***The Hidden Manna

RV15-02***

Please open your Bibles to the book of the Revelation chapter 2. We are studying the letter to Pergamum. The church at Pergamum was a church that historically represents a period of church history where the church was beginning to accommodate itself to the pagan world; accommodate itself to paganism; seek acceptance by unbelievers; seek favors; and, seek to detach itself from the onus of being Christians.

In the portion that we have just studied together in verse 16, we come down to the admonition that the Lord has for this church. It begins with the advice in verse 16 to repent. If they do not, He says that He will come quickly without delay, and that He will fight against this congregation with the sword of His mouth, which is, of course, the Word of God. It is always the Word of God which is the basis of God's dealing with us. That's the basis upon which He's going to judge us. It doesn't matter what you and I may think about any particular subject, or what opinions we may hold. The only important thing is what God thinks about it. While you and I may have a basis for arguing against something that God is doing in our particular case, it doesn't make any difference. He is not going to be taught by us. He's not going to be restrained by us. He's not going to be deluded by us. We cannot con Him. We are going to face Him on the basis of the Word. So, again, this letter points up very specifically with this expression, "The sword of My mouth." That is the Word of God. That is the most important thing in the life of a Christian.

Then verse 17 admonishes positive response to the Word of God. This admonition is to the congregation as a whole to listen to the Holy Spirit. You will notice that that comes before the specific message to individual believers who are called the overcomers. The exhortation to the church congregation as a whole, before speaking to individuals in the congregation, indicates that the church organization can yet be turned around from its evil. The letters which follow this one to Pergamum reverse this order, and speak to individuals first, and then to the congregation as a whole, indicating that the church organization, after this particular point in history, could no longer be turned back. It could no longer be changed. The appeal had to be only to individual believers within a corrupt system who themselves could change, while the congregation as a whole would no longer turn back to true doctrine. There is a very distinct change. After this period in church history, things were too far gone. Local churches as such were so deteriorated that they could not, as a group, get straightened out.

So we're now approaching this church, which is in a position where it can change. So we begin in verse 17 where He says, "To him that overcomes." The word "overcomes" is the Greek word "nikao." "Nikao" means "to conquer," or "to prevail." It is, in the Greek language, a military term. The overcomers are identified for us in 1 John 5:4-5, where John writes, "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world (the world system of Satan, that is). This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. Who is He that overcomes the world but he who believes that Jesus is the son of God?" There is the key to being an overcomer in Satan's world – believing that Jesus is the Son of God. And if you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, you, by the same token, believe all that He as God has claimed: that that is true; that He is veracity; and, therefore, all that He has claimed as being the Lamb of God for the sins of the world is also accepted. This is God's basis entirely upon which He justifies a human soul. It is people who are justified, therefore, who are the overcomers. It's just as simple as that.

This is not a reference to somebody who has some great spiritual power. You can hear some very powerful sermons that wax very eloquent about the fact that there are some spiritual giants. I loathe that concept as there are few things that I loathe, because it is a distortion of a monumental nature. There isn't any such thing as a spiritual giant in the Christian life. There never was, and there never will be. There are just people like you and me who had enough sense to go on with the Word of God, and to respond to doctrine, whom God has been able to bless all the more. But there are no spiritual giants. There are only worms saved by grace. This audience is full of worms who have been saved by grace – crawling with worms who have been saved by grace, and there are no spiritual giants here or anyplace else.

So when you talk about an overcomer, there are some preachers that really like to turn on the steam here and talk about these great people who have mountaintop experiences with God, and who know how to go along with God, and they've got some big secret inside track with Him. That is nonsense and baloney sliced thick. This is not a reference to someone with special spiritual powers or some secret for spiritual victories.

