

Among the Lampstands: Fear Not the Living One | Revelation 1:9-20

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[0:00] Welcome to Ontario Community Church, where we are encouraging, equipping, and engaging lives for Christ.! I'm Pastor Patrick Daly, and each week I seek to balance the love of Jesus Christ with the truth of His Word.

Today, we are in Revelation 1, verses 9-20, where John is on the island of Patmos, and he meets the risen Christ, the Son of Man.

He has eyes like fire, the voice like many waters, and he is holding the seven stars while walking among the seven golden lampstands. This vision talks about patient endurance and calls for us to worship in the Spirit on the Lord's day and reminds us that Jesus, He is the first and the last, the Alpha and the Omega, the Living One who holds His church in His hand.

As you listen to this sermon, ask yourself, what is Jesus showing me about Himself, the church, and my witness? Let us read, hear, and keep His Word, and fix our eyes on Jesus Christ.

What a wonderful time for us to gather together as we have just taken part in communion. A time for us to reflect on Christ's life.

[1:27] Christ being the way, the truth, and the life. It's important for us to remember what He has done for us and what He continues to do for us.

We have been going through, we started our sermon series through the book of Revelation. Revelation, a book that for many of us can certainly seem confusing, divisive, and let's face it, outright scary at times.

I know that for many of us, we may have had a certain experience. There's many people that you may know or you yourself may have experienced this book in Scripture, this book in the Bible as one of great mystery, but one that, well, we should not be afraid of revelation.

Much like we should not be afraid of the gospel, we should not be afraid of the Word of God, for it is living and active.

It is good for us to read, for us to hear, for us to understand, and to keep the Word in our hearts. Let us open to Revelation.

[2:50] Revelation 1, verses 9-20. It's on page 1,218 in your ESVP Bible or your Bible of choice, Revelation.

And as you're turning there, we began going through the first eight verses, talking about how there is a blessing for us to read these words aloud.

Just as it says in verse 3, as you're turning there, blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

Very important for us, just like any part of Scripture, for us to read it, to see what the Word of God has to say, for us to be, to approach humbly God and His Word, and for God to work in us.

Are we all there then, church? So, chapter 1, verse 9, all the way through 20. I, John, let's read together, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

[4:20] I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet saying, write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus, to Smyrna, and to Pergamum, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.

I'm going to quiz you on how to pronounce this after the fact, right? No, I'm just kidding here. Verse 12, Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning, I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands, one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe, with a golden sash around his chest.

The hairs of his head were what color? White, like white wool, like snow. Now, this is interesting. His eyes were like, what? A flame of fire, right?

And his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace. And his voice was like the roar of many waters. In his right hand, he held seven stars, and from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword.

And his face was like the sun, shining in full strength. What incredible imagery we're seeing here. What in the world's going on? I mean, if I see someone with flames in their eyes, that's, I mean, that's pretty intense for there, right?

[5:56] When I saw him, I fell at his feet. Well, I think I'd fall at my feet, too, if I see the Lord in that. As though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, what, church?

Fear not. I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and Hades.

Write, therefore, the things that you have seen, those that are, and those that are to take place after this. As for the mystery, oh, the Lord's going to break it down, right?

As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are what? Angels of the seven churches.

And the seven lampstands are the seven churches. I love when Christ breaks it down like that, so we can have some clarity going on. It's much like how, when we were going through our series through the parables, there are some explicit times where Christ breaks it down.

[7:03] When we talked about, for example, the seed and the soil, that Christ is saying, the seed represents the word, and the soil represents our hearts. So it's very, a lot more clear and clarifying when we have a breakdown like that.

And so we begin in here where it's saying here that I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation. Well, that's interesting. He's a partner in the tribulation and in the kingdom and patient endurance.

Now, when we talk about this idea of tribulation, the Greek is talking about the opposition, the oppression, or the pressure.

Talking about himself and other Christians that are receiving some sort of pressure. and the kingdom, when we talk about this, that he is part of the kingdom of God.

When we have talked about earlier in verse, let's see here, in verse six, when it says, he made us a kingdom, priest to his God and father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever, right, that we are a part of that kingdom.

[8:17] So John is saying, I too am a part of that. And patience, and patient endurance that are in Jesus, right? So he's saying that when he's writing on the island of Patmos, essentially, he is exiled, but yet he is still witnessing.

How powerful is that to not even be in the same location, but to still be able to write and to have a sense of influence on others?

It's interesting when you go on in verse 10, you see the language here. It says, I was in the spirit. That's an interesting one, isn't it?

