

Session 7 Encountering Jesus: Overcoming Temptation, Part 2

INTRODUCTION

We're on Page 49, Roman Numeral IV. We're on the same set of notes we were on in the last session: "Encountering Jesus: Overcoming Temptation." Here's the specific point. These are the four rewards of which Jesus said, "If you understand them, they'll motivate you to say no to immorality and idolatry."

I believe these four rewards are, not the whole answer, but part of the answer to the church in America resisting immorality. To see what Jesus devised, remember that He thought of these rewards Himself. There are eighteen of them in Revelation 2-3. Again, each one of these rewards is just a hint, just a phrase. It's like the Holy Spirit saying, "I have a lot more in the Bible on it. Come after Me; search it out."

Some folks look at these phrases and just quickly read over them. I feel the Spirit saying, "I have much more from Genesis to Revelation to tell you about each one of those eighteen rewards." The amazing idea is that Jesus thought these up for us. He was thinking of you when He thought of these rewards. He's saying, "You'll really like them."

Let's read it: Revelation 2:17 and then verse 26 and verse 28. This is addressed to the same two churches, Pergamus and Thyatira. Verse 17: "To him who overcomes. . ." (Rev. 2:17). Don't forget that phrase, "To him who overcomes." This is describing the believer who will resist, who will say no to immorality and idolatry. Even if they fail, they rise back up and say, "No, no, I'm not giving in. I'm not making peace with and living in those sins. I will resist them all my days."

These aren't just rewards given automatically to every believer. Our salvation is a free gift. We get into the eternal city, the New Jerusalem, as a free gift. We get into the family as a free gift. These are for people who Jesus said resist specific temptations and persist in resisting. He said, "There's something I want to give them for doing that, because I want to show them how I feel about the way they loved Me in continually resisting those sins." When you resist immorality, when your emotions, your mind, your body wants to yield but you say no because you love Jesus, did you know He takes that personally? He looks at you and says, "I take that personally. Thank you; you love Me."

Your mind has these ideas, your emotions are stirred, your body is saying this and that, but you say, "I love You, Jesus. No to those!"

Jesus says, "That moves Me and I'll never forget it, ever. I'll remember forever that you loved Me that way."

Beloved, when we know that it's personal to Him, we're far more motivated to stay steady, because He takes it personally when we do stay steady.

Let's read these four rewards specifically. There are eighteen total, but there are four related to immortality. He said, "I will give some of the hidden manna to eat" (Rev. 2:17b). The reason He said *some* is because the vastness is eternal. There's an eternal supply. This manna will go on forever and ever. We'll look at it later.

Number two: “I will give him the white stone with a new name written on it” (Rev. 2:17c, paraphrased). It’s hidden manna and a white stone with a new name.

“TO HIM I WILL GIVE POWER OVER THE NATIONS”

Now look at verse 26: “To him I will give power over the nations—‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron’” (Rev. 2:26, NKJV). He goes on in that verse to say, “He will rule them with Me.” The point isn’t that we would rule; the point is that we would rule in partnership and under His authority in proximity to Him. I don’t just want to be over something; I want to do it with Him. I want to be in the staff meetings with Him in the age to come. I know He’ll have a lot of them. He’ll bring His team together over different countries and talk to them. I want to be in some of those meetings. I want to see what He wants to do; I want to be a part of it with Him. Not everyone is going to be over nations, but overcomers will be over them in various ways.

Everyone who loves Jesus is saved, but not everyone saved will be over nations or cities or be in government. Not everyone is in the government. I want to be in the government because I want to rule with Him; not so I can strut in front of you, but so I can sit with Him around the table and plan and talk to Him about what He wants to happen in whatever little area I’m involved in.

I say, “Lord, I want to be there. I want to do it with You.”

“I WILL GIVE HIM THE MORNING STAR”

All four of them are big, but this next one’s a big one. “I will give him the morning star” (Rev. 2:28). Then He goes on later in the book of Revelation and says, “John, I’ll solve the mystery: I’m the morning star. It’s Me I will give them more of. I’m the morning star, John” (Rev. 22:16, paraphrased).

When He said, “I will give them the morning star,” John might have thought, “OK, I don’t really know what all of these are.” I don’t know what John thought, but Jesus solved that morning star one clearly, saying, “It’s Me I will give them.”

A LIFELONG JOURNEY OF CULTIVATING YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF REWARDS

I want to encourage you to go on a lifetime journey; I’m on this journey to cultivate understanding of eternal rewards. I have been on this journey for years. Meaning, I really care about understanding the age to come. You won’t make sense of this age in its lusts, its prosperity, its pressures; you can’t make sense of this age without some understanding of the age to come. This age is confusing if all you see is prosperity, pressures, pleasures, and if you don’t see it connected, it’s very confusing to interpret it. The New Testament anchors our understanding of this age and our understanding of the age to come.

