

## God's White Stone

### Revelation 2:12-17

#### Introduction:

Many couples have love names or pet names for each other and they vary with the couple, and these pet names reflect our affection and the intimacy we have for one another.

Now the point is – these are special names which until now few people new outside of our kids and us.

Jesus has a love name for each of us, but I don't have a clue as to what He might call me.

This name shows the love God has for each of us and portrays the level of intimacy that He wants with each of us.

Can you imagine the pile of white stones this must be?

**I. Every Saint Will Get A Stone – For It Is By Our Faith We Overcome. I John 5:4-5**

***4 for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes***

***the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.***

If we could just imagine this morning what this would all look like, I can see Jesus as He picks up each stone and thought about us and slowly carved that love name with a smile on His face picturing the look on our face when He gives it to us.

Every once in a while when I am around my sister and my daughter – I'll call my sister Jessica when her name is Sheila. Have you ever done that?

Just – not thinking and your brain goes into automatic and you say the wrong name.

With Jesus there is never any problem when it comes to our names.

You know people in love have special things they share together and they don't enjoy having others around when they are in intimate conversations.

#### **Illustration:**

I recall when my children were younger – they would get on the phone and talk seemingly for hours with their special person.

There would be times when I would need to use the phone and I would pick it up and all of a sudden the conversation would come to a screeching halt and they would say – "I'm on the phone – hang up!" – as

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if to say – This is a private conversation and you're not to hear us talking.

Have any of you ever had that happen as parents?

When they break out the candles or go to a special restaurant, they don't want the parents and friends to be around.

Some time ago I asked Chris if Dru and I could go out with him and Shelly and his response was, "No Dad, sorry, but this is my time with my wife!" Some other time.

I felt like the Cat in the Cradle Song.

Whatever it is – when one of them breaks out that item – the other one knows that a loving time is about to begin.

It refers to this in verse 7 that Jesus has hidden manna to share with us and the manna is mentioned first and we eat that with Him before He gives us our white stone with the love name on it.

Many of the ladies in our congregation this morning have a "rock of love" on your left wedding finger.

We could call that a stone that recognizes you belong to a certain guy. Do you recall where you got that? Do you remember the place?

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Do you know that Jesus is also romantic in His relationship with us? We will share a special meal with Him and then He will give us a white stone that will be far more precious than the largest diamond in the world. Hallelujah PTL!

The love of Jesus is so strong that He shares this joy of intimacy to the Church of Pergamos where there are Balaamites and Nicolaitanes.

Remember in our first sermon we told you that the Nicolaitanes were people who were trying to chop and divide the church into pieces.

We must not let this warning go by us as His Church and be ignorant about Nicolaitanes who want to cause division and dissension in His Church.

I did a study on the name Pergamos and found this name means "thoroughly married" and they appeared to thoroughly married to Jesus, but there is a problem in their relationship with Christ.

They have false teaching of Balaam  
They ate food sacrificed to idols  
They committed sexual immorality  
Some of them held to the teachings of the Nicolaitans.

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And Jesus said ***“Repent! Or I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the Sword of My mouth.”***

And Jesus offers them intimacy and love, but only if they will repent.

## **II. HOW MUCH OF PERGAMOS IS IN US?**

**The Word of God tells us that we are to be the Bride of Christ, IF we are truly born again and yet we cling to the world as if we were married to it!**

In Revelation 19:7-9 we read, ***7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. 8 Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) 9 Then the angel said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!’ ” And he added, “These are the true words of God.”***

The truth is – in today’s church we are bigamists in practice, we try to be married to Christ and be married to the world at the same time, when we are supposed to be committed to the One and Only God!

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The tragedy in the church today is that professing Christians try to straddle the world and the church and in their carnality they are not what Christ demands of them – and the only way to Christ is through genuine Repentance.

Folks, I can’t tell you enough in this sermon what carnality will do to your spiritual life if you don’t address it and have spiritual surgery by the Holy Spirit that will free you and give you victory.

When we talk about Repentance it means to turn around from the direction you are going and have a change from your sinful ways to the righteous ways of Christ.

**Why is this process so vitally important?  
Because Jesus is waiting to share with you  
hidden manna!**

**If we don’t do this – than we will miss it!**

Here’s the problem in the church today: We want the rewards of the Christian life without the discipline of becoming a disciple!

How do we relate to that?

What is it that demands our attention and our allegiance in our lives besides Jesus?

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In our society today in America – Money has become our god.

In our society today in America – Time has become our god.

In our society today in America – Pleasure has become our god.

