

Final Exhortations

Revelation 22:10-11

INTRODUCTION

- A. Imagine giving instructions to a loved one you will never see again. What would you say?
 - 1. Would you tell him to take good care of his family? Would you tell him to remain faithful to Jesus? Would you tell him to fulfill his dreams?
 - 2. Just what would you say to one you would never see again?
- B. That is somewhat the situation we find in our text this evening.
 - 1. The angel who had shown John the Revelation is about to leave him, and he's giving him some final exhortations.
 - 2. We want to examine these final exhortations and apply them to our current situation.

THE NECESSITY OF HEARING, v. 10

- A. "And he said to me, 'Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.'"
- B. John was told not to seal up the words of the prophecy of this book.
 - 1. This is quite unlike the case of Daniel who was told to seal up his prophecy.
 - a. "The vision of the evenings and the mornings which has been told is true; but seal up the vision for it pertains to many days hence" (Dan. 8:26).
 - b. "You, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, until the time of the end" (Dan. 12:4).
 - 2. Jewish apocalypses, in general, were "sealed," the things contained in them were hidden from public knowledge.
 - 3. John was told not to seal this prophecy, "for the time is near."
 - a. Because the things written in Revelation were about to occur, from John's vantage point in time, he could not seal up this prophecy.
 - b. The church needed to understand that judgment upon the Roman Empire would be right around the corner — those who troubled them would soon be punished.
 - 4. There are many things about this book that we do not understand.
 - a. I am not confident that I understand every vision in this book — I have presented the book to the best of my ability in the way I understand the book, but I cannot be absolutely certain I have been correct.
 - b. However, it is my firm conviction that the early Christians fully understood this book.
 - 1) If the first century Christians had as much trouble understanding Revelation as we do, where would they have had hope?
 - 2) I believe that one reason they were able to understand the book was that the book was not sealed from them.
- C. Let me make an application that is not really in the text, but one I think we can rightfully make nonetheless: Do we sometimes seal up the words of Scripture?
 - 1. Are there times that we do not share the Word of God when we know that we ought to share the Word of God?
 - 2. We have, as you well know, been instructed to share the Word of God with those around us.
 - a. To Ezekiel, God said, "'Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me" (Ezek. 3:17).
 - b. Before his ascension, Jesus told his apostles, "You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

THE NECESSITY OF BEING CERTAIN, v. 11

- A. "Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy."
- B. The evildoer is still to do evil, and the filthy is still to be filthy.
 - 1. "Evildoer" means one who does injustice or unrighteousness.
 - a. There are many people in this world who are evil.
 - 1) During the past couple of years, we have seen all too painfully that this world is full of evil men — from Osama bin Laden to Saddam Hussein.
 - 2) This text may have something to do with terrorism — the evildoers may be those who were persecuting Christians.

- 3) Yet, it doesn't take terrorists to be evil — so many are evil — from the father who doesn't provide for his children, to the employee who steals from his employer, to the pop star who glamorizes illicit sexuality and drugs to children.
- b. The Scriptures warn us about evildoers.
 - 1) "Let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters" (1 Pet. 4:15).
 - 2) "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation!" (Phil. 3:2).
2. The filthy are those who have been soiled, those who have been made dirty, and those who have been defiled.
 - a. There are so many people in this world who are filthy — if you don't believe me, just flip on the television and see what people are doing in front of the camera.
 - b. The Scriptures exhort us to put away all filthiness.
 - 1) "Lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls" (Js. 1:21).
 - 2) "Fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks" (Eph. 5:3-4).
- C. The righteous are still to do evil, and the holy are still to be holy.
 1. The righteous are, of course, those who do the right thing. That's what it means to be righteous: to do the right thing.
 2. This world has many who try to do the right thing: think about all those who take orphans into their homes, think about all those who pray, think about all those who strive to keep their lives free from sin.
 3. The Scriptures speak of our need to be righteous.
 - a. Jesus said: "I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 5:20).
 - b. "You, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness" (1 Tim. 6:11).
- D. The holy are still to be holy.
 1. Those who are holy are like God, for he is holy — "As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy'" (1 Pet. 1:15-16).
 2. The Scriptures call upon us to be a holy people.
 - a. "Having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7: 1).
 - b. "Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).
 3. Are you holy?
- E. What is the point of this verse?
 1. Why does it say: "He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still"?
 2. Some have argued that this means that people cannot change, that once you give yourself to a certain lifestyle, there is nothing you can do to change your situation.
 - a. We know that is not true from Scripture; we each have the opportunity to change.
 - b. After mentioning a host of sins that will keep one from heaven, Paul writes, "And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:11).
 3. I'm convinced this verse means: "Look, Jesus is coming so quickly there isn't time for people to change: you'd better be convinced you're right."
 - a. This was true when Revelation was written, and it's true now: When Jesus comes, there's not going to be time to change.
 - b. Do you need to come this evening and change?