Here’s the problem: it takes time to grow in that understanding. You have to study it. There’s much in the Bible on it. Over the years, I’ve found almost no one talking about it. We’re talking about how to get a bigger ministry now, having to get more friends, more money, and making life easier now. It doesn’t make sense if it’s not anchored into those rewards in another age. It really doesn’t. Our interpretation of what’s happening right in front of our eyes is off.

AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO STUDY THE REWARDS IN THE SCRIPTURES

Paragraph B. I have several principles that we’ll look at for a moment before we look at the rewards themselves. Again, it’s a hint; it’s just the briefest statement on rewards. My real goal isn’t to explain these rewards in great detail. There’s much about them I don’t know, but there is a bit I do know from the Bible. I’m speculating on

some of it; I'm not sure it's this, but it might be. The real thing I'm after is to get you connected, committed: "I will study these eighteen rewards! I will learn them, because Jesus thought of them Himself when He was thinking about us. If He thought of them, and He thinks I want them, I have a feeling I really do want them if I understand them."

Most believers greatly underestimate the glory of these rewards. Even when you read the eighteen, you read them kind of quickly; we think they're little, simple things. For example, He says, "I will give you a white stone with your name on it." I read commentators and it just leaves me so empty. "Well, the white stone is a little pebble and He'll write your name on it." The Jesus of the resurrection who created the New Jerusalem is going to give me a little, dull, white rock?

"Hey, Mike, thanks. Here," and He throws me the rock and it says *Mike* on it.

I put it in my pocket: "Thanks, Jesus. That was cool." I don't think so. He created the New Jerusalem. That white stone is awesome! Trust me. It's not a boring, little, dull, white rock. I promise you that. That I assure you.

WHATEVER YOU CAN IMAGINE, OUR REWARD IS FAR MORE GLORIOUS

Principle number one. Paragraph B. The eternal rewards. I don't understand even a fraction of where they might go in glory, but I'm trying to understand them by using the Bible. Eternal rewards will far surpass our deepest imaginings. The most creative producers in Hollywood have never even dreamed of where these things are going.

How do I know that? Paul said it in 1 Corinthians 2: "Eye has not seen, no one has even heard with their ears the story of how great it will be" (1 Cor. 2:9-10, paraphrased). You get the greatest storyteller, you get Steven Spielberg times ten, and other guys who are even better than him, multiply it by a hundred, and never has it entered their minds; the story has never been told of what God has prepared. It's so much greater. Is that exciting? He prepared it thinking about you. This is the way He loves us.

There could be more than eighteen rewards; these are just the eighteen Jesus identifies. They correspond in glory to the New Jerusalem. How glorious is the New Jerusalem, the city of precious stones, glittering like diamonds and the glory of God! These rewards will have that kind of glory. They'll correspond to that. They'll correspond to the resurrected body. You'll have a physical, material, resurrected body with the glory of the power of God in your body, in your mind, and in your heart. It won't be some dull rock that you put in your pocket. That doesn't correspond at all with the Jesus who designed the New Jerusalem.

Here's my point: each reward is spectacular. When you read the commentary that says the rock is a little stone and He puts your name on it, say, "No!" It's spectacular.

I began to ask the Lord. I don't have the answer; I'm not claiming special revelation. I say, "Lord, I want to know everything possible about these eighteen rewards." They excite me; I daydream about them. I'm in the prayer room and I'm thanking Jesus. "I want to know You as the One who gives me the white stone. I want to understand what's in Your heart towards me related to the white stone and the hidden manna. I want to know You as the Jesus who is the morning star who will reveal Yourself to me." I talk to Him related to these rewards. I really want them.

Principle number two. Paragraph C. They're only given in abbreviated form. I've already said that. The implications are far bigger than that little phrase. We can develop our understanding a little. We're only going to get a little more, but a little more understanding is a whole lot more than just a little, dull, white rock to put in your pocket. A little more understanding will take you a long way.

I know one thing: Jesus is incredibly generous. He's incredibly creative. He remembers every act of love and He pays so well when we do so little. That's the Jesus we love and He's the One who thought of the rewards.

EXPRESSIONS OF HOW HE FEELS ABOUT THE WAY WE LOVED HIM

Paragraph E. Principle three. His rewards are expressions of how He feels about the way we loved Him. I've said that several times. People imagine themselves to be more humble than Jesus. They say, "I don't want rewards; I just want Him. I just want a little cabin on the edge of glory."