I was in the spirit when? On the Lord's day, right? So during worship then, it's this idea of, and for some of you who may remember when I taught about the nature, purpose, and power of scripture, it's this overwhelming, this sense of overwhelm from the spirit to write down what needs to be written down.

In other words, it's found in 1st or 2nd Peter where it says that the apostles and the prophets were carried along by the Holy Spirit, meaning it was such a overwhelm.

[9:35] Think of a ship at sea when the water is gently moving a boat across the water. Well, the water is so powerful that it's carrying along the boat.

And this is similar language in speaking of how John is in the spirit. He's being moved, as it were, with this overwhelming force from the Holy Spirit to write down the word, right?

And in that moment, that sense of overwhelm, he hears the loud trumpets. This voice tells him to write to the seven churches and we see that that's listed. And in fact, as we go along in Revelation, we're going to break down all of those seven churches.

And so, we see in here, then, the seven golden lampstands. It talks about, in verse 13, in the midst of the lampstands, one like a son of God, right?

And it gives this description here. And it's interesting when you have this description, especially when you search in the depths of Scripture, has this language shown up before?

[10:41] Because it's very unusual, right? We're reading this and we're like, that's powerful and kind of mysterious type of description.

So, I want us to turn, actually, I want to show you that this is actually shown in Scripture before. Will you turn with me to Zechariah?

In your ESV Bible, it's going to be found on page 944. And you'll see that the vision for the prophet is very similar in the description for what we find in Revelation.

And this type of language, this isn't the first time. Now, for those of you who were there during our series in Ezra, we went over Zechariah where we went over that verse 6 where the prophet is going to say that, many of you may know this verse, not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord of hosts, right?

And it's this moment where Zerubbabel is going to receive this message to build the second temple. But we're actually looking before that and we'll see how it's connected with Revelation.

[12:00] It's always amazing when we see connections within not only Ezra, but also within Revelation. So, Zechariah chapter 4, we're going to go through verses 1 through 6, and notice how the language is very similar, almost identical, but similar nonetheless.

So, page 944, Zechariah chapter 4, verses 1 through 6. Are we there, church? All right. So, check this out. This is amazing, right? And the angel who talked with me came again and he woke me like a man who was awakened out of his sleep.

being awakened, right? He said to me, what do you see? And I said, I see, and behold, a what? A lampstand, all of gold, with a bowl on top of it, and how many lamps?

Seven lamps on it, with seven lips on each of the lamps that are on top of it. Now, in here, Zechariah is talking about that there's two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on the left.

Verse 4, and I said to the angel who talked with me, what are these, my Lord? And if you're having a vision or you're having a dream, you may want to understand what's going on. Saying, well, what are these, my Lord?

[13:19] And then the angel who talked with me, and I think the angel is being sarcastic, but that's just my opinion on here, right? He said to me, do you not know what these are? You not understand?

What do you mean you don't get what's going on, right? And he said, no. I said, no, my Lord. And he said to me, this is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord of hosts.

Very interesting that that's going to happen where this message is going to go to Zerubbabel to build the temple, but also that same kind of language is what we find in Revelation.

Very, very similar and very powerful nonetheless. So that kind of imagery has been shown before within the Old Testament, right? And how we praise God for that kind of consistency that we see within it.

Amen? So, in going in here, we see the long robe, the hair white as wool, the eyes are like fire, the feet are like burnished bras, the voice is like many waters.

[14:22] And what's interesting in this is when it's talking about the two-edged sword, doesn't that remind you about the word? Right? How it's sharp and how it's penetrating and how powerful it is.

So this is actually speaking of the Lord speaking, that it's penetrating. How powerful is that? Very, very interesting.

And for sure, even as we're going over, it's like, I feel like in Zechariah here, I'm not fully understanding and that's okay.

We don't have to understand everything within Scripture, but certainly by the grace of God, we're going to learn something. Amen? And so, because of this, John falls as though as though he's dead and Jesus touches him and says, fear not.

How many times within Scripture do we find we are told to not be afraid or to have no fear or to not be anxious? We still see that happening.

[15:29] I don't know about you, but to fall completely on the ground as though I'm dead is talk about overwhelm. Talk about the power and the presence of our Lord.

And I mean, what an image. What an image. And I was going to use some software to make such an image. It was the scariest thing I've ever made and I did not put it on this slideshow, mind you. But if you look online, you go on Google or use AI to make something, whatever, try it sometime. It's actually quite a scary image and I don't know about you, I'm going to go on the ground for a second here just like John is, you know.

