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Series: For the Time is Near
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Show Her the Door (and Then Lock It)
Revelation 2:18-29

Good morning! Please open your Bibles to Revelation, chapter two. This is the final message in Revelation, chapter two. We are continuing on in this mini-series within Revelation of *How to Be a Conquering Church*. That's what Jesus desires; that we are a conquering church, a victorious church that is passionate, committed, devoted, and is righteous and holy. Where something is pointed out we are to do something about it if it doesn't fit with blessing and honoring the Lord. This morning we're covering verses 18-29. The title of this morning's message is: *Show Her the Door (and Then Lock It) [repeats three times]*. Got it locked in? It'll be important for us to remember that.

Let's read starting in verse 18: ***“And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: ‘The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze.***

¹⁹ “I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. ²⁰ But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. ²¹ I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. ²² Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, ²³ and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works. ²⁴ But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. ²⁵ Only hold fast what you have until I come. ²⁶ The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, ²⁷ and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. ²⁸ And I will give him the morning star. ²⁹ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

[Prayer] *Oh, Father, we are again thankful for Your Word, for it examines our hearts and reveals anything that is not of You. It pierces through, it divides, it brings to the surface that which needs to be dealt with. You're doing things with these churches. You're doing a work. Why? Because You love them and You desire for them to*

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continue to thrive and to do Your work, to bless, to disciple, and to grow so that each one would fulfill Your will. I pray this morning that You would examine our hearts in the midst of this message and that You would reveal anything that is not of You. I pray that You would help us to understand where we might be compromising and tolerating something in our own lives that is not right. I pray that we would be bold and confident enough to "throw her out and lock the door behind her", whatever it is that is sinful, whatever it is that is not of You. Father, may You purify this church and may others see something that honors and glorifies You. May it be a testimony of Your grace, Your love, and Your holiness. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

That's what we should be as a church; set aside, sanctified. We should be really knowing that we're not going to be perfect but making every attempt to lining up with God's Word.

Proverbs 14:12 says: **"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.** How many times do we hear people saying, "Hey, whatever makes you happy!"? All that is really determined is the perspective of the person telling you that, and they encourage you to have your own perspective. Whatever it may be that you hold as happiness in fulfilling your life. "Hey, go with that!" But we are warned by this one verse, and I always go back to it; Proverbs 14:12, I believe, is something that can keep us on course. "There is a way that seems right to man." It may seem right to me, it may seem right to someone else but really, is it right in the eyes of the Lord? That's really what matters because our way, if it's not God's way, its end is death. God does not desire that for anyone. In fact, the Bible tells us that He doesn't desire that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). This proverb is applied to everyone; outside the church, but more importantly, inside the church.

There was a day when "diversity" meant celebrating people's cultures, not people's choices of sexual preferences. There was a day when "tolerance" was a threshold that you could cross and not a bottomless bucket where everything fit. Even though we live in a day where the world celebrates and will even impose tolerance of sexual immorality and idolatry in so many different forms, it is not unlike the times the church in Thyatira was living in. Just like what we're experiencing, they were as well. It's not beyond our imagination for the church today to be given the same letter from the Lord.

As we have seen, idolatry and sexual immorality creep into the church and wreak havoc on it. Every once in awhile, we'll see how it is that another pastor has fallen to sexual immorality, and will fall to pride and greed, and believe the fanfare that surrounds them as they increase in popularity.

There are people who fall away from the Lord because other things begin to occupy their time and take the place of God and that's called idolatry. I know you hear it throughout the Bible. It's a word that is just there, from start to finish. Idolatry basically means that *anything* that you put before the Lord is an idol.

Let me give you something that you may not think is an idol, but it is. Peace and quiet. Do you long for peace and quiet? Do you long to get away and just be with the Lord? I know we all do, right? But sometimes we get to the point to where we don't believe that God works in the midst of chaos, in the midst of busyness, in the midst of a full schedule. We ignore those things and think, "All I need is a little peace and quiet." And what happens is, rest and relaxation begins to be our focal point instead of just having peace with the Lord through anything.

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There are also people who fall away from the Lord because they don't submit their sexual appetite to Him and bring it under control. They succumb to following through with satisfying the flesh and then sexual immorality comes, and it's done. Satan would like nothing less than for these people to seduce others within the church.