I say, "I disagree. Jesus taught on rewards more than any other man in the Bible. Are you saying Jesus was giving false motivation because Jesus didn't get it? I think *you* don't get it! I think you'll want those rewards."

Jesus taught on these rewards more than anyone else. People say, "I don't want to be over people, strutting around, showing everyone how great I am."

I say, "That's not what the rewards are about. Get rid of your paradigm of pride about rewards. It's about proximity to Jesus. It's about Him expressing the way He felt about the way you loved Him. You don't want those rewards? You don't want those expressions of how He feels when you say no to immorality even a little, whether in the small beginnings or the big tests, and it moves Him, and He wants to tell you about that? You don't care?"

"Well, maybe I do care."

Trust me, you care. You just don't get what the rewards are or you don't get why He's giving them to you. He's giving them to you because He's saying, "This is how I feel on that lonely afternoon when everyone is against you and you're depressed and tired and you were tempted and your body said yes, your mind said yes, your emotions were stirred, but you said, 'No, I love You, Jesus!' and You went the other way. Oh, I loved that day and no one else even saw you go through it." He'll never forget it.

"ONE STAR DIFFERS FROM ANOTHER STAR IN GLORY"

Paragraph F. Principle four. Every person will have a different measure. The rewards that you have will be very different from the measure of the rewards of the person next to you. They're not the same. No one is the same in this age, and you won't be the same in the age to come. Yes, salvation is free. Our entrance into the city is the same. We get it as a free gift by the blood of Jesus. The glory that the Lord gives you, in terms of the measure of your encounter with Him, your position, your function, your garments, your crowns, all of these things will differ in glory for every single person.

Some theologians don't like that. They want everyone to get the same reward, kind of like a benevolent communism system. Everything is the same, looks the same, everyone acts the same, wears the same, everything is the same and it doesn't really matter if you're obedient in this age or not.

You'll get the same anyway, so who cares? That's an absolute deception. It does matter and it will matter to you. In the age to come, it will matter to you what you did in this age and how the Lord responded to it.

Look at 1 Corinthians 15. It says this: "One star differs from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor. 15:41-42). When you look up at the Milky Way galaxy, there are one hundred billion stars in our galaxy. You can only see about 10,000 with the naked eye, so a fraction of 1 percent. By the way, there are one hundred billion galaxies; the Milky Way is only one. There are a lot of stars. Many of them are far bigger than ours.

Here's the point: Paul said, "Every single star in the whole created order is different from every other star, and it will be the same way in your resurrected bodies. You'll all be different." Some of you will have the glory of God in your resurrected body far more greatly than others. Others of you will have the glory of God in your clothing far more than others, just like angels do. Angels are all different in the spheres of glory. There are mighty angels, there are all kinds of ranks of angels, and the same is true in the resurrection. Some of you will have far more insight even in the age to come than others. Some of you will have garments far more glorious than others.

"FULL MANY A FLOWER IS BORN TO BLUSH UNSEEN"

Top of page fifty. Principle five. This is just a theory, but it's a theory based on what God is like. I think it's a sound theory. I believe that each one of these eighteen rewards has great diversity. I don't think there's only one white stone. I don't know the number, so that would be foolish to say, but there may be a thousand different expressions of the white stone.

Why do I think that? God is so creative. He is so creative, the ultimate creative designer. How do you know God is so creative? Go look at the fish in the sea. There are so many fish in the sea that humans never see. We don't eat them, we don't see them, we don't say, "Wow, God is glorious." There are so many we don't even know about. Why? God says, "I create. That's what I do; I love diversity."

There are so many flowers on the tops of mountains that no one ever sees. Some explore up there, and they find beautiful flowers that no one can see. God says, "It's just who I am; it's what I do." Stars in the sky: there are billions more than we'll ever be able to understand in this age.

The Lord says, "You guys have to get it: I'm creative. Don't think when it comes to eternal rewards I lost my creativity. My creativity will never be altered." I think all of these gifts have great diversity.

REWARDS AREN'T AUTOMATICALLY GIVEN TO EVERY BELIEVER

Number six. Paragraph H. These rewards aren't automatic to every believer. You may have some of these rewards but not others. You may have none of these rewards if you live in a certain way, even in the kingdom. You may have all of the rewards. You may have some far greater than others, in all their diversity; I don't know. Here's the point: it's a dynamic reality; it's not an automatic thing at all. It's in response to the way we loved Him.

