than showing the love of God and drawing a line on sin. It doesn't pay to compromise. Jesus said, if this isn't dealt with, you are not going to like what I have to say.

The Church of Thyatira. The Corrupt Church.

Ability:

These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire and his feet like fine brass.

Behaviors:

I know your works of love, service, faith and your patience.

And as for your works, the last are more than the first

Practices:

You've allowed Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce my servants to commit sexual sin and eat things sacrificed to idols.

I gave her time to repent from her sin and she did not.

Corrective Action:

I will cast Jezebel, the prophetess, on her sick bed and those who commit adultery with her into hard times unless they repent.

I will kill her children with death and all the churches shall know that I am he who searches the minds and hearts.

I will give to each one of you according to your works.

Promise:

To the rest of you who have not followed Satan I will not curse, but hold fast until come He who overcomes and keeps my works until the end not him I will give power over the nations--"He shall rule them with a rod of iron. They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels---

I also have received from my Father and I will give him the morning star!

The Jezebel John is talking about here in this scripture is an actual woman that attended this church and called herself a prophetess. John is not talking about the Jezebel of the old testament. The church was allowing her to have leadership in the church because she drew in a crowd, told the people what they wanted to hear instead of teaching what was right. Jesus was saying get your leadership corrected or I'll do it for you. But at the same time he commended those that had stayed faithful to the teachings of the Apostles and continued to worship without partaking of Jezebel's doctrine or becoming seduced by her influence.

The Church at Sardis. The Dead Church.

Ability:

These things says he who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars.

Behaviors:

I know your works, that you have a name and that you are alive---but your dead

Practices:

Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die for I have not found your works perfect before God.

Corrective Action:

Remember what you've received and heard, hold fast and repent.

If you do not watch I will come like a thief in the night and you will not know the hour when I come

Promise:

You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy

He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before his angels.

The Sardis church was advertising themselves as an alive church. Jesus said, "BUT YOU ARE DEAD." You're not being careful with your walk with me. You're not staying in the word and keeping yourself from becoming unfruitful. Jesus was saying stop being the "you, me and no more" type of church and get out and bear some fruit. Draw some people in and show them my love. Jesus said, you'd better be careful you are going to wait around and not do anything and I'm going to come like a thief in the night. Do you really want to take that risk?

The Church of Philadelphia. The Faithful Church.

Ability:

These things says, "He who is holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens."

Behaviors:

I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it

Practices:

For you have a little strength, have kept my word, and have not denied my name

Corrective Action:

Just keep loving me

Promise:

Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet and to know that I have loved you. Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold I come quickly, hold fast what you have that no one may take your crown.

He who overcomes I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name

Jesus was commending this church for their perseverance in keeping to the statues and commandments that he's laid down for us. He says, for a church of little strength you have kept my word and not denied my name. You've been able to open the doors of my blessings because of your actions. Whatever doors I've opened for you, no one, not Satan or a circumstance can shut the doors of my blessings because you've opened them by your love for me.

The Church of Laodiceans. The Lukewarm Church.

Ability:

These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God.

Behaviors:

I know your works, you are neither cold or hot, because you've not chosen; I will spit you out.

Practices:

Because you say I am rich; have become wealthy, and have need of nothing—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked

Corrective Action:

I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see

As many as I love, I rebuke and repent.

Promise:

Behold I stand at the door and knock if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Jesus says, you're just existing. You're not taking a stand one way or the other because you want to be too politically correct or in a comfort zone. You need to choose. Do you love the world or do you love the things of God? I've asked you to invest in my statues, commandments, and teachings so that you can live the blessed life. You've claimed my blessings, and become wealthy, but yet you're not taking a firm stand. Who do you really love? If you love me, then show and tell others of my love. But because you can't profess My name, I can't profess you name to the Father. I can't say you're part of the family that loves him. You are then of Satan's church, because you can't be in both families.

What type are you? Have you lost your first love? Do you work because you really and truly love God?

Do you talk more about your persecutions than of God's ability to deliver? Have you become used to the drama of persecution that you're now the hero instead of God?

Have you compromised to have the favor of men instead of God's favor? Would you rather hear things that please you than the things that will be improvement into your life?

Have you become corrupt in your belief? Would you rather have your way more so than living righteously? Are you accepting teachings that are not true so that you can have your own way in life?

Are you dead to helping others? Are you saying its all I can do to do for my family?

Are you being faithful and not denying that Jesus is alive and loves everyone?

Can you really choose between being hot or cold? Are you willing to take a stand for Christ?

What are your abilities, behaviors, and practices for God? What corrective actions do you need to incorporate to become a faithful church?

The promises are for everyone that will hear and overcome.