Years ago, before I became pastor of this church, this was quite a jumping place. It has settled down a good deal since I've been here. Mrs. Holt doesn't think so, but it has. But then she should know because she was here then. One of the things that they used to have right down here on this sacred spot on which I am now standing was a bench which was covered with an army blanket. That was the altar. People used to be asked to come forward down this aisle to kneel at this bench and to pray through to victory. The person who was here before me used to go up and say, "Have you gotten victory, brother?" And, of course, some of those poor idiots didn't know what victory was all about to begin with, let alone how to pray themselves into victory. And if they got into victory, they would know they were there to begin with. I mean it was the most confusing, ridiculous nonsense that you could imagine. It was all based on this idea that this person could become an overcomer. I used to listen to these sermons about how to become an overcomer. How did you overcome? Well, you came up here and you kneeled by the army blanket. You leaned on it, and you prayed, and then somehow you overcame. All you overcame was your personal dignity as far as I was concerned – making a spectacle of yourself.

Well, I need not tell you what was first removed from this auditorium the first Sunday I became pastor-teacher. I wish I had kept that blanket. It would be a collector historical item. We should have it in a case out here, just as a thing that we can look back on. I'm sorry we threw it away.

But anyhow, that is not what this verse is talking about. "To him that overcomes" is every Christian who, by virtue of having believed the gospel, has experienced thereby the baptism of the Holy Spirit. You've been placed into Christ, and that has detached you from all the condemnation, the moral guilt, and the doom that you once suffered while you were in Adam. Being in Christ makes you an overcomer. You are a winner. The sin nature has been deposed from control in your soul. You are a winner. That is not just positive thinking. This is a fact of Scripture. And you cannot be anything else but a winner. God is determined that you are going to be a winner, and that is where you are going to end up. You are an overcomer. You will be a winner. Some of you will get there with ease. Some of you will get there with a lot of knocking around by the Lord (a lot of discipline), but that is where you're going to get.

Now there is no limit to how far you can go in godly holy living. There is no limit. The only limit is to the extent that you take doctrine into your soul and apply it in your experience. That is the only limit as to how far you can go in reflecting the character of Jesus Christ. There is no limit to how far you can go in overcoming every kind of mental evil, as well as overt evil, that is in the world that constantly rubs shoulders with you in your daily life. Every Christian is an overcomer, and that is the person that He is addressing now.

So you are a "nikao." This is in the present tense. So this is the continual status of every believer. It is active. You, personally, as a believer, are the overcomer. And it is in the participle mood, which indicates that here is a spiritual principle being outlined. To these, He says he's going to give something. The word "give" is "didomi." This is the word to express a grace gift from God to you, the overcomer. It is future because this is a promise that God will perform anytime along the line. Ultimately, in its fullest sense, what He promises here will be experienced in heaven itself. It is active because Jesus Christ Himself does the giving. It's in the indicative mood which indicates that here is a statement of fact.

**The Hidden Manna**

It says, "To him that overcomes, I will give," and the words "to eat" are not in the Greek text. So just take a pencil and cross those out. "To him that overcomes will I give," and the Greek does have the word "him," which is the Greek word "autos," so that it is very specifically indicating you as a personal individual. You will be given something that he calls first "the hidden manna." The word "hidden" is the Greek word "krupto." The word "krupto" means "to cover" or "conceal." From this we get the English word "cryptic," and even the English word "crypt," of course – a burial place, because these are places in which things are hidden.

This is in the perfect tense, and the perfect tense in the Greek means that here is something that begins back here in the past, and then it continues, and here we are now at the present, and it has continued on in the way that it began. So some place in the past, something was hidden, and this thing which was hidden has continued hidden right down to the present. It is in the passive, which means that this was done to this thing which is going to be called "manna" here in a minute. It's a participle – a principle stated. Something which, in the past, has been hidden. What has been hidden in the past? Manna. The Greek word is "manna." This is a noun. Actually, this is the transliteration of these Hebrew words "man hu." The Hebrew words "man hu" was what the Jew said when they woke up that first morning, and they looked all around them, and they thought that a frost was covering the ground. It was these little round white pieces of bread-like food which had a taste of honey. When they woke up, everybody looked out his tent and said, "man hu," which was, "What is this?" And everybody kept walking around saying "man hu." "What is this?" And so they called it "man hu" from then on, for 40 years. They never thought of another name. They just said every morning it was "man hu." Every day. They never caught on what it was. They just kept eating it, and they never could figure out what it was.