I want to give you those six initial principles because when you read this little phrase—I'll just keep using the white stone. If you don't know how powerful He is, the God who created the New Jerusalem, if you don't know how creative and diverse and spectacular He is, you think it's just a little, white pebble with your name written

on it. That's unthinkable. This stone will be so spectacular. I'm guessing there will be so many types of these stones, just like there are so many types of jewels and precious stones. There isn't one kind of precious stone. The city of God, the New Jerusalem, is filled with precious stones of all different kinds—big ones, little ones; and even in this life, there are earrings and necklaces and the big stone the Queen of England has, the little one, the diamond, the ruby. There are so many types of stones. God has the same creativity forever that He has right now.

I'll go briefly on these because I want to spend a little more time on the white stone, just because I just want to. They're all so awesome. I get to say this over and over; this is my favorite one: the hidden manna. The other ones are as well, but the hidden manna is amazing. Jesus said, "I will give you hidden manna."

In John 6:48-51, right through the passage, He says, "I'm the manna" (John 6:51, paraphrased). He said it with His own mouth. The hidden manna is Him, the Word of God. He says, "I will feed you." He's going to give us the morning star, so food and light are different. He's talking about food for our soul. That's different than light. It's a different kind of reward. It has a different kind of impact on us when He's the morning star.

Why is it called "hidden manna"? Most of you know the manna in the physical sense, because this is the spiritual manna. It fell down from heaven when Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt (cf. Ex. 16). They were in the wilderness. For forty years they ate manna every single day except the Sabbath. The manna fell from heaven; the loaf of bread fell from the sky. What a bizarre way to go shopping every day. They would go to the place, pick up a supply of the manna, come home, eat it, fry it, bake it, microwave it. They did everything to it, I guess. They ate the manna. There are so many points that I don't want to go into.

Then Jesus comes along in John 6 and says, "You know what? That Old Testament, physical manna? It was good. It was a picture. I'm the Word of God. I'll feed you."

He's talking about the age to come, but also this age, now. The neat thing is that every one of these rewards has a small amount of application to our spiritual life in this age. Mostly it's for the age to come, but it does have application even now, a little. But let's talk about the age to come, and not so much right now. He says, "If you obey Me now, you'll have an even greater capacity for living understanding of who I am even in that age."

He's linking our capacity to feel the power of the Word of God, to understand the Word of God, to our responsiveness to resisting immorality. He links it. You can be saved and God loves you and still struggle with immorality. You'll never grow in the Word to the level you could have grown unless you resist it in a continual way.

I told a little of my story in the last session. I was seventeen, eighteen, nineteen years old. I love Jesus, I'm reading the biographies of many of the great missionaries, and I want to be like them. I want to be deep in God but I don't like the Bible. I liked prayer even less. If you had told me when I was eighteen years old, "Yea, says the Lord, you'll be over the house of prayer in Kansas City," that would have been worse than a prison sentence. I would have said, "Lord, I beg You, anything besides that. Pray all day? Torture!"

That would have been horrifying to me. I loved Jesus: "Get me active, let me go on trips, I'll do that for You. I'll die for You, but don't make me pray. I beg Thee." What a hilarious turn of events: I do the Bible and prayer. I thought I was the one guy who would never do the Bible and prayer.

I could teach the Bible as long as I memorized the sermon from someone else, so I had something to teach. I didn't mind it at all; I took everyone's stuff. The only problem was when the guy asked me, "What do you mean by that?"

I said, "I don't know; I just memorized it from some other guy. I don't know what I mean by that."

"TO HIM WHO HAS, MORE WILL BE GIVEN"

I was seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two, and I stayed with it. Suddenly—I don't even know when—I started loving the Bible. I loved it. I couldn't wait to read it. I might have been twenty-two, twenty-three, twenty-four, something like that. It doesn't have to take you that long because it took me that long. Don't think that; don't say, "Man, it's five more years!" No, I had wrong ideas of God; I had so many wrong ideas in my mind. I didn't have the confidence that I needed to even approach the Lord in the right way. I thought He had eyes that were angry at me, not eyes burning with desire for me. I ran from Him, not to Him, when I read the Bible. That changes a lot when you see who He is. The rich get richer. When you like it a little and it touches you just a little, then you want more; then it touches you more, and you want more. Jesus said it Himself: "To him who has, I will give more" (Mk. 4:24, paraphrased). The rich get richer. The more you touch it, the more you need it and the more you love it. You can get addicted to it. It's the most glorious way to live.