And God says, ***“I’m a jealous God.”***

***“You shall not have any other gods before me.”***

**This White Stone – could be a brilliant diamond – that’s just a guess.**

**One man said and I agree with this, “The stone’s value rests in what is written on it, not on what it is.”**

Now folks, stay with me in this thought – What is written on the stone is our “title” of affection and worth to Christ Jesus that only you will know.

**The Phrase: “I will give him or her a white stone” alludes to an ancient practice whereby criminals were either condemned or acquitted according as the judge dropped a black or a white stone into an urn.**

Let me share with you an ancient practice that will give us more of an understanding of what this white stone means.

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It happened in the ancient Greek world. There is a Greek history here:

In one tragedy – a man by the name of Orestes killed his mother in what he claimed to be a judicial act because she had killed his father.

When he returns to Troy – he faces condemnation and people who want his life taken.

In his distress, Apollo advises him to go to Athens and plead his case before the courts – actually the same court Paul stood before in Acts chapter 17.

He stands before the judge and the judge drops in some black stones and some white stones into an urn.

A goddess by the name of Pallas who is the arbitrator drops in a white stone: the stones are counted and Pallas declares the accused is acquitted.

**Application:**

**So this helps us to understand the meaning of the promise: “I will give him a white stone.”  
As meaning: I will seal his acquittal!**

You know what – We are much like Orestes pursued by the furies of hell and the devil.

The enemy of our life would love nothing better than to see us tried, condemned and destroyed.

Every sin we have ever committed dropped into the urn, as it were, like a black stone against us.

But the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior drops in the White Stone into the judicial urn and that one stone outweighs all the black ones.

Aren't you wonderfully blessed this morning when we can hear our Lord say, "O guilty man – O guilty woman – I acquit you – I pronounce you absolved from all your sins and offences. Here is the White Stone – Holy it up before your accusers – and Keep it to the Judgment Day – That when the books are opened – you may produce the white stone and say – There – bless God – is my Acquittal from the Lord Jesus Himself!"

### **III. Now has the Lord ever given you a White Stone?**

You see friends, sin, guilt, the law and conscience has dropped stone after stone into the urn of your life – condemning you here – condemning you there – a black stone here and a black stone there.

I ask you this morning – is there a White Stone – that will do away with these black stones of your life?

You see when Jesus pardons us from our sinful life, He empties the black stones from our urn and then comes the blessedness and beauty of the manna and He gives us the White Stone with a new name on it.

We've been acquitted from our guilt and set free!

But it's not just acquittal, there is something more.

This relationship takes on the name of marriage.

Just as the husband takes the wife and God makes them one flesh; so it is when Jesus brings forth the manna and gives us the White Stone.

He gives us the marriage ring of salvation and changes the name.

The new name, then, is a spiritual marriage between us and Christ Jesus; and with our new name there is new favors, new blessings, and a claim to all that the bridegroom possesses.

You see – now understand this – we are the Church, the bride of Christ and He is the Bridegroom coming for us as the Church/the Bride.

When we have that relationship with Him, there is a deep love that only Christ and the believer can have.

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Here's what this passage is really trying to say:

***“To the individual who is in the process of living the victorious Christian life day by day, I will give a White Stone, and in the Stone a new name that no man can understand except the individual to whom the stone is given.”***

#### **IV. Why is this passage so important for our understanding?**

It's important for us to understand the background of this passage:

Do you realize this morning how very important it is in your relationship with God that God has given every believer a promise to be with them in order to live victoriously the Christian Life?

Some of us have learned that Christian believers were undergoing great suffering and persecution at the hands of the Roman Empire, particularly during the reign of Domitian and Nero.

In those days little groups of Christian believers would gather in a home to worship God, to sing, to pray and study God's Word.

Now, folks, remember many of the writings of the NT came to the Church as located in a particular home because in those days, Christians were

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involved in building churches, not building church buildings.

That's why we keep telling you how very important it is for church believers to be involved in a Small Home Bible Study Group.

If you will do a study, you will find in the Church at Jerusalem they had over 12,000 members before they ever had a building.

While these small groups were engaged in worship and prayer and singing praises to God all of a sudden their doors were knocked off their hinges and Roman Soldiers would suddenly be upon them.

Babies would be held by their feet and dashed against the wall to their death.

At spear-point the Christians were driven to a Roman jail and cast into a dark and filthy dungeon where their bodies were infested by lice by day and nibbled on by rats at night.

Many times the men and the women were crowded together in small cells with no sanitation facilities; all of this for no other crime, than the fact that they worshiped God.

