



General Theme: **He who has an ear, Let Him Hear!**

Mess. 05: **The Environment for the Arrival of the Church in Sardis is Formed**

Scripture Reading: Rv 2:24 - 29

Link to this Message on the IVPT Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RaemiMKtVNq>



Offering Centre

<http://institutovidaparatodos.org.br/central-de-ofertas/>



Word given by brother **Pedro Dong**, transmitted by Instituto Vida para Todos directly from Barranquilla, in Colômbia, on **06/11/2023**. Text not revised by the author.



1. We have seen in the messages above that Israel has one of the readiest armies on earth, as everyone in the nation feels like a soldier even though they are working in their secular duties. They live surrounded by enemies on all sides. So is the church, the Kingdom of Heaven here on earth: an island in the middle of enemy territory. The whole earth belongs to the Lord, but Satan has usurped the kingdoms of the world for himself and all men are slaves to sin and the empire of darkness. We, as the church, have a mission to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom. **Like Israel, we are surrounded by enemies on all sides, but the Lord is on our side, our general is Christ!**

2. Last year, we have received a great gift: living in the word, which has helped us a lot in our daily struggles in the enemy's territory. Our teens are transcribing the word, immersing themselves in it, and that word is changing their lives. This is also happening with our youth and churches, revolutionizing the church living.

Eph 5:18-19; Co 3:16; Dt 6:4-7

3. We live in a world of darkness, but we are not those who sleep, for we are of the day. We must then walk accordingly, prudently, redeeming the time, not living like fools, but always trying to understand and live the Lord's will. The things of the world are like wine that makes us drunk. Even legitimate things like our work and family care can become a wine that makes us drunk and leads us to live like fools. **So how can we always be ready as the Lord's army? Not getting drunk with the wine with which he proclaimed, but being filled with the Spirit, speaking among us the word that we have received.**

4. Colossians indicate that to be filled with the spirit is to make the word of Christ dwell in us richly, instructing and guiding one another with it. From that, he felt the vision of immersion in the word. Already in Deuteronomy we see that the people of God must know and fulfill His judgments for them to go well. We have only one Lord on earth: other things in the world are not our lords. To God alone we dedicate our whole being and to Him we owe all our love, with all our heart, soul and strength. This is the secret for God's people to prosper here on earth! The church cannot lose its first love.

5. How will we do, then, so that this love does not grow cold? **If the Word dwells in our hearts, we will always keep our first love for the Lord.** Also in Deuteronomy we see that we must keep this word in our hearts, through repetition at all times. This is immersion in the Word! Immersion should not be confused with the battle cries: they are necessary for the preparation of an army going to war, to encourage them, but in church meetings the battle cries are optional, they do not define our church living in its entirety. **Immersion in the word, however, is necessary, because we need to engrave what has been given to us in our hearts.**

6. We need to learn to take the immersion papers with us everywhere. Thus, throughout the day we can record this word several times, reading and saying its content. The Lord's will is that the word be engraved in our hearts. Before we listened to the messages, but soon the word we received faded from us, because we still had to capture all the content. The Lord then gave us the way of immersion: we can repeat the word alone or with each other, and then share about the burden of the word. Years ago I called this practice "stirring the pot", where each one offers an ingredient and puts it in the pot, bringing a portion of the word and adding to the experiences of others. **After this round of sharing, we leave with a wealth of spiritual food, which strengthens our understanding of the word.**

Rv 2:20-29; Ps 2:1-9; 110:1-3

7. Now we get into the burden of today's message. Why is church history important to us? Because we are in the church that has traveled for 2000 years; there are many things that the church has gone through and we don't know, and many times we don't know what positive and negative legacies of centuries of history we are carrying. Like a GPS, we can see the entire route we've traced here and how much is left until the end of the path. Throughout the almost thousand-year period of darkness of the church in Thyatira, Satan kept God's people in total darkness concerning His Word.