I'm not trying to sound like a hot shot but I know what it means to go from total spiritual boredom and lethargy and a dull spirit to craving being alone to read the Word and being bright in my spirit. I know that feeling so well. Like I said last session, I would give up everything in the world before I would give that up. Jesus was telling them, "If you say no to immorality, you'll grow in hunger and capacity to feel the Word. You dabble with immorality? I still love you, I still want you in My kingdom, but you'll never enjoy My Word. It will always be boredom to you."

Beloved, turn off the pornography 100 percent. Don't dabble with it at all. I'll make a statement; I don't want to overdo this because I have plenty of weaknesses, but I made a decision many years ago: "I won't look at Internet pornography once. Not once in my entire life for even two seconds." The Lord has helped me to keep that. I don't want to do it once.

You say, "I've already done it." Start today. Say, "Never again!"

I said, "I'm going to my grave never doing it one time, ever."

Why not? I tell you, decisions like that—and that's not the biggest decision, but I'm telling some of you young men and women, just burn the bridge. Say, "If he can, I can." I didn't feel anointed; I just said, "I won't do it. It's not an option." If it's an option, you'll yield occasionally. I said, "This isn't an option, zero, not once." That's just how it will go.

Again, some of you say, "I'm five years in and I'm so messed up." No, make that commitment; start today.

Job 31:1 is the verse I used. I skipped it in the last session. Job said, "I made a covenant with my eyes: I'll never look on what entices my soul in immorality" (Job 31:1, paraphrased). Write that down if it's a new verse to you. "I made a covenant with my eyes," Job said: "I won't go there." Here's the good news: it will increase your ability to receive the hidden manna, the Word of God. You'll feel its power. Not every day, all day; I don't want

to exaggerate. But you let some years go by and you'll look back, and you'll be a satisfied customer. That's this age. The hidden manna has its greater reward in the age to come. I want the deepest things that God will give the human spirit; that's what I want. The deepest things He'll give the human spirit, I want them.

The Lord says, "I'll give them to you, but I want you to say no to immorality and idolatry and I'll give you the hidden manna."

There's much more to say about that. Let's move onto the next one.

HE WANTS US NEAR TO HIM IN DOING WHAT IS DEAR TO HIM

Roman numeral VI on Page 50. "I will give him power over the nations" (Rev. 2:27). Whoa, that's pretty intense! When you get power over the nations now a little, it's called "impact in ministry." Even if you're impacting three people, that's a little expression of power over the nations. He means much more than that. He means more than impact in this age, though that's just a token of the promise. In the age to come, He's going to honor weak and broken people like us who chose to love Him. He says, "I want you to be on My leadership team in close proximity to the things that are so dear to Me, ruling the nations. I want you near to Me in doing what is dear to Me. Do you know why I'm giving you that position of proximity on My leadership team? Because back when you were on the earth in this age, when all the pleasures and temptations came"—so many times, not every time, because we all sin—"you said no to them."

The Lord is saying, "Because you loved Me, that's the kind of man and woman I want on My leadership team in the age to come. Someone who loved Me when it was hard to follow through. That's the kind of person I want ruling the earth with Me. When they had the chance to compromise, so many times they said no."

YOUR SIN AND PERVERSION AREN'T STRONGER THAN THE BLOOD OF JESUS

Again, no one is perfect. We all fail many times. You're thinking, "I've failed so many times." Forget yesterday. I'm telling you, push delete on yesterday. Say, "Lord, forgive me." You think, "No, my last ten years, you have no idea." It doesn't matter. Your sin and perversion aren't stronger than the blood of Jesus. You just confess it to Him. You say, "I'm done with it. Lord, I might stumble, but if I do I'll war against it every time."

Push delete and stand before the Lord as one of His favorite ones. All one billion of us are His favorite ones: "I'm Your favorite one. Here I am; it's me, Lord."

Move with confidence. Forget ten years ago, and begin again as a first-class citizen in the kingdom today with boldness. You say, "Man, I have habits, I have memories." Those things will get cleansed in time; stay with it.

THE PERSON WHO RULES HIS SPIRIT IS STRONGER THAN THE ONE WHO RULES A CITY

Paragraph B. He says this: "The person who rules his spirit is stronger than the one who rules a city" (Prov. 16:32, paraphrased). This is what Solomon is saying in Proverbs. He can control his spirit, his appetites, his urges. He has the urges, he has the appetites, he has the anger, he has the crazy emotions, but he rules them; he restrains them. If you'll rule your spirit, you're actually a mightier person than the one who takes over a city. It takes more power to rule your interior life than it does to conquer a city.