Anyhow, this is confirmed for us. There was a translation of the Hebrew Bible that we call the Septuagint, because, supposedly 70 writers worked on it, so they used these Roman letters, LXX, which stands for the Roman numeral seventy. This is just exactly the way they translated this: ... "What is this?" So we're referring, of course, to the historical event that took place in Exodus 16 where the Jews actually woke up and saw the manna. Exodus 16:15 says, "And when the children of Israel saw it, they said to one another, 'It is manna,' for they knew not what it was." There is the word manna ("man hu"). "And Moses said to them, 'This is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat.'"

What is the significance here to this church at Pergamum with all that we've learned about it, and the status and condition that existed there, to say to those Christians who listen to the Spirit of God, that they will experience the pleasure of receiving what he calls the hidden manna? This is manna which has been hidden in the past, and which continues to be hidden to now. Of course, originally, this food was given by God as rain from heaven, and it was to replace the food that they had been eating in Egypt – food that consisted basically of a diet of onions and garlic. This, of course, was immediately cut off. God substituted these small, round-shaped, white in color, little morsels of food that appeared like a frost, and appeared every morning. Exodus 16:14 says "When the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness, there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground." It looked like an early autumn day in which frost had gathered on the ground. Exodus 16:31 tells us that it had the taste of honey: "And the house of Israel called the name thereof manna, and it was like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey." So it was a very sweet thing. For all we know, it perhaps did have the quality of honey in it, which meant that it had fructose as the basic sugar content, which would have accounted for a tremendous amount of energy and tremendous amount of food value out of this little morsel that God had put together.

It was given by God every morning for 12,500 mornings. For 12,500 mornings, down came "man hu." They eat manna morning, noon, and night, out in the wilderness. They ate it until they actually entered the land. We finally have a terminal point for this recorded for us in Joshua 5:10: "And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the 14th day of the month at evening in the plains of Jericho. They did eat of the old grain of the land on the next day after the Passover, unleavened cakes and parched grain in the very same day. And the manna ceased on the next day after they had eaten the old grain of the land. Neither had the children of Israel manna anymore, for they did eat the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." So after they got into the land, they began sustaining themselves on the produce of the land itself, and the 12,500 days of manna provision came to an end.

**The Bread of Heaven**

In John 6:31, we have a reference to this substance, the manna. There we find that it is called "the bread of heaven:" "Our fathers did eat manna in the desert. As it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat." It's called "bread from heaven."

There is one thing that is interesting to observe here. When Moses was coming to the end of his life, he wrote this book of Deuteronomy as a kind of final summary of a review of the history of Israel. He looked back and he looked forward to what their experience was going to be. I want you to notice that in Deuteronomy 8:3, after talking about the fact that they were in the wilderness, and they had some hard times, he says, "God humbled you by making it hard on you to have the things that you needed." So verse 3 says, "And He humbled you and suffered you to hunger. He fed you with manna, which you knew not, neither did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord does man live." So here, Moses said, "God used manna to teach you something that you needed to know that was very important. You were hungry. You found yourself in the wilderness. You no longer had the food of Egypt. Your children were crying. You were desperate for food. So God came along, and after having put you in that condition, He provided you with this food from heaven. By that very act, He showed you that He was a God you could trust. By the very act that He gave you that food, He fulfilled the promise that He made to you back in Egypt: Leave the land and I'm going to take care of you so."