But Christ is saying, I am the first and the last, the living one. I have the keys of death and Hades, right? Because when we think of our Lord Jesus Christ, we think of the fact that he conquered death, right?

That when he speaks the word, what is said will happen. It will come to pass. I think of how in scripture when Christ is out in the boat and there's that stormy sea that's going on and he goes out and he says, peace, be still, right?

[16:38] Those kind of commands that happen. It's done. And so he goes on explaining the symbols, the stars representing the angels or the messengers and the lampstands equaling the churches.

Let us remember these three things then, kingdom, tribulation and then endurance. We talk about tribulation, let us remember it is pressure, it is affliction.

Not only do we think about the tribulation, but we can also think about times where we have had or experienced a tribulation. Don't raise your hand. How many of you have experienced pressure or a tribulation or a trial before?

Just know that whether you're experiencing the tribulation or a tribulation, God's going to be there with you. And when we think of this language of not being afraid, well, it's easier said than done. However, isn't it good to know that God is there by our side in every season of our life no matter what it is we're going through? No matter what it is we are about to go through? Think of these things and think of the comfort and peace and the security that Jesus Christ gives for us.

[17:51] That's one of the many reasons for us to believe in Him. I don't know about you, but with the way culture is changing and with the constant, you know, there's a lot of good things that are happening in culture, but I also look and there's a lot of crazy things that are going on.

We need a constant in our own life. We need that sure foundation and I can't help but think of how the world is today with the craziness, the political unrest, the shootings that are happening.

People need Christ more than ever before and it's important for us to, number one, lean into Christ as our firm foundation, but also to share in the gospel of Jesus Christ letting people know that there is hope in Him and that there is something more to this life than the craziness or the ever, never-ending scrolling on TikTok or Instagram or Facebook or this constant noise of the media. God provides something a much better way. He provides true peace. He is the truth. He is the way and He provides eternal life for us.

And so, that should be a call for you to be a part of the kingdom, to believe in the Lord and to be saved and just know that in knowing Christ, it's not going to be an easy journey.

[19:16] There's going to be times where we have trials. How many of us have never had a trial? Don't raise your hand for the love of God. If you haven't, then praise God. Right? We've all had trials.

We've all had tribulations. We've had people who have gone up against us. Look at Psalms sometime. Look at all the times that David was just all over the place emotionally. I'm thinking, well, David, what's going on here?

But we can relate to that. Humanity. We can relate to the Lord and come to Him no matter what it is that is going on in our own life because we are imperfect people in an imperfect world but we rely on the perfect God.

Amen? That's where it's at. Let's go to the interpretation then. Right? Here at Ontario Community Church we use what's known as the OIA method, observation, interpretation, and application. The O representing what can we see. Right? Scripture is our source. Nothing should surpass the Word of God. That is our book and we should read it. We should use it by golly.

[20:18] Right? And then the I is what are the lessons that we can learn. A, the application is what can we do about it. So the I then, the first one is tribulation. So the first lesson essentially, the first interpretation is tribulation, kingdom, and endurance.

I was kind of mentioning it already. Right? We should be part of the kingdom. Right? And in being in the kingdom there will be times where people go against us. There will be times where we are, I think of that song under pressure.

Right? There's times where we are going to face adversity but we still trust in the living God as our foundation. We're not going to be shaken. We're going to endure to the end.

And that is the beautiful thing about knowing Jesus Christ. And we think about this for a second is that being a part of the kingdom means we're going to endure with Christ.

We're going to endure with our brothers and sisters together. Because sometimes, and very often, when we go through a tribulation, it's not just us. It's other people. What a call for us to pray for one another, to bear each other up, to be present for each other.

[21:24] And so we, I put we may face tribulation but I want to say we will face tribulation at times. But we're a part of Christ's kingdom and we endure to the end. The second thing then is the Son of Man walks with His churches and His people.

We've had this imagery before throughout Scripture where Christ is leading His sheep to green pastures. Christ as the great shepherd and He is, in other parables, it talks about other pens where other sheep will be representing other churches, other things that are going on in here.

And so Jesus is standing among the seven lampstands. Now, when we look at the number seven, we think of completedness, we think of perfection. And many, many scholars and even I am of the belief that this is a representation not just of the seven churches that we find in Revelation but also for all of the church, the universal church, if we, as it were.

And how important it is that Christ is present or at least should be present in every single congregation. That He's there with us, right? We think of the presence of God and the working of the Holy Spirit, the transforming power that comes from Him, the healing that comes from Him.