Jesus is saying this: “If you rule your spirit by saying no to immorality because you love Me, I’ll see to it that you’ll rule nations with Me.” The correlation is there. I want to be close to Him, not just in understanding the Word; I want to be close to Him in the transformation of the nations. I want to be close to Him in impacting the age to come. I want to be close to Him in the work, not just in the Word. I want to touch Him in the work as well. He says, “I’ll give you both, but you must say no to immorality. I’m watching. I’m not cancelling you out if you fall, but I’ll remember it and take it personally in these ways if you say yes to Me.”

Page 51. The morning star. Jesus said in verse 28, “I will give you the morning star” (Rev. 2:28, paraphrased). Then in chapter 22:16 he says, “I’m the morning star. I’m Him” (Rev. 22:16). Jesus said, “You know what the morning star is, John? It’s Me. Remember when you fell like a dead man before Me back in chapter 1?” In chapter 1:16, Jesus’ face was like the sun, like a star. The glory of God was in Jesus’ face. John said, “It’s too great! My capacity for Your glory is too small!” He fell like a dead man.

Jesus woke him up and said, “John, it’s Me. Don’t worry; I’ll turn it down.”

I’m making this up, but Jesus turned down the manifestation of glory emanating out of His being. John says, “OK, now I can listen. Don’t do that to me again until I get a resurrected body. You’re awesome.”

Jesus could say, “More than this, trust Me. This is only a little. I just had it a little high this time.”

Jesus is light and brightness. This is close to Him being like the Word, the manna, but it’s different. When Paul the apostle saw the light of Jesus, Jesus stood in front of Him as a bright light and Paul touched the realm of God’s glory. This talks about the Spirit touching us on the inside, making our spirit bright with God’s brightness. It’s like making our spirit bright with God’s brightness. That’s what’s going on here.

TO WHAT DEGREE ARE WE WILLING TO WALK IN THE SHINING LIGHT OF GOD?

Paragraph B. John the Baptist was a burning and shining lamp (Jn. 5:35). When Jesus is the morning star to me, at what level? Jesus might say, “What level do you want Me to be the Shining One who brings you into the realm of My spirit? What degree do you want it? Do you want a dull spirit?”

No, I want a bright spirit. I want to communicate this bright spirit to others by the grace of God. Look at John 5:35. This is Jesus talking; He said, “My forerunner, John the Baptist, was a bright and shining lamp” (Jn. 5:35, paraphrased).

This man had a bright spirit. Some people understand the Word in a deep way, but their spirit is still dull. I don’t know how that works. Other people, they move in the spirit realm but they don’t do the Word very much. I want to move in the spirit and I want to encounter things in the supernatural realm. I want the realm of His glory but I want to go deep in the Word. I don’t want to choose one or the other; I want to go deep in the Word and the brightness of the realm in the Spirit in the glory. I want to rule the nations; I want to change the nations. I want to make a difference in the earth. I want to do all three of them. I want His Word, His Spirit, and His work; that’s what I want. That’s what you want. We could go on and on about this, but the realm of His glory, His brightness, He’ll give you in this age, but He’s talking to the saints of this age.

He said, “Turn from immorality and idolatry; say no to those things, and I’ll give you brightness in your spirit, even now. You won’t be spiritually bored. Your spirit won’t be dull. You won’t be lethargic. It won’t be so much effort for you to talk to Me.”

Can you imagine? Our spirit is invigorated with God, to the point where it’s no longer an effort to talk to Him. You know how Misty was talking about this a little in her session, how when you daydream, where do you go in your mind? When you escape all the pressures and you get into that daydream, whatever it is; what the Lord wants is that our daydream, our getaway, our great escape is just talking to Him. That’s where we draw back. When all the pressures are on us and we’re fantasizing in the holy sense, we find ourselves talking to Him.

Most Christians say, “It’s so much effort to talk to Him. I have to stop, turn off everything, and say, ‘OK, Jesus. I love You, You love me, the Word says it. It’s an hour-long prayer meeting, with fifty-eight minutes to go. OK. Uh, yes. You’re My everything. I give everything to You. You’re my everything. Fifty-seven minutes...’”

It’s effort to talk to Him. I understand that. That’s so normal. Over the last few years when things are happening, I find myself daydreaming without even thinking about it, and thinking about these rewards, and talking to Him.

I say, “Lord, how did this happen?”

The Lord’s answer is, “I’m touching you a little with My light.”

It takes a little more work to get back to work. I say, “Wow, this is different. In the early days it was so much work to sit down and talk to You.” Every now and then—it’s not always this way—it takes work to stop talking. I say, “Wow, I’m a weak and broken man. How did that happen?”

I think the Lord’s answer is, “It’s a little of Me as the morning star.”