So suddenly, this little substance that they saw on the ground every morning was a testimony and a memorial to the fact that God keeps His word. So Moses said, "What was important out in the wilderness? Your hunger, or the Word of God? Your hunger could only be solved by the fact that the Word of God was possessed by you. If you did not have the Word of God, you had nothing. Nothing could be provided. Nothing could be secure. The only reason you survived out in the wilderness was because God keeps His word. The reason God permitted you to hunger was so that you could be in a desperate position in desperate straits. Then you turned to Him, and God said, 'OK, I promised I'd take care of you. I'm going to come through.' He provided the manna." Every time they saw the manna, they knew that food was important, but a person could have all the food in the world and have nothing if he did not have the Word of God to feed upon. That is the thing we live on. If you have the Word of God, all the material things follow. Isn't that what Jesus taught when he was here? In Matthew 6:32-33, He said, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." What is He talking about? Seek the things of doctrine. Seek the things of the mind of God. Then all of these material things are going to be added unto you.

That is a lesson that a lot of Christians never, never learn. They think that their security lies in their job; their savings account; how much gold and silver they have; how much food they've stored up; how much water they've put aside; and, how much everything else. They think that that's where the security lies. No. It lies in having the Word of God at your command. Therefore, it is not without significance that when Jesus Christ was faced by the devil in the wilderness temptation in Luke 4:4, we have Jesus Christ quoting Moses from this verse here in Deuteronomy 8:3. The devil said, "Turn these stones into food. Make yourself some bread. You are the Son of God. You have the power to do that." That's the same condition. He needed food. He hadn't eaten for 40 days and nights. He needed food the way they needed it in the wilderness.

But what did He do? He said, "Wait a minute. I am not going to resort to My supernatural powers as deity. I am going to the cross as humanity. I have to go as man to bear the sins of mankind. I go there as the God-man, but I go there as any man would go – as any human being would go. I go there as a sinless perfect human being. But I go there as a human being. And my needs are to be met the way every believer's needs are to be met. I am no different from any member of Berean Memorial Church, who may have a material need, whether it is food after 40 days of starving or what. You can't call it down by supernatural powers. How can you call it down? The same way that Jesus Christ did. He resorted to the Word of God, and He called upon a God who doesn't lie to keep His promises. So he told the devil what Moses told Israel: "Man does not live by bread alone, but when he really lives, he can only live by the Word of God." The person who has doctrine will have material things as well. Manna demonstrates that this is our life. Doctrine is our life. Doctrine alone can bring our needed provisions.

So manna indeed typifies the spiritual food that God provides for believers in His word. Bible doctrine, after all, is the mind of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 2:16, we are told that believers are to feed upon Christ. In John 6, this is what Jesus was trying to teach a group of people at one time: that He was their spiritual food. All of this is background to get back to what in the world he meant by the fact that we would experience the joy of sharing a hidden manna if we refuse to be contaminated by the world system; if we refuse to seek the favors of our society; if we refuse to compromise the authority of God's word; and, if we refuse to compromise with the world system in any respect of its delusions which are so great today, we would enjoy feeding upon hidden manna. Well, here is the clue as to what He was referring to.

In John 6:30, the Lord Jesus Christ is engaged in discussing this matter of spiritual sustenance. Some of these people could not understand that He was using material things as a spiritual illustration: "They said, therefore, unto Him, 'What sign do You show then that we may see and believe You? What work do You perform? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' Then Jesus said to them, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven, but My father gave you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life unto the world.'"

**The Bread of Life**

There is a bread from heaven. It's not that material manna. There is a true bread from heaven. It is in the person of Jesus Christ: "Then they said unto Him, 'Lord, evermore give us this bread.' And Jesus said unto them, 'I am the bread of life. He that comes to Me shall never hunger. He that believes on me shall never thirst. And I said unto you that you also have seen Me and don't believe. All that the Father gives me shall come to Me, and I will not cast out. For I came down from heaven not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. This is the Father's will who has sent Me: that of all that He has given Me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of Him that sent Me: that everyone who sees the Son and believes on Him may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day.' Then the Jews murmured at Him, because he said, 'I am the bread that came down from heaven.' They said, '"Isn't this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it, then, that he said I came down from heaven?'

