

TOPIC: Be Hot for God

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SUMMARY OF MESSAGE

Warnings against Lukewarmness

Text: Revelation 3:14-22

Focusing on Rev 3:18:

*¹⁸ 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.*

There are three applications that we can draw from the above-mentioned verse:

1. Buy gold refined in fire

This gold is the genuine tested personal faith of an overcomer. Faith is personal and we must have personal faith in and a personal relationship with God. He desires for us to be overcomers, to be victorious and to be the head, not the tail.

1 Peter 1:6-7 tells us "In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various **trials**, that the **genuineness of your faith**, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is **tested by fire**, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Mark the words - "If need be". It is not always necessary for us to be put through trials. Rather, it is for those who have not yet learnt their lesson. Then going through these trials is akin to paying 'tuition fees', like the child who pays the price for having his finger caught between the door hinges in spite of his mother's warnings not to put his finger through. The genuineness of our faith will come through trials just as everything must be sifted out before pure gold comes forth.

John 16:33

- i. In the world, there are trials affecting all.
- ii. For believers, our faith will be tested in areas such as provision, peace, finances, protection and consequences of sins of people in our lives.

There are trials because of the fallenness of Man, a consequence of Man's choice which results in spiritual and physical death. Sometimes we are in pain because of our own foolishness. Whatever a man sows, he will reap. Both the believer and the unbeliever face trials but for the former, it is a time of testing of one's personal faith. As people of God, we cannot behave like the world does. When faced with the threat of influenza A (H1N1), we need to claim Psalm 91 and rest in the knowledge that we will be protected. There is a difference between arrogance which is confidence in the self, and faith which is confidence in the Lord.

That we are to **buy** this gold refined in the fire suggests that it will cost us. Work requires time, energy, sacrifice, money and death to our old selves. We must cease to respond to our sinful nature and know that God has made a provision for us to overcome the trials in the world. All trials are common to man and we are not so special that the devil will attack us individually.

The line is drawn between those who know God and those who do not. As believers, we have His promise in 1 Corinthians 10:13 that we will not be put in a situation that we cannot overcome. God will always “provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”

1 John 5:4-5 tells us that “for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.” Our faith is strengthened as we put together all the promises in the word and it is this faith that helps us to overcome trials. As we struggle with various issues in our Christian journey such as protection, we must come to a conviction that He will always protect us.

1. Trials (1 Peter 1:6-7) → 2. Testing of faith (James 1:2-5) → 3. Produces patience/perserverance (Roms 5:3-5) → 4. Character → 5. Hope(Heb 6:19) → 6. Love of God → 7. Perfect and complete, lacking nothing

Trials of faith are not trials that are brought on by wrong decisions and actions. They are trials of the Word of God, an opportunity to level up our faith. At different phases, God develops different aspects of our character. As you persevere, these virtues become part of your character. The Greek word for hope means a certain expectation. Hope in the Lord is a certainty that does not disappoint.

The gold is also the outcome, the reward for our work of faith (1 Cor 3:12-14). This is expressed through growing faith unto spiritual maturity, Christ increasing and “I, me and myself” decreasing, and where ours responses are increasingly unto the Lord. God is looking at and weighing our attitudes and motivations. If it is not settled on this side of heaven, it will be brought up for judgment.

2. Buy white garments that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed.

Garments are righteous acts (Rev 3:4-5, 19:7-8, Heb 1:9). Our gift of righteousness is right standing with God. Our lives will then produce works of faith. We cannot remain in a consumer mindset where if you don't like the church, you just leave. As believers, we need to be plugged into the bodylife. Right standing with God results in right living for God.

All of us have responsibilities and we are responsible to know what is happening around us. From the Transformation Conference 2009, we learnt that there is a judge from Hong Kong who prays over the entire courtroom for justice and that there will be no perjury. Indeed, the people who had come in intending to lie through their teeth were compelled to tell the truth after swearing upon the Bible. There were also other testimonies of this American missionary in Thailand who activated his church in Phuket to lend assistance during the tsunami crisis and was instrumental in rebuilding a school and structuring a curriculum that was good for the students. This caught the attention of the King who honoured him with a medal, and the Thais themselves began to notice him and respect his work. Through his ministry, he also led the Phuket mayor to Christ and this led to the latter giving millions of USD that he had previously received in bribes back to the poor. Our very own hotel magnate Edward Ong was impressed by the Lord to build a 5-star hotel in East Timor because God wanted to use it to be a blessing to this new and war-torn nation. Financially, he is to rely completely upon the Lord for the construction of this place.

