



REVELATION:
THE FINAL ANSWER

REVELATION

The Final Answer - Pitch Perfect - Part 2

Revelation 1:4-7

INTRODUCTION

As we continue our study of the book of Revelation, we are going to spend some more time looking at the perfect picture of God's messenger, and that is John. In today's key passage, John is still taken away with Christ alone even after all of the years of following Jesus. You can't read what he wrote (inspired by the Holy Spirit) without capturing his passion, love and worship of Jesus Christ. As we look at these words, I need to tell you that some of us have lost heart. How does that happen? How does someone lose the fire that was once in their heart to follow Christ? In the coming days, we will read about a church that lost its first love. But for now, I want us to become aware that we may have lost our fire. And when that happens, we need to know what to do to keep the fire alive in our hearts.

KEY POINTS

1. Never forget whose you are, regardless of your present situation.

I don't know where you are in your life right now, but you need to be caught up in whose you are. If you focus only on your present situation, it is easy for the fire to go out. You could look at what is happening in your life and you might say, "This is not where I intended to be financially, relationally, or professionally right now. And certainly, this is not where I intended to be spiritually right now." It is very easy to implode if you look at your present situation. Sometimes, it can be out of control.

Simply remember John. Remember that his focus was not on his isolation or his present situation; instead, his focus was on whose he was in Christ. If you want the fire to burn brightly in your heart, focus on Christ!

2. Never compare yourself, or your situation, to others or theirs.

Even though it's tempting to compare yourself to others, you don't really know what someone else's situation is. John could have fallen into this comparison trap. He could have said, "Lord, why have you isolated me? Why have you allowed me to be in exile? You haven't done that with Simon Peter or James. Why me?" Why me and why us? That's our problem. The fire has gone out because we are too busy looking at our neighbor across the street. When we are extrapolating certain ideas about someone else in comparison to us, and it has literally drowned our fire for Christ.

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3. Live to be a blessing to others, not expectant to receive blessings from others.

With many of us, we are counting how many people have blessed us rather than living how we can bless other people. That's what John was doing. He was living to be a blessing. He realized that God had given him insight not only for the churches of his generation, but also for the people who would read the Book of Revelation for years and years to come. I pray you will realize that you can keep your heart on fire by living outward. God will be fanning the flame on your bonfire personally.

4. Choose to remain faithful in difficult seasons.

Difficult seasons will come in your life without a doubt. And when they do, you will have a tendency to wonder, "God, what are you up to? Why have you allowed this to happen? What is your agenda? What is your plan?" When you are experiencing a difficult season in your life, you need to realize that God has a plan for your life, in the midst of that difficult season. Remember, John was going through a difficult season on the Island of Patmos. He was in his later years, and he was totally separated from everyone. He literally could have said, "Okay, I'm done. I'm done. God, if this is how you're going to treat me as your child, I'm done. Instead of being blessed, I seem to be cursed."

That was not his perspective; and he chose to remain faithful. Let me remind you of something that is very, very powerful here. Do you realize that this difficult situation in John's life positioned him to be at the right time, in the right place, and in the right position personally, to be able to receive and write? Because he was isolated, he could hear from God without any distractions. While he was isolated alone on this island, he had time to write. If he had not gone through this difficult situation, we may have never received the Book of Revelation.

5. When isolated from meaningful encouragement from others, press into Jesus.

I mentioned before that John wasn't receiving visitors. They weren't coming to Patmos to visit him. There is no record that anyone showed up, wrote a letter, sent a basket of food, nothing, nothing! Instead, do you know what he did? He pressed into Jesus. Your spiritual life should never be dependent upon what others are doing for you or with you. Even if they have forgotten you (and they will), press into Jesus. Maybe, they will continue to do so, spiritually and personally. When you are isolated from meaningful encouragement from others, press into Jesus.

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6. Resist putting yourself before others.

This is exactly what John did. He saw that the message he was writing was inspired by the Holy Spirit; and he knew it would be a blessing to other people. Remember when he wrote, “Blessed are those who read and those who hear the words of this prophecy.” His focus was on others; it was not about putting himself first. I told you before that John rarely referred to himself in his own Gospel. He was always, “the one whom Jesus loved” or, “John, the beloved.” This is where we get that phrase; he always downplayed himself and up-played Jesus. When you do that, when you put others first before yourself; your fire will continue to burn.

7. Get back into the Word.

On the Island of Patmos. John did not have the Torah at his disposal. There was no cell phone or computer to Google, “Where is this passage? Where did this come from?” It came because it was already in his heart.

As a child, John had studied the law and the prophets. He had memorized Scripture. Guess what? At the right time and in the right place, the Spirit of God brought things back into his memory. Let me ask you a question. How much of the Word of God do you know? If there was a time when you were separated from your Bible and you don’t have access to the Internet, could you write down verses which God has placed in your heart? Do you have that catalog of the Word of God in your heart and in your mind? With that catalog and the Holy Spirit, you can recall the words when you need them. If you want to keep the fire alive in your heart, you need to get back into the Word.

8. Keep your eyes on Jesus and verbalize what you think of Him to others.

The entire Book of Revelation is about sharing Christ with others. That's what John was doing. Many believers have lost their fire and their heart because they have stopped telling other people what they think about Jesus. They have stopped witnessing. They have stopped sharing Christ with their family members and their friends. They think these people have been exposed. However, they have no idea what people are hearing. The discipline of sharing your faith and talking to people about what Jesus is doing in your life, doesn't put out the fire; it fans the fire and the flame grows larger.

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9. Repent and repeat 1-8, until you are where you know you are to be spiritually.

Rinse and repeat. This is key. For many of us, we think the Christian life is about wet wick living. The normal Christian life is not complacent. It is not inactive. It is not flat. Instead, it is full of fire and vinegar. It is full of passion and love for Jesus and worship of Him. You are verbalizing about Jesus and the things He can do in other people's lives. Don't settle for a wet wick.

Your life is critical. Your life is important. Your life counts! Let it burn for Jesus! If you find yourself complacent, inactive, unengaged, and detached; guess who moved and threw water on your fire? It wasn't the Lord, and you can't blame anyone else. Do you know where it came from? You know who was holding the bucket. It is time to let the bucket go and begin to cry out, "Oh Lord set my soul afire, set my soul afire."

NOTES

Lined area for taking notes, consisting of 25 horizontal lines.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What are some ways you find yourself regularly comparing yourself to others?
2. When was a time you chose to remain faithful amidst a difficult season? How did that work out for you?
3. Do you make it a habit to memorize Scripture? If not, what are one or two verses you can begin committing to memory so that you can have God's Word readily available to you at all times?
