

Objective

The confirmands are convinced that the Lord Jesus will return. They know that they are also called to participate in the marriage of the Lamb.

Contents

Our time: the time in which God's work is being completed.
Our election as the bride of Christ.
Overcoming.

CNAC-QA 49; 551–557; 559, 561–564

1 Lead-in**Workbook exercise A (homework)**

At the beginning of the lesson exercise A is discussed. For this the names of the congregations were to be found to which the seven letters of Revelation were written. These are

- Sardis (5)
- Pergamos (3)
- Philadelphia (6)
- Ephesus (1)
- Laodicea (7)
- Smyrna (2)
- Thyatira (4)

Explain

The seven letters are addressed to the congregations in Asia Minor and their angels (rectors).

The seven letters

In these letters dangers were pointed out to God's children. The letters contain advice for the congregations, which were subjected to various bad influences. We often encounter such influences today too. This advice is therefore also of value for our time. For us these promises point to the future. Each congregation also received a promise.

2 Our time: the time in which God's work is to be completed**Explain***Dangers which also threaten us*

Many positive aspects were reported in the letters to the congregations. The Christians distinguished themselves in patience, love, faith, and the courage of their convictions. We find the same in the congregations today. Negative situations however, are likewise addressed. These can also be encountered in our time. For example, in the letter to the congregation at

- Ephesus it says: "I have this against you, that you have left your first love" (Revelation 2: 4).
- Sardis it states: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead" (Revelation 3: 1).
- Laodicea we read: "Because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked" (Revelation 3: 16–17).

As an example of the dangers which also threaten us, the conditions which prevailed in the congregation at Laodicea are to be discussed.

Explain

Historical Laodicea

In the city of Laodicea there were many banks. Most people were rich. Ointment for the eyes was made there which brought relief to many people who were ill. Wool was produced and processed so that the people could dress well. Around Laodicea there were (and still are) hot springs from which water was channelled into the city. Along the way however, this water became lukewarm and took on a peculiar taste.

The congregation at Laodicea

The members of this congregation concerned themselves too much with earthly matters. As a result their soul withered. The striving for earthly things got out of control. Their faith became lukewarm; they became indifferent.

Laodicea today

In our time, the time before the Lord Jesus' return, we are also subjected to such influences!

Ask

What do you understand such influences to be?

Listen to answers and summarise

Many things can divert us from the goal of our faith and take up our time.

Explain

God also counsels us through the Holy Spirit. For example: "I counsel you to buy from Me **gold** refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and **white garments**, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with **eye salve**, that you may see" (Revelation 3: 18).

Explain

For **gold** extracted from a gold mine to become pure it must be refined in fire, that is, all slag must be removed.

Gold: pure precious metal

Refined **gold** is a beautiful, pure, and precious metal.

Ask

What does 'gold' mean to us and why do we need it?

Listen to answers and supplement *Godly truth*

Gold is often used as an illustrative comparison to spiritual possessions such as divine wisdom, faith, and godly truth. To become rich for eternity we are to buy such pure gold from Jesus Christ.

Explain

White garments are worn at special occasions (e.g. by a bride at her wedding). They symbolise purity.

Festive garments

In Laodicea white garments were also worn following the acquittal of a charge.

Ask**What do 'white garments' mean to us and why do we need them?****Listen to answers and supplement**

White garments symbolise the purity of the soul. We are to 'buy' such garments. Jesus Christ offers them to us through the forgiveness of sins.

The garment of grace

We endeavour to preserve our white garment: the purity of our soul.

Explain

When we cannot see well anymore because our eyes are infected or there is a foreign substance in them we use eye medication.

Ask**What does 'eye salve' mean to us and why do we need it?****Listen to answers and supplement**

In a spiritual sense we need ointment for the eyes to be able to see clearly. The spirits of this world would like us to neither recognise the signs of the times nor perceive the dangers for the soul. However, we are to see clearly that the Lord Jesus' promises recorded in the Bible are being fulfilled today.

*To clearly see the way and our goal***Workbook exercise B**

The confirmands now do exercise B in their workbook. They explain how these spiritual possessions can be acquired. Afterwards the answers are discussed. It is to emerge that we also have to do something to acquire these possessions. To

- acquire godly truth we have to accept God's word and counsel. These are so important that we arrange our life accordingly. We thereby grow in faith, knowledge, and understanding.
- obtain forgiveness we also must forgive. We must consciously grasp the word of forgiveness.
- adopt the proper vision we have to learn to view our life from the goal of our faith.

Ask**Why does God counsel us through the Holy Spirit during the time in which God's work is to be completed?****Listen to answers and supplement**

He wants to help us to become worthy for the day of the Lord Jesus. Our time ought not to frighten us. Rather it should cause us to trustingly look to our future with the Lord for which He has called us.

3 Our calling**Ask****Why did God elect us?****Listen to answers and supplement**

God "chose us ... before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1: 4). We cannot answer the question of why He elected us. This is God's free election by grace.

By grace

*Godly election –
divine commission*

Divine election is always associated with a special commission. For example: God designated Solomon “to build a house for the sanctuary” (1 Chronicles 28: 10).

The Lord Jesus chose the Apostles (cf. Luke 6: 13) and called them to be ambassadors: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28: 19–20).

Ask

For what purpose have we been called?

**Listen to answers
and supplement**

We have been called to

- be God’s children and the Lord Jesus’ bride,
- participate in the marriage supper of the Lamb,
- reign with Jesus Christ in the thousand-year kingdom of peace as the royal priesthood (cf. Revelation 20: 6),
- be heirs of God’s kingdom and citizens of the new creation, and
- be united forever with the triune God.

The greatness of our calling is shown in Revelation 19: 9:

A student reads aloud

“Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!”

Explain

It is our goal of faith to be accepted at the return of Christ. We feel the need to prepare ourselves for this event and to strive for worthiness.

4 Overcoming

Explain

To demonstrate our worthiness for this calling we have to prove ourselves on earth and overcome.

Ask

What does ‘overcoming’ mean to you?

**Listen to answers
and supplement**

When individuals prepare themselves for an occupation they must learn to make some sacrifices over the course of their apprenticeship or studies. The greater the goal the more sacrifices they have to face.

We shun sin ...

Christ expects us to be prepared for His return. To be prepared we renounce the Devil, shun sin, and remain faithful to the Lord.

*... through the
power of God*

With our own strength alone however, we cannot reach this goal. The Lord Jesus defeated (i.e. overcame) all forces hostile to God (cf. John 16: 33). We have faith in Him. Through Holy Communion we receive the necessary strength to be able to resist and overcome sin.

Explain

To overcome therefore means: I want to genuinely strive to live a life that is pleasing to God, battle against sin, and wait for Christ's return (cf. 1 John 2: 15–17).

The reward of those who overcome

The reward which those who overcome will receive is mentioned at the conclusion of each of the seven letters. For example, in the letter to the congregation in Laodicea it states: "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne" (Revelation 3: 21). Toward the end of Revelation it says: "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son" (Revelation 21: 7).

The main points**I also want to ...**

... overcome and participate in the marriage of the Lamb!

Homework

The confirmands read the Ninth Article of Faith and consider its contents.