8. The main characteristic of the period of the church in Thyatira is that it is no longer God who, through His prophets, speaks. The church in question tolerated that the woman who claimed to be a prophetess spoke in the name of God during the entire period of the church in Thyatira, and this led the people of God to practice prostitution and eat things sacrificed to idols, people were seduced by the doctrine of the leaders, the deep things of Satan. This led them to a deep degradation. There were in Thyatira, however, those who did not fall into the doctrine of Jezebel, and these are overcomers. **As we have seen in previous messages, this is the golden line of God's grace that has lasted from the time of the apostles until today, and has come down to us at a time when the Lord is consolidating the church in Philadelphia.**

9. The overcomer, who keeps the works of the Lord and not the works that Jezebel incites, will have authority to reign over the nations just as Christ received authority over the nations from His Father. Christ confers authority on the overcomer! In Psalm 2:6 we see that Christ was made king over Zion in place of Lucifer, which made the enemy of God furious to the point of raising a rebellion among the nations. When we go out into the streets to rescue people, we encounter this fury, because we enter Satan's territory and he causes the princes of this earth to conspire against God, His heir and His word.

10. Christ is not only the only begotten Son of God, but also the one who became incarnate, took the form of a human figure and, as a man, was begotten by the Father as His firstborn son. This further shames Satan, so the spirit of the evil one does not recognize the coming of Christ in the flesh. Christ was given the Kingdom and, today, as His church we are given to Him as an army to fight for the Kingdom of God. The scepter of Christ's power comes from Zion, the overcomers of the church. **We want to be part of that overcoming army, that we may be that scepter of Christ's power through us, that He may rule over His enemies.** The enemy pursues us, attacks the prophetic word, attacks immersion, war cries, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, GPC, the tools that the Lord has given us, because he wants to stop the church. But we won't stop!

11. At the dawn of the Lord's return, the army of youth, of teenagers, will rise. Our teenagers are at an age where they would normally not be interested in the things of the Lord, would be alienated and apathetic in church life. But all of a sudden, in the last two years, our teens have woken up to the things of the Lord, our kids want to go out on the streets with their families, our youth have become NEOS, the older youth have become the Mighty Men of David! **The Father is fulfilling the promise He made to the Son: He is putting Christ's enemies under His feet.** So Satan is not happy, and he is attacking us in every way possible.

Mal 4:2; 2Pe 1:19

12. Christ is the very Morning Star! The Final Day is coming, and those who first perceive the arrival of the dawn are those who follow the prophetic speech. We are preparing for that day, we fight for the Lord's kingdom. **In the hearts of those who fight for the coming of the Lord, the**

Morning Star will rise first! This is for the overcomers, for those who love the coming of the Lord. The church in Philadelphia has this characteristic, it loves the coming of Christ!

13. In the previous message I shared especially about the Waldensians, as Pedro Valdo had the Bible translated into a popularly understood language, releasing access to the pure word of God for the people, so that they could free themselves from Jezebel's contamination. The Roman hierarchy had sworn to destroy all who disagreed with it by fire and sword. All those who wanted to follow according to the pure Word were condemned as heretics and sentenced by the pontificate to eternal damnation, as the pope had the power to forgive or condemn to eternal damnation. **But the Lord preserved His true saints from the days of the apostles as a golden line of God's grace.**

Ps 119:130

14. In those days, in the Middle Ages, human society lived in darkness. From that moment on, in the 12th century, there was the emergence of great schools of science. When the word of God is known and believed in a simple and pure way, people begin to come out of the thick darkness and mental perplexity, for the revelation of the word of God enlightens and gives understanding to the simple. **Even today Christians who have the Bible in their hands but no revelation are just as much in the dark.** Hence the importance of our colporteurs. The first colporteurs, the Waldensians, carried copies of Bible passages. Currently, however, even with easy access to the Bible, there is a lack of revelation. Colporting brings people out of darkness, it gives wisdom to the simple.

15. The terrible Crusade against the Albigenses with the intention of exterminating them took place in the 13th century. His intention was to take back the holy land, Jerusalem, and many soldiers who went to fight in the crusades died. They heeded the Pope's call to fight for being superstitious and believed when the Pope claimed that those who participated in the crusades would have their sins and debts forgiven, would be freed from purgatory and would have a place in heaven. Later, however, the crusades began to exterminate those considered heretics, the Albigenses and Waldensians, colporteurs of that time. But no one can extinguish the line of life driven by the word of God. **What gives us strength today is following this Word! We are not on our own, running a human and flawed project. This is God's project, and everything that is guided by His word will not end!**

16. At the end of the 14th century, many Waldensians left their valleys to settle in Switzerland, Moravia, Bohemia – where the Czech Republic is today – as well as various parts of Germany. And their largest colony was formed in Calabria, around the year 1370. In that region the first reformers emerged, and it is linked to the emergence of the church in Philadelphia. They built schools and taught the Bible plain and simple. And between the years 1560 to 1594 they were victims of massacres, looting, torture, extortion and death by starvation. But the Waldensians remained true to the truth; demonstrated a determination and perseverance unparalleled in history.

