

'FASTEN YOUR GRIP'

By

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Unless otherwise stated, all scripture quotations in this booklet are taken from the New King James Version of the Bible.

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Scripture Readings: Revelation 2 v 24 & 25, Revelation 3 v 1 – 3, 11

[Rev. 2 v 25] "But hold fast what you have till I come". "Hold onto the truth you have until I get there" (Message Translation).

[Revelation 3 v 3] "Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent". "The message you heard with your ears grasp it again and turn back to God" (Message Translation).

[Revelation 3 v 11] "Behold I am coming quickly. Hold fast what you have that no one may take your crown". "Keep a tight grip on what you have that no one distracts you and steals your crown" (Message Translation).

The schools are out for summer there is a mass exodus from the normal routine as thousands leave for a holiday break. Alas sadly when the holiday mode comes upon us some of us begin to loosen our grip on our Christian life. We wind down, we chill out, we take our foot off the accelerator and we relax. We all need a break because Jesus said "come ye apart and rest awhile" [Mark 6 v 31] if you don't come apart you will fall apart. You can't keep on with velocity you must take time out. Jesus took time out everyday and he spent it alone seeking the will of God for his life. But for some they will come apart because they have lost their grip on Christ.

Brother and Sister have you got a grip on Christ? Have you got a grip on Godly living, lifestyle & principles?

God's Word for you at this holiday season is 'Fasten Your Grip' hold fast, don't lose hold of what you've Got from God, cherish it for the rest of your life.

Three times and to 3 different churches these words of warning are spoken by the risen Lord in the book of Revelation.

- [Revelation 2 v 25] He says to the church in Thyatira "hold fast what you have till I come". The Lord Jesus said these words to the church of God in a city called Thyatira.

If you read the letter and check history, look into commentators you will find that the Thyatira Church was a Church of brilliant potential but had become a compromising Church (that's what we are seeing today – the Church is compromising Godly principles). It was a Church with a brilliant location in the midst of a long valley where two rivers met, brilliant commercial centre, a tremendous gateway to the East – Asia and other parts of the known world, a powerful influence and had tremendous outreach potential. Yet it had no fortifications like the city it was easy prey, who would come and take and then leave, because it was a channel from east to west etc. so they came and went as quickly as they came to Church.

It had compromised the truth of the Gospel, by tolerating those with a Jezebel spirit of control. Ever met people in church life who have that heavy personality control of others? If they don't like it, they go around all their wee pawns overburden and control them. Their personality becomes used by the evil spirit to dominate – infact it is occultic. Jezebel worshipped idols and Satan. The Jezebel spirit of control, the spirit of false prophesy, the spirit of

sexual immorality, because that is how Jezebel lived. She controlled the King her husband. That Jezebel spirit is in many Churches today. You get a strong personality and that personality whether it is a man or woman, minister or lay person that Jezebel spirit can dictate to Churches. Not the will of God, but the deception of Satan.

Such over-tolerance and compromise had weakened their potential and clouded the truth and diminished their effective testimonies thus the Lord wrote a letter warning them and he said “**hold fast what you have**” because in the midst of compromise there was a wee nucleus. Infact if you read the 7 letters there was in everyone of the Churches a wee nucleus; you call them the over-comers.

There are always the over-comers. I would love to have a Church full of over-comers, but they are not all over-comers why? Because some are losing their grip and allowing the enemy to come in and dictate to them.

The message translation says “**hold onto the truth until I get there**”. The youth bible says “continue in your loyalty to Christ until I come”. Don’t compromise the truth for short-term thrills from others that will lead you astray into ineffective compromising situations. My answer and the Word of the Lord is those who are being dictated to –don’t let anybody else do that, fasten your grip. **Know whom you believe in, know the truth and recognise it, know deception, and expose it!!**

If this Church was to close today I would still serve the Lord, and I know some you would do the same, but we don’t want it to close, we don’t want our Church to be a compromising Church, letting everything go on – sexual immorality, adultery, fornication and all that kind of practice. We don’t want a spirit dictating even through the Women’s Fellowship. But you don’t have to be a woman to have a Jezebel spirit. It is in men as well. So we need the spirit of truth and the spirit of freedom in our midst.

2. [Rev. 3 v 1] The second Church he writes to is the **Church of Sardis** and he says this “remember therefore how you have received and heard, hold fast and repent”. They had went over the score, they had lost it. He’s bringing them back from their fall, he says “hold fast and repent”. The Lord Jesus spoke these words to the Church of God in Sardis.

Let me read you the description of the Sardis Church by the examination of our Lord Jesus. He said “these things, says he who has the 7 spirits and the 7 stars, I know your works that you have a name, that you are alive but you are dead”. You have a name or a reputation that you are alive, but you are dead. That was the examination of the Lord Jesus. Sardis was known as the lifeless Church, or the Church of the living dead. A great name and a testimony of life, but in reality it smacked the smell of death. Is that you? You have a great name ‘marvellous what God has done for him in the past’ but today you are dead and dying. Is there anybody like that, you have lost the plot, you have lost your grip? You have allowed things to come in – you have a great name that you are alive, but nobody knows that you are dead on the inside. You are not the way you used to be, you don’t have the fire in your belly, infact this message is killing you because it is you personified.