That's what we're looking at here. This Jezebel was within the church. She wasn't without, she was *inside* the church! She was a seductress. She was not a prophetess. Satan would like for many to be seduced, for many to follow her, and destroy the church from within, one by one, by one. But Jesus would like nothing less than for these people to repent, to turn from their sin, from their wicked ways, and be reconciled and saved, one by one.

Now, Thyatira wasn't a capital city. It wasn't this social and cultural, and artistic renowned city where everyone flocked to. It was actually a blue-collar city. It was known as a military town, a commercial center, with many trade guilds, or better known as unions. It was your humble, hard-working, blue-collar town.

Their work ethic wasn't only evident in what they did for a living, but also within the church. It was known for it's hard work. In fact, the Lord Jesus points out "I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance. I know these things. You are a hard-working people. And by the way, your latter works exceed the first." That's who they were.

Approval (v. 19)

We see here a few things. We see the approval, the word of encouragement that God gives them in verse 19. The Christians in Thyatira were a church and a people that loved much. They weren't afraid to work hard. They're faith had feet and they not only endured but, as we know, they also excelled. Their latter works exceeded their first. Think about that. What would they do? They would be a church that was so loving, so inviting, so open that they would reach out to you as you came in. They would hold on to you and help you out. They served others and served them well.

I know that a church does not continue to grow in their service without multiplying the help. You can't possibly do that. You can't sustain a serving church in a stagnant state for too long. It doesn't work. It must be growing in order for the latter works to exceed the first. People can grow tired. They can get to a point to where you feel like serving is a routine. You can get to a point to where you lose joy, you lose excitement. This is why I know that that church there, that little church in Thyatira, was an exciting church! Everyone rallied around everything that they were doing. They were serving well. They were loving well. They were working hard. They were patient and enduring. They had much faith. They were teaching others to do the same. It was a discipling church and each part of the church was doing it's part in love, faith, service, and patient endurance.

Not only were they excelling in love, faith, service, and endurance, but they were also, what the world would call a "tolerant" church. They accepted everyone just as they were and really, from what they were told, didn't really do much else but just love on them. They continued to reach out to those who were in need. I'm sure within the church and outside the church. So by all outward appearances this church was stellar. This was an amazing church! It was on the move and it was growing. It looked really, really good, and it was acceptable to people outside as well. Why? Because what they were teaching, what they were accepting was all in line with what the world held as being ok and acceptable. So the community embraced them.

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Now, for the former they were commended. It was good that they were a loving, faithful, serving, and patiently enduring church. That was good. Those are good things!

But how did Jesus introduce Himself to them? Let's take a look at verse 18: ***"And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: 'The words of the Son of God,...'*** First of all, He describes Himself as the Son of God. Secondly, who has ***"who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze."*** Basically, He introduced Himself as the one who sees everything and will judge everything. Jesus was essentially telling them, by the way He described Himself, "I have My eye on you and nothing escapes Me. Nothing. Not a thing."

What would happen if we held that thought every second of every minute of every hour of every day of our lives? Nothing escapes the Lord. He is with me wherever I go. How is it that you would conduct yourself? Any different? Hopefully not, of course, but sometimes we forget that He is right there.

Hebrew 4:12-13 says: ***"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³ And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account."*** Naked, exposed. He sees everything for what it is. He knows the intentions of our heart. He knows our motives. He knows why we're doing what we're doing. He knows all of those things.

We know by this letter they were accused of something that was grievous. But why would Jesus be against such a church? I mean, it's growing! It's thriving! It looks great! They're latter works exceed their first!

They are living in a place where it's a blue-collar location. By the way, they guilds, what they would do when they came together was that they would sacrifice to idols. Some of the food that they did not sacrifice, they would give away to families, or to whoever else. So that was a form of compromise.

But c'mon, give them a little slack, right? A little bit? Jesus is very clear here. They don't deserve a little slack. No! No, tolerance of any compromise whatsoever. Because tolerance of sin is never justified as acceptable to the attainment of an end result. I'll repeat that: *Because tolerance of sin is never justified as acceptable to the attainment of an end result.* Quite honestly, I would rather see this church completely die than to see us go along with something that's acceptable to the world so that we could attract more people, and keep them. But that's what they were doing.

No amount of good works will overshadow unrepentant sin. Sometimes we attempt to do that, don't we? "I feel so guilty. I feel so bad." And then all of a sudden we try to work our guilt out, work our sin off. As if we could work it off. "If I can just do a little bit more I'll feel better about myself." But Jesus was telling them that their favor with Him was about to end if they didn't do a 180. It's a very loving word from a loving God, because He is a just God and He *has* to deal with sin.