Back home, as parents, are you aware of what your children are being taught in their schools? Are you involved in your children's lives, inculcating godly values and lessons in them so they know how to discern right from wrong? Pro-family boundaries are constantly being pushed and we need to rise up against this, to be seen and heard. How about other areas like falsifying reports in your jobs or being asked to entertain clients in sleazy pubs? How do you make a stand? If you live your lives to be politically correct and as men-pleasers, you have received your reward on earth. We need to be intentional in praying for our schools, workplaces and homes. This is why we have the blessing campaign, to pray for our oikos, and to change the spiritual climate in the places that we are at. BBTC pastors are here to partner you.

Buying white garments also mean we pay the price to walk in righteousness, holiness, separation from and separation to godliness. What is permissible for others may not be permissible for us, and what **was** permissible may not be permissible now as we grow spiritually. We have to pay the price to be blameless; to have a conscience void of offence before God and Man (Acts 24:16). We need to have integrity, to have complete wholeness (1 Thess 5:23). At judgment, we will either have joy or shame.

3. Buy eye-salve to anoint our eyes to see.

Luke 11:34-35 speaks to believers. The light which is in us is not darkness. Spiritual seeing is to have spiritual wisdom and revelation. This means we have oversight, insight and foresight. In life, we must have knowledge and facts then understanding. Wisdom is knowledge applied.

How to have wisdom and revelation?

- A. From the intake of the Word (Psalm 19:8, Col 3:16). The Word of God will give us wisdom; we need to move from information to revelation. We need to be in the logos of the Word before we can receive *rhema*. 1 Peter 2:2-3 tells us to desire the pure milk of the Word. The goal of the intake of the milk of the Word is to experience the reality of the promises of God in our lives. From Matt 4:4, the goal of the intake of the bread of the Word is to regularly hear what the Lord is speaking to you in your daily living.

The goal of the intake of the meat of the Word is to sharpen discernment as you apply the Word to the situations of your life (Heb 5:14). Discern good and evil, and if something is from God or Man or a mixture? Many a situation Christians discern wrongly but God can turn things for good. If we are not partaking of the Word regularly, we will lack wisdom. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

- B. From your connectivity with the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:17-18, 1 Thess 5:19, Eph 5:18, 1 Cor 2:9-10). As we love God, He will instruct us and speak to us, revealing to us by His Spirit.

In these end times, as your faith is being tested, you are gone if you are neither hot nor cold. We need to walk circumspectly and carefully. We need to have the zeal of the Spirit which is rooted in the Word and guided by the wisdom of God.

Be hot for God and make a stand for righteousness!

Topic: How We Live Matters!

Questions for discussion

1. How do you think God will judge our works? What kinds of criteria do you think He would use?

1 Cor 3:5-17

2. From your experience, share how trials have helped to develop your faith and character?

3. In the examples given, the judge and missionary brought the domain of His kingdom into their workplace and became vehicles of transformation. We may not do the way they did but what could be some things we can do and impact the community we are in, i.e. our neighbourhood, our workplace or someone we know?

4. Over the weeks and months, as you do your personal devotion or do BS together in the cell, do you feel or notice any difference taking place in you? Is there a greater degree of spiritual perceptiveness, deeper hunger or greater degree of sensitivity to the Spirit's leading, teaching or prompting?

5. On a scale of 1 to 10, how hot would you assess yourself at this point in your spiritual life? (We understand that the number indicated is relative and will mean differently one from another, i.e someone's '5' may actually be hotter than another's '7'. The person may be hot but he may not feel hot enough. Hence, any number indicated is relative. It is just a personal gauge.)

No condemnation, no comparison, no competition but only encouragement...