But there is hope – “hold fast and repent”. He will never cancel anybody out, you cancel yourself out. He never cancels anybody out, he says ‘hold fast,

get a grip, grasp' repent if need be and get back. Many of us have a reputation. The Peoples Church has a reputation, we have two good reputations, the first is people don't want to come to this Church because they will get saved, the other is we are the happy clappers etc and hanging from the rafters and doing summersaults and that's always told by people who never come. There are people outside who will tell you what always happens in the Peoples Church, but have never put their foot over the threshold – isn't that the truth?

Because of the Scottish / Irish background we get a bit excited, but not over the top, some people think we have lost the plot. When we worship the Lord and close our eyes and praise the Lord and dance etc some Churches think that is over the score. That's unconservative and so they call us down for it, but I want to know what they're going to do in heaven? I want to practice now for heaven.

Sardis had become the Church of the living dead, it had a great reputation, but they were dying or dead. "Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God".

On my knees this morning, I said 'I know I am not perfect Lord, but I want to have a heart that is perfect towards you'.

In other words he's saying, if you don't get sorted, if you procrastinate, if you keep on putting it off and saying you're going to, but not getting round to it, he says if you don't get sorted and address your situation, the writing is on the wall - you will die.

N.B. "Remember therefore how you have received and heard". There was a time when they heard and received and rejoiced and obeyed, but they got away from it. Something happened and they got away from it.

Think of the gift you once had in your hands, the message you heard with your ears, now he says "grasp it again and turn back to God".

Am I talking to someone who has a name and you are alive, but you are dead, a testimony of life in the past, yet you are dying on your feet? **Fasten Your Grip!**

Hold fast and repent. "So do not forget what you have received and heard". "Obey it and change your hearts and lives, so you must wake up or I will come like a thief" (Youth Bible).

This was Christ's 'wakeup call to a Church' who had lost it's grip - repent and fasten your grip.

3. [Chapter 3 v 11] "Behold I am coming quickly, **Hold fast what you have**, that no-one may take your crown". This was his warning to the Church and the believers in Philadelphia, that's the Church of brotherly love (that's what it means, brotherly love) or missionary minded Church.

[Verse 7] "And to the angel of the Church in Philadelphia write, these things says He who is holy. He who is true, He who has the key of David, he who

opens and no-one shuts, and shuts and no-one opens". This was the Church of the open door.

The Lord Jesus is going to open doors for you wherever you are in life. What will you do with them? Whether you go through them is your choice. He has given you an open door that no man can shut!

The Church in Smerna showed her loyalty to Christ in the midst of persecution. Ten years they suffered persecution and some of them died. But the Church in Philadelphia showed her constant love and loyalty to Jesus in serving, evangelising, outreaching by spreading the Gospel through Christ's open door. Because of their little strength in danger of Satan's lies, the synagogues of Satan's teachings who tried to infiltrate, poison and pervert their teaching the Lord Jesus commands them to 'hold fast, continue strong in what you have left that no-one take or steal your crown'.

I had to let go of the world; I was compelled by the call of God on my life to come into the ministry.

Now that you have obtained what you've obtained, now that you've come so far in spite of the distractions, don't lose it or let someone else steal your crown.

There are many people who are able and talented but like Esau, they allow people to steal their birthright. Jacob wanted it even though Esau was to get it.

If you are called, don't loosen your grip, whatever you are called to do, don't loosen your grip, if it's not working out, then ask God to give you the grace to work it out. If there are other people and they are coming in and you feel like you are losing your crown, then remember they are coming in to compliment you and you are to compliment them. We are not here to fight with each other and climb the ladder because we will all have a crown when Christ comes if we don't lose our grip.

We all have got a crown, the over-comers crown awaits you so don't loosen your grip.

"Keep a tight grip on what you have so no-one distracts you and steals your crown" Fasten your grip!

To all these 3 Churches the Master commands "hold fast to what you have". Are you letting go to what you have or are you holding fast?

- To the 2nd Church he says "hold fast and repent". Do you need to repent to get back what you have lost and what you are losing? Get it back today!
- To the other Church he says "hold fast to what you have, let no-one take your crown". If you believe you have been called, designated, anointed, delegated to whatever it may be, if God's hand is on your life don't panic, just hold to what you've got because there is a crown waiting for you.

[2 Tim. 4 v 8] "There is therefore laid up for me a crown of glory, that the Lord the righteous judge shall give to me" not only to me but also to all who love

his appearing". I don't want your crown, I have my own! But I'm not letting anyone take mine because that is my destiny – amen!

This is not the time to compromise, that's what the Anglican Church is doing also the Church of Scotland. This is not the time to play dead, you have a name that you are alive but you are dead. This is not the time to loosen your grip and surrender your crown – **it is time to hold fast!**

Charles Hadden Spurgeon a well known preacher said "a man has 2 hands, I would urge you to take a double hold on these things which Satan will try to steal from you".