"Jesus, therefore, answered and said into them, 'Don't murmur among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father who sent Me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, and they shall all be taught of God, every man, therefore, that has heard, and has learned of the Father comes unto Me. Not that any man has seen the Father, except He who is of God: He has seen the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believes on Me has everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread that comes down from heaven: that a man may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever. The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.'"

This whole passage stresses the fact that a believer feeds upon Jesus Christ in some way. It is possible for us to feed on Jesus Christ, who is the spiritual food that sustains us. He is the manna that falls upon us as the manna once fell to the ground in a material sense for the Jews. How do we feed upon him? The first time you feed upon Christ as the heavenly manna is when you exercise faith in the gospel. John 6:57-58 say, "As the living Father had sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eats Me, even he shall live by Me. This is that bread which came down from heaven, not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead. He that eats of this bread shall live forever."

How do you eat of Jesus Christ? You eat of Jesus Christ (you take spiritual sustenance from Jesus Christ) through your mind. It is through the mentality of your soul that you believe the mind of Christ. The mind of Christ is that which is reproduced in the doctrines that we have recorded in Scripture. As you learn doctrine; as you believe it; and, thus act positively upon it, you have entered into feeding upon Jesus Christ. The first act of feeding upon Christ that any human being does is believing the gospel. Believing the gospel is the first step in the intake of spiritual sustenance. The second step is the immediate result of that believing upon the gospel in the form of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which places you into union with the death and the resurrection of Christ, and all that that connotes for you and your destiny in heaven. That is another experience of having fed upon Jesus Christ. Then the third stage is the one in which all of you are, and that is the daily opportunity via the great system of perception that God has provided in the form of the local church; the pastor-teacher; the completed canon of Scripture; and, all the way down the line – all that is involved in instruction in the Word of God where spiritual food is made available for you to take into your human spirit.

What food is made available? The explanation of the doctrines of Scripture, which are the mind of Christ. So as you take doctrine into your soul, you are feeding upon the thoughts of Jesus Christ. As you feed upon the thoughts of Jesus Christ, you are experiencing fellowship with Him. You are experiencing fellowship through His word. That is what feeding upon Christ means. It means to be in fellowship with Him via the Word of God. He is the bread of life today. He is the bread from heaven. He is to us what manna was of old.

As you may know, the Jews had, as a central object of furniture, a box which was called the Ark of the Covenant. This box had on top of it a lid of acacia wood, representing the humanity of Christ, covered over with gold, representing the deity of Jesus Christ. Now this box was carried through the wilderness, and it bore within it several very sacred objects. One of them, the book of Hebrews tells us, was a golden pot, which was filled with manna. It bore, as well, the 2 tables of stone upon which the law (the Ten Commandments) had been written. It also bore the rod of Aaron – the dead stick that had come to life that had blossomed out. All of these were significant in terms of man's rebellion against God. You could not get to these objects except through the lid. This lid opened, and you could not get to these objects except through that which represented Jesus Christ.

This was put into this ark, and the lid was closed. No human eye saw that part of manna again, probably, for 500 years, if they ever saw it again at all, before it was in time destroyed, when the ark itself was destroyed. In Exodus 16:33, we have the record of the manna being hidden in this way: "And Moses said unto Aaron, 'Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the Lord to be kept for your generations.'" Hebrews 9:4 tells us that this was a golden pot into which it was placed. Why was this placed there? For the reason of a memorial – a memorial unto God's grace and to God's trustworthiness. God had said, "Come out of Egypt. Don't be afraid. I'm going to take you into a land flowing with milk and honey. I'm going to get you there. That's My Word. That is doctrine. Lean upon that. Trust me." When they found themselves without food, manna indeed represented the fulfillment of that promise. Every time they thought about that manna hidden in that ark (in that box), they remembered that this was a God who was trustworthy.