The contrast also between the church in Ephesus, and the church in Thyatira, I thought was very interesting in that the church in Ephesus was accused of losing, or lessening in their love, but were faithful to call out and judge false teachers. While the church in Thyatira were increasing, or exceeding in their love, but were tolerant, or losing in being faithful to call out and judge false doctrine and teachers. By the way, both of these were considered sins. Both were considered sins that were bad enough to where Jesus felt if they didn't repent from those sins that He would remove their lampstands.

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Warren Wiersbe said, "Unloving orthodoxy and loving compromise are both hateful to God."

A.W. Tozer wrote, "If the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the church today, 95% of what we do would go on and no one would know the difference. If the Holy Spirit had been withdrawn from the New Testament church, 95% of what they did would stop, and everybody would know the difference."

Those are sobering quotes. Now don't get me wrong. They may not close their doors, they may not be gone tomorrow, or the next day, or next week. They might continue physically and geographically, but not spiritually, not filled with the Spirit. You could say that their affiliation would be pulled and part of the people, or part of the gathering, would hear this:

Matthew 7:21-23: ***"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.²² On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?'²³ And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'*** And then in John 4:34: ***Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work."***

It's a serious warning that Jesus is giving the church in Thyatira. It's not something to take lightly. It's something really to consider and for us to think about as a church in 2015, because their efforts were cut short due to compromise, through tolerance of false doctrine that was eventually being adopted and followed by some of the church in Thyatira, even though they were laboring and excelling in their service.

Accusation (vv. 20-21)

We have this accusation in verses 20 and 21 by the Lord, that they were turning a blind eye to something deadly, something destructive that was happening within the church. They were tolerating the teaching of idolatry and sexual immorality by someone who professed to be someone that she was not. She was saying she was a prophetess. Not everyone who says that they are teachers, prophets, or pastors are what they say they are. This bright church in Thyatira was about to go dark if they didn't do something about this cancer that they were allowing to remain within the church. They had to do something. They were called on to do something. They were warned.

They were admonished because this woman was not a prophetess. C'mon guys! Think about this! What is she teaching? What is she encouraging you to do? You know the truth. She's actually not a prophetess, she's a prostitute selling herself off as being something that she was not, and then leading the church down a path of death and destruction, idolatry and sexual immorality. And Jesus was grieved! Now this woman had been warned and she cared nothing for the warning. She remained in sexual immorality. She refused to repent.

But get this: this letter is not to her. This letter is to the church, ***"to the angel of the church in Thyatira."*** It is a word of approval, and a word of accusation, and admonition. More importantly, this letter is directed at the person shepherding the people that made up the church, and to the people themselves, corporately and individually, because we'll get to the point where you have a decision to make; personally, independently of everyone else, and yet together, as well.

Admonition (vv.22-25)

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As we read in verses 22-25, we see the admonition. This is what needs to happen. Jesus, yes, He approved of some, He accused them of other things that were going on, and then He admonished the church. He said, "Listen, this is what you need to do to make things right." The church is being warned to stay away from her because not only will judgment come upon her, but He was warning that judgment would come upon them, as well.

This is tolerance of diversity at it's worse, it's what the world teaches, promotes, and even protects with policies, rules, and laws. But water and oil don't mix. The tolerance of diversity that the world teaches, promotes, and protects is a moral decay with an "anything goes" type of mentality and ideology that the world wants for even the church to embrace. Why? So that they can embrace everyone, all together in one bottomless bucket. What's good according to the world isn't always good according to God, in fact, many times it's not. There are many things that definitely belong to the church that are in the world. They just don't belong.

Isaiah 5:-20-23 (I know I've said this before recently, probably more than at any other time, but we need to be warned of this):

***²⁰ Woe to those who call evil good
and good evil,
who put darkness for light
and light for darkness,
who put bitter for sweet
and sweet for bitter!***

***²¹ Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes,
and shrewd in their own sight!***

***²² Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine,
and valiant men in mixing strong drink,***

***²³ who acquit the guilty for a bribe,
and deprive the innocent of his right!***

God calls the church to be set apart, to be sanctified, to be holy, pure. A tolerant church is one that really does itself in. It's not to be commended. Maybe the world will commend us, but Jesus Himself will not commend us. He is the head of His church. It may be an outside influence that infiltrates the church, but the influence, if allowed to remain, is promoted from within. If it's not dealt with...and I'm talking about sin, I'm not talking about differences of opinion. I'm talking about sin. This is sexual immorality. This is straight idolatry. If it's not dealt with, then it's actually promoted from within. That influence will eventually progress to an accepted thought, and become part of the church more. It'll be an ideology that's embraced, and then it'll be promoted. We see that this is what happens with the church, "This is accepted. This is the way we think."

