FACING THE DANGER

INTRODUCTION

 **DATE: 5/6/2018 am**

**TEXT: Revelation 1:12-18, 20**

**INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES**

There’s never been a more dangerous time for our churches

We are facing the immoral decline of our culture

And honestly, churches are struggling to keep their heads above water

From the outside,

We face a growing opposition from the Gov’t and the reality of an increasing hostile anti-Christian majority

There is no longer a Moral Majority / the tide is turning

From the inside,

Church leaders who are coming up with all kinds of unscriptural ways to fill their pews

There are all kinds of false doctrine floating around

And pastor’s who are trying to stay true to the Word of God are left scratching their heads …

Marveling at the migration of members leaving for the lukewarm liberal churches

The situation looks incredibly bleak

But here’s the thing, this situation is exactly what the Apostle John was facing in his day

And the Lord Jesus addresses these issues with the Apostle John in chapters 1- 3 of the Book of Revelation

The churches of Asia Minor in the 1st century where the first recipients of the Book of Revelation

And as our church is in danger …

So, they faced the same pressures of living in a culture of rampant immorality and idolatry …

Referred to in **Revelation 17 & 19** as ***“the great whore”***

They faced the same tyranny of an oppressive gov’t …

***(“the beast”)***

They faced the same discrimination from the Liberal religious leaders and the Jewish synagogues …

***(“the false prophet”)***

They faced the same population at large …

***(“those who dwell on the earth”)***

But behind the scenes, all these pressures are merely the tools Satan ***(“the great dragon”)*** is using as he attempts to destroy churches ***(“the bride of Christ”)***

These churches, 2000 years ago and several thousand miles away, were experiencing exactly what we are facing today

And it’s no surprise, that we face the same dangers at the hands of the same enemy, employing the same methods, using the same tools

Except that nowadays, it looks a little different

It looks like Christians being mocked on talk shows or sneered at on social media

It looks like Christians cowed into silence in their workplace because they fear losing their job

Or told to keep their faith in their churches and not bring it out into public

It looks like church leaders falling out over theological differences

It looks like denominations embracing a new definition of marriage

It looks like churches closing down and being snapped up by developers to be converted into something more relevant

It looks like congregations losing heart because attendance is dwindling and the soul of their nation just seems so irreversibly lost

There’s no denying it

And there’s no point burying our heads in the sand

Every church is in danger— and that includes ours

In fact, there are only really two kinds of churches:

-- Those who are soberly aware of the risks and are prepared to face them, and …

-- Those who are carrying on completely unaware

The devil is prowling for both

The question is: what are we going to do about it?

I hope to help us answer that question with this series of messages – Why?

So, we’ll be able to **“Face the Danger”**

**~~~Prayer~~~**

**INTRODUCTION TO THE MESSAGE**

The good news is that Jesus has done something about the Dangers Facing our church (He’s always previous)

He wrote us a letter to explain how

Most people don’t think of the Book of Revelation as a Letter

But that’s what it is

It has a typical opening greeting and concluding blessing,

And was written to, and meant to circulate among, the churches in Asia Minor (What is today modern Turkey)

**1.** Jesus had this Letter written in order to …

**Revelation 1:1 b *– “shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass;”***

His intent was to help these churches Face the Dangers

And equip them with the means to fight off the attempts to over throw them

**2.** To Deliver His Message Jesus would use the Apostle John

The end of **v. 1** says – ***“He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John:”***

I don’t know why He choose John, but I do know by this time in history there where not many of the original 12 left

**John 21:21-23 …**

**3.** This Letter is unusual in that it is Prophetic

Which reveals both present and future events of judgment and salvation in very vivid ways

In comparison … Paul’s Letters where Doctrinal

**4.** The Promise of the Prophecy

There is a Promise attached to this Letter

John says in **v. 3 - *“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand”***

He says all who will Read, Hear, and Obey the words of this prophecy will be blessed;

They will Not be overcome by the Dangers Facing them

They will be Overcomer; they will receive what God has Promised; they will be Blessed

And these Promises are for us as well

So, what exactly is it that we need so badly?

**5.** A Vision

What is it that our church needs when it’s Distraught, Weakened, Threatened, and Caused to Wonder if God is in control?

We need a Vision

When the world seems against us, we need to look for the One who is for us: Jesus Christ

Like Isaiah in **Isaiah 6**, and like John here

Because He’s the One **vs. 5,6 -** ***“that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood,” “And hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen”***

And He’s not hanging on the cross anymore

In **vs. 12-20**, John describes meeting Jesus face to face as He is now: Risen, Ascended, Exalted, and Glorified

So how is it that we are to Face the Danger?