Where is this going in the age to come? Beloved, in the age to come you’ll have a spiritual capacity to receive and even to release the light of God related to what you did with immorality in this life.

This is why Jesus said, “If you won’t stop it, I will break in and help you stop, it because the rewards are stunning beyond what you know and they last forever. You really do want Me to break in and wake you up. Trust Me, you do.”

People say, “If He breaks in, how can He be a God of love?”

I say, “How can He be a God of love if He didn’t break in with His discipline to stop us?” He knows how glorious what He has for us is.

JESUS DIDN’T FORGET THE WARDROBE WHEN HE PLANNED THE NEXT AGE

Page 52. I love all of them. I love them so much: the white stone that’s NOT a little, dull rock. It’s so much more than this. We’ll take the next five minutes on this and then we’ll ask the Lord to touch us. This is just my opinion, but I believe this will be one of our most precious possessions in the age to come. Some of you will have crowns, and all of us will have different garments. They won’t all be the same. Yes, you do get all the standard white gowns, the white tee-shirt that’s really full of glory. You all get that coming into the city, but

much more than that. That's not the fullness of your wardrobe. Like I said the other night, Jesus didn't forget the wardrobe. The food is great, the music is great, the fragrance is great, the visuals are great, the diamonds are everywhere, the water is awesome, everything is great, but we're stuck with one glorious white tee-shirt for billions of years because He forgot the wardrobe. No, He didn't. He's spectacular in His creative design of clothing. He's spectacular as a designer of clothes. He gets it way more than we get it and you will wear the way you loved Him in this age—you will wear it in the age to come. You will have garments that will communicate how He feels about the way you loved Him.

Beloved, it's so worth it, saying no to immorality and idolatry. It really is. These are the things Jesus told them. If you get hold of these, you'll be motivated.

A WHITE STONE WITH A NEW NAME WRITTEN ON IT

The white stone. Let's finish with this one. Again, this isn't for everyone, but for the one who overcomes (Rev. 2:17). Everyone gets the free gift into the city, but He's talking specifically about overcoming immorality and idolatry in a specific way. Don't take this out of context; He's addressing two specific sins they were compromising with in that city. "I will give you a white stone. On the stone I will put a new name." This new name is critical. He's going to put the new name on the stone.

Third, it's a name no one knows. Even the name will surprise you. I'm using my holy imagination here. I'm basing it on what I know of the Bible. I only have a small amount of insight into this. I'm basing it on how God used stones and how God showed that He remembered our dedication in the days of old. There are plenty of verses where He proves to us that He remembers our dedication. As a matter of fact, this reward is a reward of remembrance. It's a reward like a trophy where He's shouting at you, "I remembered everything you did!"

This is different than the manna, the morning star, and the ruling of the nations. This is a trophy. This is a memorial. This is a statement of remembrance about how you loved Him and about how He felt about the way you loved Him during your seventy years on the earth.

You understand what a name means in the Bible. The name is the story of a person's life. The name is insight into their character, insight into their destiny. When the Lord says, "I'm putting your name on it," He isn't inscribing on a little white pebble, in my case, "Mike, bro." That's not what He's doing: "Hey, bro, good to have you." It's not a nickname. Your name is the story of who you are. I believe He's saying this: "In that stone I'll tell the story of the way you loved Me and the way I felt about it."

A STONE MORE GLORIOUS THAN A DIAMOND

Paragraph B. The word *white*. I'll leave most of this for you to read on your own. The white stone, I believe, most probably relates to precious stones— diamonds, rubies, sapphire, that kind of thing.

Paragraph C. The actual word *white* in relation to Jesus means *glistening, bright, shining*. This is not a dull rock. This is something far more glorious than a diamond. I believe there will be many expressions: very little ones, like little earrings. I don't mean you'll put it in your ear; that's not my point. My point is, little ones to big ones, but I'm just going to picture one standard stone for the analogy. I'm making this part up. Out of these thousand expressions, I picture something like a soccer ball. Just get a soccer ball in your mind. It's not a soccer ball; it's far more glorious than the most brilliant diamond that has ever been on the earth. The supernatural glory of God

is in this stone. It's a stone, but much more than an earthly stone. It's a glorious New Jerusalem stone. I'm not saying it's that big, but that's how I picture it.

I like to say, "Lord, give me that white stone," and I picture Him handing it to me and my heart broken with joy. "Lord, look at the glory of God." It's way beyond a shining diamond.

The Lord says, "Look closely." I'm making this conversation up: "Look, your name is on it. I put the story of how you loved Me in that stone. Look." I imagine this stone.