Jesus even said, "If this doesn't change, I will make you into an example."

"Wow, Jesus! This is Your church!"

"Yes, it is. But I will make you into an example."

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"²³ and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works."

So maybe we insist on going in that direction, of allowing certain thing to happen within the church, but then pretty soon we look just like the people who were referenced in Romans 1. They were given over to a debased mind. Given over to doing whatever it is that we want to do. And we will be destroyed from within.

He warns us. It's a loving warning. He loves us! He's not telling us because He says, "I hate you and I want to see you go down. Done! Over with!" No! He wishes that none should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).

Then Jesus' attention turns to those who are remaining faithful. He says, "Hey, wait a minute. There are some, there's a remnant, within the church who remain faithful." He encourages them to hold on until He comes. He's not saying, "Wait until I come and bring judgment." No, that's not the day that He's talking about. He's talking about the day in which He comes for His church; the rapture. That's the day that He's pointing to. "Hold on! Cling with everything you have. Fix your eyes on Me, the Author and Perfecter of your faith, and I will help you through." For them, He gives them this promise of rewards because there are rewards for persevering.

Rewards of Persevering (vv. 26-29)

Not only does Jesus encourage the Christians to hold fast until He comes again, but He also makes these promises to those who endure faithfully.

First, these people will be rulers with authority over nations and will hold the ability to judge. God's people will live and reign with Jesus Christ, according to Revelation 20:4. Jesus will set-up His righteous kingdom with perfect justice and will rule with a rod of iron, and any rebellious people will be easily broken to pieces like clay pots. It won't be difficult. We will reign with Him. We will have purpose. We will have work, and that will be part of our worship toward Him.

Second, these people will be given the Morning Star. This is the most important because this speaks of resurrection, *and* of Jesus Christ Himself; the greatest prize of all. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, he wrote about this indescribable gift. I will never forget the first time that I came across those words describing Jesus Christ. He is the preeminent gift. He's the greatest gift that we can receive. Jesus is saying, "Above all, this is what I promise you: the Morning Star, Myself."

So with all this said, really what matters is that we hold on. We must realize that we need to let whatever it is out the door first, whatever it is that is not of the Lord that is sin, that's against Him. Maybe it's our thoughts, or pride, or laziness. Maybe relationships that we're entertaining in our thoughts that should not be there. There are so many things. I pray that the Lord does reveal those things, whatever it is, and that you would let her out the door and lock that door behind her!

But then we need to learn how to hold on. How do we hold on? Because Jesus said, "For you who remain faithful, you just need to cling and hold on!" How do we do that? It's actually very simple. We need to have a conquering type of life that is full of love and service, faith, and patience endurance.

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Also, be intolerant of anything, and anyone who is given to leading the church astray from Jesus. Be intolerant of those things! It's ok! Jesus never told His people to be tolerant of sin. He never did. We need to see it for what it is. We need to note it for what it is.

Joseph ran away when Potiphar's wife was attempting to seduce him. That's what we need to do with sin. Run away! Doesn't matter how we're perceived by the world, how we may be persecuted by the church. We just run away. Why? Because we're at peace with the Lord.

In conclusion, I wanted to give you a few things to help you hold on.

1. **Know the Truth (2 Timothy 2:15)** The best thing that you can do to start out is to know the truth. What does that require? Should we sit down and counsel, go through things with other people? No, the first Person that you need to be going through in truth is the Lord. The Spirit will give you understanding. He'll teach you. What do you do? Just crack this baby open right here! [referring to the Bible] Really that's it! This is beautiful! This is God's truth! 2 Timothy 2:15 says: ***"Do your best to present yourself [yourself!] to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."*** So you don't be lazy! Open it up and read it!

"Well, I can't read very well." That's ok, read slow.

"I can't focus." If you ask the Lord sincerely to give you understanding and to help you focus, you'll get focus. Just read it. God will minister to you and you will begin to develop this covering and a protection in your life, a governance that comes by the Word of God.