(We will talk more about the specific Dangers, later)

But let me show you the only way we will truly be able to Face those Dangers w/ 3 thoughts this morning

First, we can Face the Approaching Danger in …

**I. THE LORD’S “MAJESTY” - vs. 12-16**

These verses show us the Majesty of the Lord

Majesty means *royal power and beauty*

When we begin to see the Lord for Who He truly is …

There will be some definite changes taking place in our lives

We see His Majesty Described in …

**A. His ‘Activity’ – vs. 12, 13 a**

***“And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;” “And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man,”***

When John turns, he sees Seven Golden Candlesticks

The Candlesticks were made of gold, the most precious of metals, and were filled with oil in which was placed a wick that was lit to produce the light (Lamp Stands)

The Candlesticks represented the Holy Spirit and His ability to bring light into the world

The Light from the Lamp is a type of Christ

Jesus came into this world as a man, but a man Who was filled with the Spirit of God, and preached the Word of God

Who served as the Light of the world –

**John 8:12** – ***“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life”***

I’d like for you to notice some things here about the Lord’s Activities

Our text has Jesus in the “***midst of the seven candlesticks***” (We’ll look at the Stars later)

**1.** The candlesticks in this passage are identified for us in **v. 20** –

***“The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. (is this) The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches”***

**2.** We are told that they represent the Seven Churches mentioned in **Revelation 1:11**

Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea

**3.** These candlesticks are Gold, representing the precious nature of the Church

There is no institution on earth as precious and as beautiful as the Church!

The Church is so precious to God, that Jesus was willing to purchase it with His Own blood!

And there is nothing in heaven or earth that is more Precious than His Blood!

**Acts 20:28** - ***“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood”***

**Ephesians 5:25 *– “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it;”***

**4.** There are Seven of these Candlesticks

Again, Seven is the number of completeness or perfection

These Candlesticks represent real Bible Believing Churches, and they represent all the local churches down through the ages

The real message of the Candlesticks, however, is found in their purpose

As Christ is the Light of the World, so are we

**Matthew 5:16 –** ***“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven”***

**Philippians 2:15 – *“That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;”***

**Ephesians 5:8 – *“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:”***

So, that brings me to what I wanted to say about this verse

Jesus is pictured as being in the midst of His churches

He is Active in the Midst of our Church, protecting us from the Danger

When we gather, He is always here with us –

**Matthew 18:20** – ***“For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them”***

Helping us, Speaking to us, Protecting us, Directing us, Blessing us, Encouraging us and Challenging us

He is in the midst of His people as we live, worship and move toward glory

There are times when we can recognize His presence and there are times when we forget that He’s here

Still, He is with us all the same …

**… *“for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”* - Hebrews 13:5 b**

If we could ever forget about our agendas; our order of service; our concerns; …

And recognize the presence of the Lord in His church

It would transform our worship services

Thank God He loves us and desires to meet with us!

 You and I might not show up for worship, but Jesus never misses a service!!

We can Face the Danger because Jesus is **Actively involved** in His Churches

Then, we see His Majesty in …

**B. His ‘Appearance’ – vs. 13 b -16**

**Isaiah 6:1 – *“In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple”***

We need to get a vision for Who the Lord really is

When we can see Him in His Majesty

There will be no Danger we will Face that will overcome us

I think of Stephen in **Acts 7:55,56 –** ***“But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,” “And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God”***

This chapter give us that vision

John tries hard to Describe the Lord in terms we can understand

**1.** His Garments **– v. 13 b**

Jesus appears **“*clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle*”**

This is the attire of both a King and a Priest

As a King, Jesus is the Sovereign Lord

He is in absolute control as He rules

(Even though the world does not recognize it)

**Revelation 17:14 – *“…for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful”***

Jesus is sovereign over all the world

As a Priest, Jesus is our man on the inside

He is our Intercessor; the One Who prays for us in Heaven day by day

 **Hebrews 7:25 – *“Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them”***

We need to see Him for Who He Truly is

Look as he describes …

**2.** His Hair and His Head **– v. 14 a**

***“His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow;”***

This speaks of His purity and of His agelessness

We are reminded of His sinless purity

**Hebrews** **7:26 – *“For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;”***

Jesus knew no sin

We are also reminded that He is ageless!