On special Roman Festival Days, these believers were brought into the coliseum that still stands in Rome today.

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These Christians were herded into the center of that arena and at a signal the Roman ruler – Nero – the iron gates would be raised around the walls and wild – half-starved beasts of prey would be turned loose upon God’s people.

A baby would be torn from its mother’s arms; and the father would watch helplessly as his family was torn to shreds.

People would go down in screams while they were eaten alive.

Finally after the beasts had had their fill, they were driven back into their cages.

Then the Roman soldiers would march into the arena and use these believers for target practice.

Many of them were burned at the stake and hung on crosses and used as light torches at night.

And all the while the spectators in the coliseum would shout and laugh and jeer at the Christians dying for their faith.

All of this for no other reason than simply being a Christian.

**ALL THIS, FOR NO OTHER CRIME, THAN  
SIMPLY BEING A CHRISTIAN.**

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The heights of barbarism

Oh, it just makes us sick to even talk about it, but that my friend is what they went through when it speaks about **“Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city.”**

I’m not trying to be over dramatic or sensational here, I’m sharing with you what really happened and I haven’t even gone into some of the most dreadful things done to the Christian as they were martyred for their faith in Jesus.

Believers, I want you to know that those days are not over. If you will read and study the book of Revelation and Ezekiel and Matthew and other books in the Word of God, these days are yet ahead for those who will love Jesus in the Last Days.

That’s why I preach a message like this – to prepare us for what is ahead.

You say, Pastor, where do you find that. Well, I just opened up Revelation and turned to chapter 6 and verse 8 and you will read one verse as an example, **“I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.”**

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Believers, listen to me, that's just one verse I randomly picked out of the Book of Revelation that tells us what is going to happen in the Last Days and yet the Church today is unaware of this truth.

## **V. CHRISTIANITY TODAY HAS BEEN MADE EASY.**

**Most of us have comfortable surroundings and all the luxuries of the 21<sup>st</sup> century here in America.**

**We take Christianity for granted, but we need to be reminded that it has not always been like this.**

To the Believers who suffer, God promises a reward to them with a White Rock.

As I was sitting at my desk thinking about this – I thought – you mean if I am faithful no matter what happens or comes my way – all I get is a White Rock. You got to be kidding.

And then suddenly a voice seemed to speak to my heart and say, “There is more here than meets the eye.

There's something more here that I'm not understanding.

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Let me draw to your attention to something I never knew until this last week.

Do you see this little rock I hold in my hand? When I found this out, I left my office and went outside and did my own investigation.

This is just a plain ordinary rock I picked up outside the church door.

As I studied this rock and looked at it carefully, I found a break right through the center.

Do you know that every diamond in your ring this morning has a slight break in it?

Geologist will tell you that all diamonds and stones have a break in them. Why is that?

When Jesus hung on the cross and died it tells us in Matthew 27:51, “***At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split.***”

When Jesus died on Calvary, every rock on this planet split in the twinkling of an eye.

Maybe that doesn't mean a lot to you, but it does me.

You can pick up any rock you want by the side of the road, wipe away the dirt and the mud, and

through its center runs a break that stands as a testimony of the dying love of the Lord Jesus Christ for you and me. Hallelujah PTL

### **Application:**

It's too bad that so many professing Christians in the church today do not have a break in their hearts for God.

The Bible tells me that there is no rock without a testimony of God's love.

A cold, lifeless rock, by the side of the road has a better testimony of the love of God, than the lives of so many professing Christians.

Think of that – and may God help us all to be broken for Him, and to quit whining when we face suffering and tribulation.

### **VI. Next, we come to the symbolic meaning concerning God's White Stone.**

**In the OT times when God's people worshiped in the temple, and God came to commune with them in the Holy of Holies, only the High Priest with the White Stone set in his breastplate was permitted in the Holy Place to commune with Almighty God.**

This says to us today that only the person who has come to Jesus for forgiveness and received a new life has the privilege of coming to God in prayer.

Somebody says, "Well, now – Pastor – Do you mean to say that God does not hear the prayer of an unbeliever or a backslidden Christian?"

Unless that prayer is for repentance, that's exactly what I am saying.

Let me reason with you – How can a person say, "***Our Father which art in heaven***" when that person has rejected God as a Heavenly Father?"

How can an unbeliever or a backslidden Christian say, "***Our Father which art in heaven***"?

If a child would come to any man here who was not his father and say "Father, I want this and or that," – you would say, "I'm not your father."

Now – if this child was an orphan and I adopted him, than that would be different. He is my legal son.