17. I'm going to speak a little about John Wycliffe's English and the translation of the complete Bible into the English language. He studied Theology at the University of Oxford, England, not in the dry dogmas that were presented at the time, but he wanted to know the Holy Scriptures. He soon realized the incompatibility of the norms established by the clergy and the teachings of Jesus and His apostles. He denounced the enrichment of the clergy, the papal indulgence sales system, and the luxurious life of the clergy. He advocated that the state should fight the abuses of the papacy. His work contained eighteen theses, which were published at Oxford in 1376.

18. A year later, in 1377, Pope Gregory XI issued a bull – an official document of the papacy concerning political or church matters – against him, declaring that his eighteen theses were wrong and dangerous. Wycliffe organized the project to translate the entire Scriptures into the English language because, as Andrew Miller said, **authority must emanate from the Bible, and Christ is the Head of the church and not the popes.** According to him, the Bible should be a common possession of all Christians, available for everyday use. This was his great legacy to the church!

19. Such was the struggle of Wycliffe who, like many in his day, on seeing the errors introduced by the Jezebel doctrine, was revolted. So he invested a lot of energy in reporting errors. **I'm saying**

this, brothers, because our focus should be to positively spread the word of God. Our main concern is not to denounce errors, but to carry forward the Word, because it is the Word that will do the work of God, not our notes.

20. Now I'm going to talk a little about Jan Huss – or Jan Hus in his native language. England's connection to Bohemia, which is now part of the Czech Republic, occurred in the marriage of Anne of Bohemia to Richard II of England. Anne loved the pure word of God and at her death her servants of Bohemian origin returned to their country with the writings of John Wycliffe. This material became widely read by members of the University of Prague. Jan Huss was sent to study at the University of Prague to prepare for church service. He stood out so much that Queen Sofia appointed him her teacher. He was appointed as preacher of the university chapel, called Belem Chapel, the house of bread, because the spiritual food was distributed in the common language of the people.

21. Like all reformers, his eagerness to preach against the abuses and vices that dominated the lives of priests and oppressed the people, prompted violent reactions from the clergy. He denounced all the pride, luxury, and debauchery of the entire clerical system that had become intolerable to human beings. Therefore, condemning abuses has become the shortest path to great popularity. Practically all reformers and pre-reformers fell into this mistake: due to the general revolt, they focused more on denouncing errors. We need to focus positively on the pure word of God and trust that the very Truth will take care of doing its work, without arousing hatred towards error. After all, hatred, unbeknownst to Christ, will culminate in revolutionary practice and result in real disaster. **This teaches us to always preach the Word of life in a positive way, for only the Word will do God's work in the spiritual and heavenly realms, and we must not go into right or wrong in the earthly realm.**

Ac 20:29-32

22. Satan tries to attack the church in every way. Even in the time of the Apostle Paul, he already foresaw to the elders of Ephesus that ravenous wolves would penetrate among them. They will not spare the flock, they want to achieve their hidden goal for their personal benefits even if it harms the life of the flock, because what matters is their own goal and work. **But still, our responsibility remains to spread the word of God and trust that it will do the work. Let's trust in the Lord and in His word!** Virtually all reformers fell into the error of spending less energy on seeking revelation from the Word, to make room for denouncing errors and political fight.

23. An example of this focus of the reformers is that, through Martin Luther's reform, the brothers in Germany freed themselves from the power of the Pope and needed to understand how to be headed by the Holy Spirit from then on. But there was no investment of energy in studying the Word in this regard, which led them to be governed by state power. **It is necessary to pay attention to the Word! It has power to build us up and give us an inheritance among all those who have been sanctified.** That's why I've been insisting so much that we are focused on the Word.