YOU'LL NEVER KNOW HOW MUCH YOU MOVE HIM TILL HE TELLS YOU

Page 53. Paragraph J. This is my last two or three minutes. The white stone has a name no one knows. You don't even know the name. The reason I think you don't know the name is because you don't know how much your love moves Him until He tells you on that day. I'm making it personal to me, because that's how I imagine it. I imagine that wonderful day when the Lord says, "You know those days that were boring, mundane, lonely, hard days and you chose to say yes to what I told you and you obeyed Me? Let Me tell you how I feel about that."

I say, "Oh, my goodness. I had no idea."

"This is what that meant to Me. This is what you mean to Me now."

"Lord, that's unthinkable. I never knew."

"That's what I mean. It's a new name. It will surprise even you, the way your weak, little life touched Me." I believe that's a dimension of the name no one knows.

Paragraph K. We're moved by telling stories. We love to tell stories. I love to read a biography about some great man of God. My favorite was J. Hudson Taylor in China in the 1850s. When I was eighteen and nineteen, I told J. Hudson Taylor missionary stories because I didn't know Bible verses. In my Bible studies I told stories of missionaries. I read all the missionaries: Charles Finney and Jonathan Edwards and David Brainerd and John G. Lake. I would give a few Bible verses and tell stories.

I've got good news for you: Jesus loves to tell your story just like we love to tell the stories of others. He says, "I love to tell your story. You think you like J. Hudson Taylor stories? I like J. Hudson Taylor stories much better than you do. They moved Me and they'll touch Me forever."

My point is, He desires to tell the stories forever. He'll tell the story about you many times, to you and maybe to those who are near you. I don't know how it works, but don't think He'll just hug you, shake your hand, give you a wedding ring and say, "Next! Get to work!"

No, He loves your story and it will be told forever and forever. Not just His story. We sing the hymn, "I Love to Tell the Story," and we do. That's our favorite story: His story. Part of His story is the way we moved Him. Beloved, the dignity we have to Him is beyond anything we understand; it really matters.

M. The last point here. I'm getting my media team ready here in just a second. This is wild. I saved it for last. This isn't exactly how it is but I want to push you in your holy imagination. How spectacular will these white stones be?

If someone took this soccer ball—this is hypothetical, it's not a soccer ball—and they put the most advanced technology, the smart phone-times-a-million, inside that soccer ball, crystal clear and brighter than diamonds, the glory of the resurrection multiplies all these capacities. Imagine if that little soccer ball that's now a big diamond had all the advanced technology of video, music, color, light, fragrance... We're talking about the Jesus of the New Jerusalem. He's really creative and really powerful and He loves to stun us with His love. He's creating something so big; He's going to hand it to you. I imagine myself looking into the stone, and He says, "Look, you think technology is good, you ought to see the power of the Holy Spirit. I don't need technology; I can get open visions. I can recall anything, anytime, anywhere I want and show as many people as I want. Look at that—your name in that stone."

I'm wondering, what if every episode of your life of choices to love Him is in that stone? It's part of the new name that you will love Him forever. I was telling some of the worship leaders this. I can't picture it; no matter what I've thought, Paul said it has never even entered the mind of man. Whatever you think, it's far superior to anything you could think.

Misty said to me some months ago, "Have you ever seen a plasma ball?"

I said, "Never heard of a plasma ball."

She said, "They're weird. They're weird things."

Let me show it to you. A few of us got together. I saw it and said, "I like that." I'm picturing something a million times better, but I like it. I said, "That's the soccer ball that's like a diamond, that has all the stories of my love for Him in it."

I said, "Misty, if I get one of these, I'll invite you over and show you how He felt when I loved Him. I want to see the one with your name on it."

We were just having fun. I want to show you just a couple clips, because I want to push you a little. This isn't what it looks like. That's what a plasma ball looks like. Imagine a ball like that with all of the stories of your life in it. Jesus hands to you something a thousand or a million times more glorious than that. That's not a little white rock, is it? A little white rock wouldn't motivate me. Is that a cool soccer ball? Imagine if He pointed at a moment forty years ago when I first started really seeking the Lord, and He said, "Look, let Me show you a part of your name. Here's that one day. Remember when you were sixteen and did this?"

"No."

"Here, look. Let Me show it to you. Here's another one."

Maybe the soccer ball is like that: diamonds and lightning and thunder. Do you know why I like lightning and thunder? Because lightning and thunder come out of the throne. What if it comes out of that stone? I don't

know, but I like it. Maybe the soccer ball is that way but a million times better. Maybe not, but who knows? Here's the point: it's not a dumb, little, white rock, a pebble you put in your pocket.

Amen. Let's stand.