Now, don't miss this – this is important – The only prayer God can hear from a lost person or a backslidden person is: "***God be merciful to me, a sinner.***"

What would you do friend if you could not pray when you lost a loved one or a friend?

What would you do if you had a son or a daughter who was going off to war?

The greatest privilege God has ever given to us people is the great privilege of prayer.

**DR. W.T. CONNER SAYS, "PRAYER IS THE MOST SPECIFICALLY AND DIRECT RELIGIOUS ACT OF WHICH MANKIND IS CAPABLE. HE, WHO IS LIVING THE VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIFE HAS THIS WONDERFUL PRIVILEGE, SO WHY DON'T WE USE IT?"**

### **Look at A Picture of Christ (vs 12)**

Christ introduces Himself to the Pergamum believers in vs 12 when He says of Himself

***"These are the words of Him who has the sharp, double-edged sword"***.

It is probably fitting to use a sword here since the sword would have been a common implement of death in Pergamum.

But here the usage is more likely that it is to be used as an implement of judgment rather than condemnation.

Other parts of Scripture use this metaphor also.

Heb 4:12 says ***"For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."***

God's word convicts and spurs us into actions

For those of us who are compromising our stand today - Christ has a remedy for us.

***16 Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.***

This command comes to us as a command to repent immediately.

Jesus says, Do not linger in Satan's ways, but repent, change your mind, change your actions and your attitude immediately for Christ will not be patient with us and He will not linger coming to fight against us and them.

The Balaamites and Nicolaitians were to repent immediately of their deeds and the church was to repent of its failure to deal with the problem in the first place.

God was calling them to no longer compromise on what was true, they were not to condone what was ungodly or crave anything that wasn't pure.

The consequence for not repenting is that we will face God's Word - His sword - this time in judgment and condemnation.

Believers – listen to me - His word is a powerful opponent - it calmed storms, healed sick people, drove out demons.

Our Lord's admonitions are never mere suggestions.

They are to be taken seriously, and acted upon with speed and determination.

If we are living in compromise today, Christ is telling us to repent – and repent QUICKLY!

## **Two promises are given...**

### **1) Hidden Manna is promised.**

***Jn 6: 47-52 ... 47 I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. 50 But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this***

***bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."***

We're going to take the Bread that represents Christ's body here in a moment.

When you partake of this – remember – Jesus gave His broken body for your sins and mine.

When you partake of the juice – remember – Jesus' blood was shed for the remission of your sins.

### **2) The second promise is for a white stone with a new name on it.**

The white stone spoke of the redeemed position we have through a relationship with Christ.

The stone is also important because it has a name on it - a New Name.

There's an old song we use to sing and it goes like:

1. I was once a sinner, but I came Pardon to receive from my Lord.

This was freely given, and I found That He always kept His word.

2. I was humbly kneeling at the Cross, Fearing naught but God's angry frown  
When the heavens opened and I saw  
That my name was written down

3. In the Book 'tis written "Saved by Grace,"  
 Oh the joy that came to my soul!  
 Now I am forgiven, and I know  
 By the Blood I am made whole.

Cho "There's a new name written down in Glory and  
 it's mine, oh, yes it's mine, and the white-robed sing  
 the story a sinner has come home.

There's a new name written down in Glory and it's  
 mine, oh, yes it's mine, with my sins forgiven I am  
 bound for heaven, never more to roam."

History confirms that the Church at Pergumum did  
 not take the word of the Master seriously.

And today not much of the ancient city remains.

Yet, I cannot help but believe and hope there were  
 some/ a remnant who heard what the Holy Spirit  
 was saying to the churches.

Such people repented, and once again pressed  
 forward to obtain the prize.

Today, those triumphant souls are with another of  
 their number, Antipas, who lost his life that he might  
 forever gain it.

How blessed is the soul who listens to the Lord!

Eternal blessings will be realized, and cursing  
 avoided.

### **So where are we at ...**

We live in a time and a place where it is so easy to  
 compromise our stand.

It is easy for us to get caught in the compromise the  
 world sends our way through temptation and sin.

I'm not talking about those who are old, but those  
 today who are like the Balaamites and Nicolaitians,  
 trying to live with one foot in either camp.

If we are guilty of living a compromised Christian  
 life, Christ calls us to repent Quickly.

The rewards for doing so are that He will sustain us  
 (physically and spiritually) and will give us eternal  
 life signified by a white stone and a new name.

Where are we at? Where are you at? Are you  
 compromising?

Do you need to repent? Are you assured of your  
 hidden manna, white stone and new name?

***"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit  
 says to the churches."***