When you come across a situation you'll actually have wisdom, godly wisdom because you'll think about the truth and you'll say, "I used to think that way. I don't anymore. Why? Because I know the truth!" So know the truth!

2. **Hang with the Right People (1 Corinthians 15:33; Hebrews 10:25)** It's not so hard! We're so afraid of people judging us, of us seeming to be "holier than thou". "Well, who are you? All of a sudden you don't come around." It's very clear what God says about our influences and who we expose ourselves to. 1 Corinthians 15:33: ***"Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals."*** No questions there, right? It's pretty clear.

Hebrews 10:25: ***"...not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."*** We're coming to the end of time and life is but a vapor, it's a mist, here one moment and gone the next. We are to stir each other up to good works. We are to gather together with like-minded people who are also in love with Jesus and desire to bless, honor, and serve Him. So be influenced with the right people.

3. **Think on Right Things (Philippians 4:8)** ***"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."***

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"Oh, but my thoughts are running here and there!" Go back to number one; Know the Truth, start thinking on those things. As the Psalmist did in Psalm 1, he meditated on God's law day and night. You can't do that unless you know the Word. You can't meditate on lovely, and honorable, and commendable things if you don't know what's lovely, and honorable, and commendable according to God. Think on right things. Let right things consume your thoughts.

4. **Talk with God (1 Thessalonians 5:17)** A lot of people gain knowledge. They hang out with the right people, but this last thing is neglected; talking with God.

"You're there and I know I want a relationship with You but I'm not going to talk to You." No, no. Talk with Him!

"What do you mean?" Pray! That's what the Bible says about talking with the Lord. Pray! You need to hear from Him. It's not just a one way conversation: "God I need...please do...give me...if only You would..." It must be this posture of submission to Him, of surrendering, in praying to Him.

Remember ***"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."*** (Matthew 6:9-13). You won't know what that is unless you're listening, unless you're reading His word and understanding His truth, and His will for your life. And then, you're there in prayer and not only do you speak to Him and are thankful for Him, and praise Him for his awesomeness and His wonders, but you also begin to listen to Him in those times.

We are to ***"pray without ceasing."*** Talk with God more than anyone else. And as you acknowledge God's presence, His presence will have a greater influence on everything in your life, more than other things or other people do.

So that's His message to us this morning. Again, these letters to these seven churches are all complete. As I go through and study and prepare, I realize, "Wow! This one is for us, too!" We go to the next one. "Wow! Yep, that's us, Lord, and we definitely need to heed this word." We're not picking and choosing. We're just allowing the Lord to do a work within our own lives, within the life of this church.

I pray that we would always be a repentant church, and that we would move forward and advance for the sake of the kingdom and glory of God. I pray that we wouldn't just stay seated here but that when we go out into the world that we would be like the church in Thyatira. Their latter works exceeded their first. I so desire to see that! I want to see us exceed in love, in faith, in service, in patient endurance. I want us to do that! But we can't do that unless we deal with tolerance of sin in our own lives. Really it has to begin with you individually, and then we'll see it impact the church as a whole. Then, we'll see the impact of a church that is truly set apart, and holy, and sanctified on the world around us. We'll see an impact! Not just by empty and vain works, religious works, feel-good works, but true and sincere works that comes from a group of disciples who are committed to, devoted to, and just given to the glory of the Father. I pray that's us.

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[Prayer] *Father, I know that at Refuge, we love to serve, we love to love on other people, we love to come together and stir each other up to good works. I pray that if there is anything that is not of You, any wickedness, any evil, anything that is sinful, Lord that we would choose to repent and to turn from those things, and that our lampstand here within this community would not be removed. But more importantly that we could exceed and excel, and that we would not only be a fresh new church, O but that we would be an impacting church, that we would have these hands that reach out, and tell others about the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ, that we would be excited about living for you everyday, that we would understand that You are present with us wherever we go, that we would honor You not just with our lips but with our hearts, too. I pray Lord, that today You start a fresh new work right here. I pray that Your spirit truly would fall upon us as it did the first church in the upper room when the Spirit filled the place. I pray that You would do that! O God, we are so hungry to see a move of the Spirit! Are we ready? Father, only You know. Time is short. I pray that we would be wholly given to being about Your business, and that we would help each other out along the way, that You would uplift us and we would uplift each other, and then we would just pull people in who don't know You. They would see grace exemplified in our own lives, and then we would point them to the One who gives it, and Who poured it out on the cross. To us who are being saved it is the power of God. I pray that we would understand that. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*