After Jesus Christ had been raised from the dead for 40 days, He finally took His disciples out to that famous place outside the city of Jerusalem called the Mount of Olives. There He gathered with them on the top for the last time; made some final proclamations and declarations to them; told them of how they would now be His witnesses; told them that His ministry was over; and, told them that a new helper was coming from heaven in the form of God the Holy Spirit who would no longer be restricted to being in one place at a time, as was the God-man, but who would be every place at once, literally indwelling their bodies, and would be now their helper to accomplish absolute supernatural things. He said, "If you have been impressed by what you have seen Me do, just wait till what you will do relative to this world. If you think I have moved the world, and this city, and humanity, wait till the way you are going to move mankind once I have gone, and the Spirit of God has come in return."

We're told in Scripture that after He said these things, He began rising, and gradually came into a cloud out of their sight, and they never saw Him again. Acts 1:9-11: "He is now in the third heaven, seated upon the Father's throne, sharing that throne with God the Father, waiting to the day when He will again be seen."

**Jesus Christ is our Hidden Manna**

In Mark 16:19, Jesus Christ is now in the identical position as was the pot of manna inside that ark. He is hidden from us. He is now the hidden manna. What the book of the Revelation is telling us is that while some of the Christians in the church at Pergamum were willing to play ball with the pagans around them, and were willing to compromise their relationship to Jesus Christ and to the Word of truth, there were others who would not do that. There were some Christians who said, "I will not eat meat which has been used in worship of an idol. I don't care if it is good meat. I don't care if they are good steaks. I will not eat meat which has been sacrificed (used in worship) of an idol, because behind every idol is a demon. That meat (that chunk of meat), as good looking as it is, has been used in worship of a demon, and I'll have nothing to do with it."

There were some Christians who, because of that, were ostracized socially. It's hard to be invited to people's homes (particularly people of some social standing in the city of Pergamum), and not be served meat which had been offered to an idol. That was the best meat there was. Therefore, some people went to a home and said, "I'm not going to eat that meat. I refuse to eat it." That would be comparable to some of you who have some real convictions, and you won't eat ham. And somebody says, "Come over for a ham supper." What are you going to say? "I don't eat ham?" They might say, "You don't eat ham? OK. I don't want you to come." You're ostracized, and you're cut out from that social contact.

Well, the Lord Jesus is saying, "I know some of you have been cut out because you have suffered rejection by the world because you will not compromise your relationship to Me." And the Lord Jesus said, "I'm promising to you people that you believers who are the overcomers are going to have fellowship with Me, who is the hidden manna of the church age? I'm off in heaven. You cannot see me. I am the bread of life. I am that upon which you sustain yourself. I am the key to every happiness that you will ever experience on earth. I am the source of every victory over evil that you will ever experience. I am the source of every accomplishment of divine good. I am the source of all successful living. And I am capable of bringing this kind of a lifestyle to fruition with you through the mind of Christ; through the Word of God; and, through doctrine. As you enter the doctrines of Scripture, you feed upon the hidden manna, the person of Jesus Christ.

How do we feed upon this hidden manna? How is this available to you? Well, the world may reject you? The world may say, "I don't want anything to do with you." But Jesus Christ says, "Meditate upon the Word of God." The word meditate means "to chew it over" – literally here chewing upon the Word of God. As you're chewing upon the Word of God, and digesting what God has said, and responding with positive volition, you have fed upon the hidden manna of Jesus Christ, your Lord in heaven (Joshua 1:8).

There's one thing that is important to remember in all of this: While the Jews woke up every morning, and they saw all this frosty-like substance of the manna laid out for them, there was one thing that the manna would not do. It would not go into the pot by itself and come into their tents. There was no way. They had to come out of their tents, and they had to walk around picking up the manna, and take it back in, and put it in the pot for that day's sustenance. There was no other way they got it. They individually and personally had to go out and collect the manna and bring it home for the day. And in the same way, the analogy holds true. We have the hidden manna of the mind of Christ available to us in the form of doctrine. But you're not going to get it until you personally seek to pull it in every day.