24. In this way great civil unrest arose in Bohemia, and Huss was accused of being the leader. Emperor Sigismund summoned the Council of Constance in Germany, promised a safe conduct to Jan Huss to safely present his doctrine before the general council of the church. But the hierarchy of the clergy claimed that, as a heretic, he would not be entitled to safe conduct and he was betrayed by the emperor. After successive interrogations, Huss remained steadfast in his statements, although every attempt was made to have him recant, he was condemned to death by burning by the emperor's own sentence. He was executed on a stake over woodpiles in Constance in the year 1415. His friend, Jerome of Prague, was also tried by the Council of Constance and was burned at the stake in 1416.

25. The death of Huss sparked a war, and although the Hussites subsequently split, it is important to note that a portion of them migrated to Moravia in 1451. Many citizens of Prague, including members of the nobility and learned men, joined this migration, assuming the name of "brotherly unity" or "united brothers". They lived in peace for 3 years, and due to their missionary zeal they multiplied quickly and many people were converted through the preaching of the gospel.

26. Thus in various parts their communities were formed, and this again aroused the hatred of the priests of Rome, who declared them incorrigible heretics, and there was a terrible persecution. Property was taken, many left their homes to wander through the harsh winter. The prisons of Bohemia, especially those of Prague, were crowded with the United Brethren, and they received the cruellest tortures. This lasted for about 20 years.

27. They then organized themselves, but unfortunately in a humane way. They created a distinction between essential and non-essential things: essential matters were those pertaining to man's salvation, and non-essentials involved external aspects such as rituals, ceremonies, customs and ecclesiastical rules. As Andrew Miller said, with that resolution they created an environment conducive to the exercise of human will, and anything that is not in the revelation of God's word must never be introduced into His church. As far as the church is concerned, we must never introduce anything that is not in the word of God, for the smallest error may tomorrow become a big problem. Therefore, we must be zealous for the word of God.

28. Those expelled from Moravia were received in Hungary and Moldavia. In 1470 they made public the complete translation of the Bible into the Bohemian language. The first complete translation was made in the English language. In the next message we will talk about the invention of the printing press, which contributed so much to the great change in the church. There is a connection between the United Brethren and the Waldensians. In the 12th century, Pedro Valdo was expelled from Lyon, after successive persecutions he found refuge in Bohemia, and worked there with great success for 20 years. Some claim that in the 14th century those who followed Pedro Valdo's line already numbered approximately 800,000.

Ro 12:4-8; 1 Co 12; 14

29. Therefore, I would like to make some final remarks. The church is the Body of Christ, which contains many members, each with their own role. The church is not a human institution in which man can decide the functioning and structure. But the functioning of the church is given by the word of God. The first function, which moves all other functions in the Body, is the gift of prophecy. **This prophecy quoted here is not simply predicting the future, but speaking for God under direct inspiration from Him.** Everyone can speak for God, but the speaking of God in the church begins with speaking under the direct inspiration of His speaking.

Rv 1:1; 1 Co 12:18

30. He who prophesies must prophesy under the direct revelation of God, which is not given to many. **In Revelation we see that God wanted to pass the revelation on to the leaders of each of the seven churches, but chose John to pour out His speaking through him. Today we have one speaking!** That's how the church works. It is up to us to continue to function as members of the Body in the place where God has placed us, and in that way the church will grow and be built up.

Ac 20:32; Ro 1:16; 1 Co 1:18,21-25; 1Th 2:13

31. Power for building up the church comes by the word, not by a great man administrator. The Word of God is His power! It is not by our wisdom, but by the foolishness of the Word. **It is not an able and strong man who is directing us and giving direction, but the Word, whose leadership is in all the earth.** Therefore, Satan's target is to attack it, for it is the power of God.

32. The Thessalonians heard the word of Paul, a man, but they accepted it as the word of God. Satan wants to sow doubt in your mind. When we doubt, the Word comes to us, but it does not work, it only works when we believe. If we believe and obey, the word works effectively in us.

33. Therefore, our fight is for the revelation of God's Word, not political fights or focus on mistakes. **We must believe that if each member is saturated with the Word through immersion, Christ will dwell in each one's heart, filling us with the word of Christ, He will govern His Body as the Head, and build His church in love.** He is weaving a fabric of love between us. Christ is the only one capable of uniting us perfectly in love. And against this united and edified church Hades will not prevail!