You cannot bring Jesus to others if you don't hold onto him yourself. Christ is no shadow you can lay hold of him, there is something to lay hold upon. We need to stand together, the Church is only as strong as it's weakest link!!

If you are weak then give me your hand, I am strong, I am a winner, I refuse to lie down, I refuse to give in, I refuse to be intimidated by the enemy – I have a destiny!

I am not anybody special, but I am just living the Word of God for my life. I need you and you need me and we need each other. If you believe you have been brought here for a divine purpose and you have a divine destiny then stop wallowing in the mire of self-pity and saying I'm not discovered, I'm overlooked, I'm undermined. A man's gift will make room for him. Your time if it has not already, will come, but if you loosen the grip it will never come – don't lose your grip in these days!

Someone said to Pastor Spurgeon about his preaching and how he preaches the truth, irrespective of the congregation. He said "my ministry is a flail which parts the chaff from the wheat and a fan which drives the chaff away and I desire it to be".

The preacher is sometimes not everybody's friend, but the preacher is God's servant and God's workman.

He says "I aim at preaching the chaff from the wheat, if I hear that somebody has been offended because of the truth which I have preached, I remember that they were offended at that infinite greater preacher who on one occasion found that many went back and walked no more with him for he had uttered a hard saying, who could hear it, does this offend you, you will be more and more offended yet as we further and further delve into truth".

We need to hold fast to the truth, the word "hold fast" is the same word in [Hebrews 4 v 14] and the same in [Rev 2 v 25 & 3 v 11] it means to use strength, to seize. There is no passivity in this, it's not take it or leave it, it's grab, retain, lay hold of it, hold fast, keep, lay hands on it, obtain, take by, grip tightly.

[Hebrews 4 v 14] "Let us hold fast our confession to Jesus Christ".
[Revelation 3 v 3] means to watch, to guard from loss or injury by keeping the eye on to prevent escaping, fortress around, detain, hold fast, keep, preserve. "Hold fast till I come".

Whatever you have got from God, don't let it go, don't throw it away, hold tight, cherish it, hug it, fasten your grip on what you've got, what's left, what's valuable to you, don't let go, hold fast until the Lord comes.

There is another 'hold fast' [1 Thes. 5 v 21] Paul says "Test all things". Don't be gullible.

Sometimes we can't see the good because of our negative attitudes. Negativity is not from God, it is a killer! One drop of negativity can ruin a vision. If you are listening to negative people you will be sour, you will be defeated and you'll never see anything good in this Pastor or the Church. If you listen to the wrong people they will poison you that's what Jezebel was doing, it was the synagogue of Satan and they were doing that.

God says 'don't let them, "hold fast"' Paul says to the Thessalonians they had problems with the synagogue of Satan also "Test all things, hold fast what is good". Hold down, keep in memory, possess, obtain, seize on, stay and take the things that are good, throw out the garbage.

When you eat a meal, most of the times you eat what you like and leave what you don't. Unless you lived in our house years ago, you had to eat everything; you weren't allowed to leave anything!

[Hebrews 3 v 6] "But Christ as a Son over His own House whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end". You must go right to the end till Jesus comes.

[Hebrews 10 v 23] "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering for He who promised is faithful".

[2 Timothy 1 v 13] "Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus".

It doesn't matter if Benny Hinn, Billy Graham, or whoever says it, if the Lord doesn't say it, question it.

"Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus". The word 'hold fast' there means to possess, of necessity.

[Luke 20 v 20] "So they watched Him and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, that they might seize on His words, in order to deliver Him to the power and the authority of the governor". That is the same word as [1 Timothy 6 v 12 & 19] "fight the good fight of faith, lay hold". Do you see the way they grabbed hold of Him, he says lay hold of eternal life, get a firm grip. They didn't let him go, they took him straight to the cross. He didn't escape because they had a firm grip on him as they were doing their dastardly deed for evil. He says 'fight the good fight of faith'.

Do you see the way they did that with me Paul says, 'you do that with Christ' lay hold, grab him, "lay hold of eternal life whereunto you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses". Seize the truth.

I love this story. Do you ever read about David's 3 mighty men. Men who knew how to fight for their King. God give us a Church who knows how to fight (not each other).

How can anybody or anything threaten you when you lay hold of Christ? A firm grip keeps you right.

[2 Samuel 23 v 9] "After him was Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David when they defied the Philistines who were gathered there for battle, and the men of Israel had retreated. He arose and attacked the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand stuck to the sword. The Lord brought about a great victory that day; and the people returned only to plunder]. He was so faithful in battle that they had to prize his fingers open to get the sword out. 'Would you get to know God's Word that when you die they have to prize it out of your hands. The sword of the Lord'.

We need to get to know God's Word, we need to read it, we need to live it. There are too many Christians reading this that and the other and it's good to read all sorts of things but not as a substitute for God's Word – it is the Word of life and it will strengthen you.

1. Get a grip on Jesus
2. Fasten your grip on sound words / the promises of God's Word (grip the promise until it is birthed in you, get to know where they are)

When you get a grip of the promises then you know you are coming through!

Amen!