

THE CHURCH THAT FAILED TO MEASURE UP

Revelation 3:1-6

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Introduction:

Recently I read a fable about a **dog** who loved to chase other animals. He bragged about his **great running skill** and said he could catch anything. Well, it wasn't long until his boastful claims were put to the test by a certain **rabbit**. With ease the little creature outran his barking pursuer. The other animals, watching with glee, began to laugh. The dog excused himself, however, by saying, "**You forget, I was only running for fun. He was running for his life!**"

That does make a difference! Motivation is the most important factor in everything we do.

We Must Be All We Can Be For Christ. How?

I. Living Up To Our Name (1,2)

A. Listen to what He is Saying

1. Our way is not proper (1b)
2. Our works are not perfect (2b)

B. Listen to what We are Saying

1. **We are Christians**--Greek "the name;" "a follower of Christ"
2. **We are Baptists--Baptist Distinctives:**
Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Peter 4:16

a. Absolute Authority of Scripture

God's Miracle Book.

This is true for a number of reasons:

- 1) In its **origin** -- coming to us by divine inspiration.
- 2) In its **durability** -- outlasting the opposition of its critics and surviving the attempts of its enemies to exterminate it.
- 3) In its **results** -- transforming the lives of those who read and believe it.
- 4) In its **harmony** -- agreeing in all its parts, even though written over a period of 1600 years by about 40 different authors.
- 5) In its **message** -- telling of many occasions when God supernaturally intervened in the affairs of men to accomplish his redemptive purposes.

6) In its **preservation** -- maintaining its accuracy and reliability down through the centuries.

The Bible is the tuning fork of life.

b. Autonomy of the local church

c. Regenerate church membership

d. Soul liberty--individual access to God without sacerdotalism (of, or relating to, priest/priesthood)

e. Believers baptism

f. Separation--political, ecclesiastical, personal

II. Strengthening That Which Is About To Die (2a)

KJV & Separation

III. Repent of That Which is Failing (3)--reclaim our stewardship

Once upon a time there were four men named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody . There was an important job to be done and Everybody was asked to do it. But Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it. But Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about it, because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought that Anybody could do it, and Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody and Nobody did the job that Anybody could have done in the first place.

IV. Keep Standing Where We Are Right (4,5)

*I read a story about a **rich baker** who sent for 20 of the **poorest children** in town and said to them, "In this basket is a loaf of bread for each of you. Take one and come back every day and I'll give you more." Immediately the youngsters began **quarreling** about who would get the largest loaf. **Snatching** from the basket, they left without even thanking the baker.*

***Gretchen**, a poorly dressed little girl, patiently waited until the others had left. She then took the **smallest** loaf, which remained in the basket, **kissed** the old man's hand, and went home. The next day the scene was repeated. But when Gretchen's mother sliced this loaf, she found many **shiny sliver pieces** inside. When Gretchen took the money back to the baker, he said, "No, my child, it was not a mistake, **I put them into the smallest loaf to reward you.**"*

A. Even though in the minority (4a)

*All the **great injustices of history** have been committed in the name of unchecked and unbridled "**majority rule.**"*

*The late Senator James A. Reed, of Missouri, in one of the most forceful speeches ever delivered before the Senate, observed with great truth: "The **majority** crucified Jesus Christ; the majority burned the Christians at the stake; the majority established slavery; the majority jeered when Columbus said the world was round; the majority threw him into a dungeon for having discovered a new world; the majority cut off the ears of John Pym because he dared advocate the liberty of the press."*

Christ always calls us to follow the lifestyle of the "Minority opinion."

Don't be deceived by the loud voice of "majority (opinion) morality."

B. Expecting great rewards (4b,5)

1. Clothed in white (4b,5a)

2. Confessed in heaven (5b)

CONCLUSION:

*An old woman, known to all her neighbors as "**Garbage Mary**," lived in a small town in Florida. Every day she would be seen **dressed in her rags**, walking the streets, **scavenging** through garbage cans for food, which she hoarded in her car or in her tiny two-room apartment. She was a **recluse** with no friends, and, as she scrounged cigarettes and ice cubes from anyone who was available, it was logical to believe that she was an old woman who was rapidly losing her mind and living on the verge of destitution.*

*Finally, Garbage Mary was picked up by police and **confined in a psychiatric institution**. But, when some court officials went to her apartment to collect a few of her personal effects, they were amazed to discover that there was money everywhere. Scattered through her apartment and her car were **bank books, stock securities, oil-drilling rights, real-estate documents, and cash**, which indicated that Garbage Mary was worth more than a **million dollars**. These documents also indicated that she was not an old woman, but a forty-eight-year-old **college graduate**, who had inherited a great deal of money when her father died in 1974.*

*Whatever the reason, the tragedy remains. Here was a woman, abounding in the physical resources she needed to meet her physical needs, foraging through garbage and living in rags, while her resources went unused and neglected. **While her money collected interest, she collected garbage!***