Up to now, you've been perhaps very interested in this analogy, but at this point, we may now find a certain point of conviction. We may be in a certain place where these Jews were. Some of them said, "I don't want to go out every day. I don't want to go out every day and collect this manna – this heavenly food that has fallen." So they'd look around when nobody was watching, and they would collect twice as much. They would say, "Tomorrow we don't have to go out. It's too crowded out there, with a bunch of Jews running around collecting manna. I don't even like to be out there with them." But God had warned them not to try that stunt. And oh boy, it was a shock when the next day they slept in late, and didn't bother picking up the manna. By noon, when the sun came out, the manna would melt, and it was gone. They looked out there and the manna was all gone. They slept in late; got up for breakfast; and, opened the manna pot. And there it was crawling with worms – lots of protein, but not very good-tasting. They just lost all their stomach for the manna for the day, and they went hungry. What they had gathered, and thought they were going to ride on, turned to worms.

Yesterday's doctrine turns to worms in your mouth today. Yesterday's doctrine, if not refreshed by a new intake, turns to worms in your soul. That is the problem with a lot of Christians who can't get anywhere really in the Christian life. They're trying to live on worms instead of the mind of Christ. God says those of you who have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit because you've trusted in Christ, and you're in Christ, you are overcomers. You are a "nikao." You're not a loser. You're a winner. Now all you have to do is feed on this hidden manna – that Christ that you can't see, but who is just as living and who is just as available in the form of Scripture as if He were here face-to-face talking with you. God has supplied doctrine. Our commander-in-chief has performed His logistical responsibilities. He's made it possible for the supply trains to come through. We have a capacity (a basis) for ultimate fellowship with that hidden Christ – that manna in heaven.

For this reason, in 1 Peter 5:2, Peter, the senior pastor-teacher, says this to all the rest of the teachers of the word: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight of it, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy money, but of a ready mind." Feed the flock of God. What is Peter saying? Peter is saying, "Point the people of God to the hidden manna, the Christ whom we cannot see, but whose mind we can feed upon through the Word of God. And as we feed upon His mind, we have fellowship with Him."

Yes, the world has rejected you. The city of Pergamum had nothing but contempt for a lot of these believers. But while the mystery cults and their religious leaders paraded themselves and prided themselves on the fact that they had secrets that only the people who were on the inside knew, the believers had the real secrets. They had the real hidden secrets. The Babylonian mystery cult devotees were a pathetic sight. They thought they had something that was hidden. They had nothing. They had worms. It was the believers who fed upon the mind of Christ who had the real sustaining capacity that only God can give.

So to the Pergamum church, and to you and me, God the Holy Spirit says, "To you who are overcomers, I will give of the hidden manner." He gives that to us through the means that He has provided for us to come into the understanding of what the Word teaches. But you must go out, gather it yourself, and gather it on a daily basis. Every day you miss in listening to a tape; every day you miss studying the Word of God; every day you miss in researching what the word has said, it's a loss to you. You kids go to school and say, "Oh, I've got homework to do. I've got this to do." You don't say, "Well, I've got a little time to spend with the Lord. All I have to do is read a few verses of Scripture," and it revolutionize your life, and it will make you a winner. You young people have the greatest time in the world. You've got more opportunities. It's harder on adults. But all you have to do is discipline yourself enough to get up. All you girls have to do is use a little less comb time; a little less winking at yourself time; a little less spraying your hair time, and killing everybody else around the place, gassing them to death just a little less; and, a little more time in the Word, and you're going to go someplace.

I've seen some of you who are adults now, when you were little kids around here, you learned to do this. I've seen it bless your lives. I've seen it make you indeed victors; I've seen it make you overcomers; and, I've seen it carry you over all of the delusions of society. While others of your peers have fallen by the wayside, you stood, because you fed upon the hidden manner. That is the great thing. That is your privilege as an overcomer. God forbid that you should squander it by the fact that you are too lazy to get out every day and start collecting it in one way or another.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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