**Daniel 7:9 –** ***“I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of …***

***… His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire”***

**Revelation 1:8 –** ***“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty”***

He is the One Who has always existed!

**3.** His eyes **– v. 14 b**

***“and His eyes were as a flame of fire;”***

They speak of His Omniscience; Intelligence and Perception

**Hebrews 4:13 – *“Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do”***

**Proverbs 15:3 *- “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good”***

He sees every Motive, Sin and Secret in our hearts and in our lives

Nothing is hidden from His gaze!

**4.** His Feet **– v. 15 a**

***“And His feet (were) like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace;”***

Brass, or bronze, in the Bible speaks of Judgment

Jesus appears here in the midst of His churches as One having the authority to Judge

He sees all and when He sees that which displeases Him,

He exercises His authority as Lord and He moves in Judgment to set things right

Keep in mind that Jesus is a Just Judge

Not like you and I … He will Judge fairly

**5.** His Voice **– v. 15 b**

***“and His voice as the sound of many waters”***

When John first hears the Lord, he describes His voice has a trumpet - **v. 10**

***“and (I) heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet”***

His voice came … demanding John’s attention

John also describes the voice of the Lord as “***the sound of many waters***”

Just like Niagara Falls, the sound of those waters drowns out all other noise

12 million cubic feet of water per minute flows over that cataract

And as that water crashes onto the rocks below

It becomes the only sound that is heard, and the only sound that matters

Thus, it is with the Voice of Jesus

Today, men turn a deaf ear to His voice;

But there is coming a day when He will speak again on earth

And His voice won’t be ignored then!

**6.** His Hand **– v. 16 a**

***“And He had in His right hand seven stars:”***

His right hand is the hand that speaks of power,

Jesus holds the seven stars

These stars are identified in **v. 20** as the “***angels of the seven churches***”

Some folks believe these stars refer to a guardian angel that is given charge over each church

Others feel that the stars refer to the pastors of these churches

I personally lean toward the latter interpretation

Jesus is pictured as holding His servants in His hand, protecting them by His power

The people John was writing to were undergoing severe persecution

They needed this reassurance as they struggled

And so, do, you and I!

It comforts my heart to know that I am safe in His hand,

**John 10:28-29 –** ***“And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand” “My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand”***

**7.** His Mouth **– v. 16 b**

***“and out of His mouth went a sharp twoedged sword:”***

We are told that a “***sharp two-edged sword***” comes from the mouth of the glorified Christ

This reminds us that He is coming not with words of peace and blessing;

But with words of Righteousness and Judgment

When Jesus came the first time, He came with a message of peace and salvation

The next time He comes, He will judge the world with a word from His mouth

Like the thrust of a sharp sword that can slice to the bone and bring instant death;

One day Jesus will speak and His enemies will be utterly destroyed

**Revelation 19:15** – ***“And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God”***

**Hebrews 4:12 –** ***“For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart”***

**8.** His Face **– v. 16 c**

***“and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength”***

John says that the face of The Lord was like looking into the face of the sun

John had seen this face before

When Jesus was transfigured in **Matt. 17**, John was there

When Jesus came to this earth and was born in Bethlehem, He concealed His glory beneath a robe of human flesh

When He came the first time, He was approachable

 Anyone who wished could enter His presence then, and many did

But, when He comes again, sinful men will not even be able to look upon Him, much less approach Him

We can Face the Danger by **THE LORD’S “MAJESTY”**

By getting a Picture in our Minds of Who the Lord Really is

We can Face the Danger by …

**II. THE LORD’S “MERCY” – v. 17**

The Mercy of God is not getting what we truly deserve

Because as sinners, we deserve death

***“The wages of sin is death”***

Let’s Look at how the Mercy of God will help us Face the Danger

**A. John’s ‘Reaction’ – v.17 a**

***“And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead”***

John does what any sinner would do in the presence of the Lord: he faints dead away!

Lost men make their boasts and shake their puny fists in the face of God;

But the day is coming when every God-hater and Christ-rejecter will bend their knee in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ

John simply demonstrates for us what everyone will do one day

The key is to bow the knee today

Today is the Day of Salvation

**B. Christ’s ‘ Reassurance’ – v. 17 b**

***“And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not;”***

When John faints, Jesus does what He always does:

He speaks peace to His child! Think about this!

Jesus takes His right hand, the hand in which He protects His servants

He takes that hand and He tenderly touches John

Then He speaks to John

That same voice that thunders with power and authority

That same voice that will one day judge the nations

That same voice minister’s peace to the heart of John!