And so Christ is the good shepherd and the lampstand is paralleled with what we found in Zechariah chapter 4. Wasn't that interesting to see that there's this vision that's happening and not only is it applying to the temple that needs to be built that we find connected with Ezra, but it's going way all the way over into Revelation.

[23:03] That's amazing. That's incredible. And I mean, it just goes to show you the power of our Lord, right? And just as the temple would be led by the Spirit, so too would the Spirit lead John to write down the vision.

How wonderful is that connected? And we think of how, well, Christ is the sure foundation. He is the Son of Man. The third thing then, two words, church, what does it say?

Fear not. Fear not. The living one who rules over death. Piggybacking off of the fact that Jesus is the first and the last.

Some translations will go on saying that he is the Alpha and the Omega as a repeating theme. Absolutely. The living one who died, rose again, and now lives victorious.

He lives forever, holding the keys of death and Hades. That Christ rules and reigns. And when I talked about this idea, the sword that is from his mouth, it's a representation of the spoken word that it's penetrating, and that is voice, the power of many waters.

[24:14] What interesting language. If you've ever been to the coast and you hear the sound of the waves that are just smashing up upon the rocks and how loud and how penetrating that is.

Or when we use the language of a loud trumpet, there's all these different words to describe how loud and how powerful the voice is. And so when we look at Jesus Christ, let us be encouraged then that Christ reigns supreme and victorious in our lives.

That Jesus Christ saves, ruling over death. I want to be a part of his kingdom. I want to be a part of that which is going to stand forever, not something that will fade away.

Let's go to that next slide then, which is now the application here. It's important for us to read the word of God and to learn it, but it's also important for us, how do we apply this to our own very lives?

So the first one then is to live, what does that say? What's that second word? So don't live alone, right? Live together in Christ with the power of the Holy Spirit.

[25:31] It is not good for us to live life alone. We are better when we are together, united as the body of Christ. And unfortunately, when we think of the world and the culture in which we live in, how do you hear very often any good news on the news?

I'm starting to think, I don't think I've heard any good news recently, but we have the greatest news, and that is the good news of the gospel, right?

And we think for a moment, how easy is it for us to be separated from the body of Christ?

And how the world and our culture and people with evil in their heart want to separate the body, separate us from one another.

But when we think of Christ, we think of the hope that is found in Him, the joy that comes from Him, the unity, the life that comes from Him, not the division, not the hatred.

[26:45] Let us think of the life-giving power that comes from Him, right? And even through trials and tribulations, when you are going through a bad situation, whether you're going through a trial or a tribulation, whether you're about to or you just got out of it or maybe you're going through that storm, knowing that Christ is with you and knowing that us as brothers and sisters in Christ, we've got to be there for each other.

We've got to pray for one another and check in with each other. A simple how are you doing? A letter. A text message. If you don't like talking on the phone, I get for some of us we might not like that.

Whatever. Think of ways that you can connect with your brothers and sisters in Christ and think of how you can exhibit the love of Christ for others. So we live together in Christ.

Not to be alone. I'm always convicted when I meet a Christian who wants nothing to... They believe in Christ but they want nothing to do with the body. Or they want nothing to do with the church.

And more often than not, it's because they've been hurt. More often than not, it's they were taught, well, hatred or division rather than hope and love and peace and the building up.

[28:03] And granted, we have to think of how we can exhibit that love to others. I have a special place in my heart for people who just are not a part of the body.

Pray for them. Think of how you can be present with them. For some of you, you may know of this notion of people who have deconstructed their faith.

And I, as a millennial, I know a lot of people who are my age who have left Christianity because of one reason or another. More often than not, it's because they felt isolated.

Because they weren't able to connect with the body. Right? Now, I'm not going to justify every person that has left the church. But how important it is, is it for us to be able to speak truth but also to deal in love.

Meeting people where they are at in their spiritual walk. I always tell people, whether you're on a spiritual journey and you're seeking truth, may you find the truth.

[29:16] Right? May you begin your life in Jesus Christ. That is not the end. That is the beginning of your new life in Christ. And we've got to think of how we can minister to those who have deconstructed, have that open door.

be available for those. Much like we're to be there for those that don't even believe or have never heard of the gospel. May we be ambassadors for Christ and may we be able to share in our faith, in our testimony with other people.

And so, let us stand firm on the solid rock. Let us live like Christ and as I mentioned before, this world needs Christ more than ever. let's not be divided.