If we are to Face the Danger, we are going to need to …

… have this picture of Christ burned on our hearts

You’ll not make it any other way

**THE LORD’S “MAJESTY”**

**THE LORD’S “MERCY”**

Then Lastly, We can Face the Danger by …

**III. THE LORD’S “MINISTRY” – vs. 17 c -18**

***“I am the first and the last:” “I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death”***

Our 2 last verses here pictures Jesus in His work

These verses tell us Who He is and What He does

**A. He’s ‘Reigning’ One – v. 17 c**

***“I am the first and the last:”***

John is reminded that Jesus is the “***author and Finisher***” of all things

He is the One Who has always been and the One Who will always be

Jesus stands as the great Bookend on either end of history

Kings will come and kings will go, but Jesus has, is and will, reign forever

He is timeless and He is eternal!

**B. He’s the ‘Resurrected’ One – v. 18**

***“I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen”***

Jesus did something no one else has ever done:

He entered death on His Own and in His Own way and He walked out of Death again when He was ready

He died on the cross and then He rose again from the dead according to **Matt. 28:1-6**

**C. He’s the ‘Redeeming’ One – v. 18**

**“*I am He that liveth, and was dead*”**

Jesus died, but His death was like no other death in the history of the world

He died, not for Himself, but He died for others

He went to the cross to pay a price He did not owe;

For a people who owed a price they could not pay

He gave His all for those who had nothing to offer

He paid the whole price to redeem people from their sins

**D. He’s the ‘Remaining’ One – v. 18**

**“*I am alive for evermore”***

When every ruler and every subject has faded from the fabric of the ages;

When every rich man and every poor man has been erased from the memory of time;

When every kingdom and every deed has been forever diluted by the stream of history;

Jesus Christ will still be Lord and He will still be God

He is the remaining One!

 Don’t worry about something happening to Him!

When the dust of time has been swept into the dustbin of eternity,

Jesus will still be the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords!

That ought to bring comfort to every child of God and strike terror into the heart of every rebel

**E. He’s the ‘Releasing’ One – v. 18**

“***I…have the keys of hell and of death”***

*Keys* speak of Access and Authority

I have access to all the keys of the church

 Because I possess them, I can go anywhere

I can go places others are not allowed to go

The same is true with Jesus!

Jesus Christ decides all the issues of life and death

He determines who lives and who dies

Because Jesus entered death and conquered it,

He possesses the keys of death

Because He entered the place where the dead reside and walked out again, He holds the keys of Hell

 ***Jesus is the Key Man***! He is a good Man to know!

Because I know Him, I cannot go to Hell, He has locked the door!

Because I know Him, I can go to Heaven;

He has unlocked the gates of that city for His children

Do you know the One who holds the keys to Life & Death?

Knowing Jesus’ Ministry will help us to Face the Danger

**CONCLUSION**

Let me Close with this Illustration

**Ill.** A father was attempting to read his Sunday paper.

His little girl, was constantly interrupting him and asking him questions.

Finally, not wishing to be disturbed by his daughter any longer, he cut up a map of the world, gave it to her, and told her to put it together. He thought this would keep her busy for some time.

However, in just a few minutes she returned with the map and every piece was in the right place. The father was very much surprised and said: “*How in the world did you put this puzzle together so quickly? You don't know anything about geography.*”

The little girl replied, “*Well, daddy, there was a picture of Jesus on the other side, and I knew when I had Jesus in the right place, the whole world would be all right.*”

What a truth!

That is what John is trying to do here at the very start of the book of Revelation

He is trying to get us to see Jesus as He really is!

He is not the humble man of Galilee any longer

He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lord and He deserves to be worshiped, served and glorified

When He is in the right place, the whole world will be all right

Until then, the world will be out of balance and will continue to wobble under the effects of sin and rebellion, until Jesus comes and makes it right

Is there anything here for us?

There’s this: Is Jesus in the right place in your heart and life?

 If He is, then that means you are saved and that you are humbly serving Him

If He isn’t, then it means that your life is out of balance and like a bad tire it wobbles out of control headed for destruction

We all have this opportunity to come before Him today to praise Him for Who He is

We have the opportunity to bow to Him; to thank Him and to honor Him

Today, we can do it voluntarily,

In That Day men will be compelled to bow

**THE LORD’S “MAJESTY”**

**THE LORD’S “MERCY”**

**THE LORD’S “MINISTRY”**