Let us be united in Christ. Let us focus on the hope in Him. The newness of life, the transformation, the healing that comes from Him. That's just the first point.

The second thing is to worship on the Lord's day in the Spirit. Let the Holy Spirit work in and through you. Worship the Lord. Be in His presence. Don't let there be any distractions or any sort of things that derail you or deter you.

[30:37] Focus on worship and coming to the Lord no matter what it is you're going through. I can tell you there's a lot of times where I'm coming before the Lord and I'm not in a good state and that's okay.

We come as we are to the Lord who gives us comfort, who will guide us, who will lead us. He is the Good Shepherd.

So let the Spirit lead and guide you not only personally, but to lead us as a church body. Let your mind, your heart, and your spirit be transformed by Him.

And just know that we're all a work in progress. God's not done with us. God's going to continue to mold and to transform us and to work in and through us all the days of our life.

What an amazing journey to be on though, to be molded by Him. I'm sure you may identify or you may know someone who you have seen God work in their life.

[31:45] How powerful is that? We are a work in progress. We are to be changed and transformed to become more like Him. If you don't know the Lord, may you respond by believing the death, burial, and resurrection of Him.

And in knowing Him, may we continue to respond by following where the Lord leads us. And then finally, the third one is shine as Christ's lampstand.

I've put personal and corporate because there's a connection that we find with Revelation as well as the parables. If you remember the parable of the lamp, right, letting your light shine, don't hide it under a bushel.

But also the parable of the ten virgins. We find that at times, lampstands typically means churches, but it can also mean us personally.

So it's equally as important for us to let our own light shine, but for us as a church to have our light shine. Being a beacon of hope.

[32:48] I always think of that imagery of a lighthouse, right? And you think of the, you know, the classic image of there's a storm that's going on and the waves are crashing and there's thunder and lightning and there's a guy on a boat and he has no idea where's the lighthouse and finally he sees that light and he wants to go towards it.

What a powerful representation we can think of when it comes to the church. How many of us are seeking for that safety, that security, let us come to the light.

And so, guard your witness with integrity and love. Let your good works point people to Christ as I always mention. We are not saved by what we do.

We are saved by what has been done for us in Jesus Christ. Because of this, we are saved so that we can do good in the name of Christ.

let your own lamp shine and let the lampstand of the church shine brightly. And I encourage for you to pray, to pray to the Lord, to pray for your brothers and sisters in Christ, but also for this church, much like how we pray for other churches that they will shine brightly.

[34:06] We think about all the churches that are around the area, we better be shining bright because there's a lot of people that need to come to the Lord. It's very important for us. So let your own lamp shine and let the lampstand of the church shine brightly.

Pray for your brothers and sisters, pray for shepherds, and let us think of how we can encourage one another this week. And in closing, let us take away these two words, fear not.

When we think of the power, the awe, and the wonder of Jesus Christ, it's overwhelming for sure. However, know that Christ is with you every step of the way.

The living one who died and now lives forevermore, and that he holds the keys. Let us listen to his voice. Let us hear and understand.

May we receive his guidance and keep his word as we endure trials, tribulation, and journey on our spiritual walk in Christ.

[35:15] Let us pray together. Father God, we thank you for this time and this opportunity for us to gather today. What rich and heavy teaching we have today.

I pray, Father, that we may hear your word and hear so that we understand. You call for us not to be afraid.

May we not be afraid on this journey in life. May we come to know you. May we receive that free gift of salvation by believing in you.

May we grow. may we not hide away our lamp and may we as the church may we shine brightly. In other words, Father, I pray that we may shine brightly in our own lives but also brightly as the church.

And I pray that we are moved from this message today to live and to love like you. May you move us to act and to respond to you whether that's believing in you the first time returning to you continuing on the growth trajectory or just being moved to act.

[36:35] We love you so much. We praise you and we glorify your holy name. It is in the name of Jesus Christ that we pray the living one the alpha and the omega that we pray and we all say together amen church.

Amen. Thank you for listening to Ontario Community Church. If this blessed you, share it with someone who needs encouragement. Remember the promise.

Blessed are those who read, hear, and keep the words of this prophecy. So let us live it this week with steadfast faith and a loving witness. This next Sunday we will begin week four in our Revelation sermon series with Revelation chapter two verses one to seven where Jesus's letter is to Ephesus.

We will explore what it means to keep our first love and to do the first works while shining as his lampstand. Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ the first and the last the alpha and the omega God bless.

God bless you through Thank you.

[38:25] Thank you.