

6-11-23 Seven Churches of Revelation (Thyatira)

Revelation 2:18-29.

Satan called a worldwide convention of demons. In his opening address he said, "We can't keep Christians from going to church. We can't keep them from reading their Bibles and knowing the truth. We can't even keep them from forming an intimate relationship with their Savior. Once they gain that connection with Jesus, our power over them is broken. So let them go to their churches; let them have their covered dish dinners, but steal their time, so they don't have time to develop a real relationship with Jesus Christ."

"This is what I want you to do", said the devil. "Distract them from gaining hold of their Savior and maintaining that vital connection throughout their day! "How shall we do this?" his demons shouted. "Keep them busy in the nonessentials of life and invent innumerable schemes to occupy their minds," he answered:

1. Tempt them to spend, spend, spend, and borrow, borrow, borrow.
2. Persuade the wives to go to work for long hours and the husbands to work 6-7 days each week, 10-12 hours a day, so they can afford their empty lifestyles.
3. Keep them from spending time with their children. As their family's fragment, soon, their homes will offer no escape from the pressures of work!
4. Over-stimulate their minds so that they cannot hear that 'still, small voice.'
5. Entice them to play the radio whenever they drive...also, keep the TV, Streaming services, Computers, Tablets, and their Smart phones going constantly in their home and see to it that every store and restaurant in the world plays non-biblical music constantly. This will jam their minds and break that union with Christ.
6. Fill the coffee tables with magazines and newspapers. Pound their minds with the news 24 hours a day. Invade their driving moments with billboards. Flood their mailboxes with junk mail, mail order catalogs, sweepstakes, and every kind of newsletter and promotional offering free products, services, and false hopes.
7. Keep skinny, beautiful models in the magazines and TV so their husbands will believe that outward beauty is what's important, and they'll become dissatisfied with their wives.
8. Keep the wives too tired to love their husbands at night. Give them headaches too! If they don't give their husbands the love they need, they will begin to look elsewhere. That will fragment their families quickly!
9. Even in their recreation, let them be excessive...have them return from their recreation exhausted. Keep them too busy to go out in nature and reflect on God's creation. Send them to amusement parks, sporting events, plays, concerts, and movies instead.
10. Keep them busy, busy, busy! And when they meet for spiritual fellowship, they will leave with troubled consciences. Crowd their lives with so many good causes that they have no time to seek power

from Jesus. Soon they will be working in their own strength, sacrificing their health and family for the good of the cause.

'It will work! It will work!!'

It was quite a plan! The demons went eagerly to their assignments causing Christians everywhere to have little time for their God or their families, and to have little or no time to tell others about the power of Jesus to change lives. I guess the question is, has the devil been successful at his scheme? You are the judge!

Has he?

Compromise will destroy a church, a family, a marriage, a friendship and certainly a relationship with Christ. We live in a world of compromise where people seek their own interests at any cost. People sell their souls for possessions, power, and pleasures of this world.

People compromise what they know is right in order to get what they want. This was exactly what the members of the church at Thyatira were doing. The church at Thyatira is a picture of the compromising church, a church full of believers and false believers who were compromising with the world in order to fulfill their personal desires.

The Church in Ephesus: Lost it' first love (loveless church)

The Church in Smyrna: The persecuted church (one of two that Jesus had no condemnation)

The Church in Pergamos: The compromising church

This week: the church in Thyatira; the adulterous, corrupt church

The Commander.

- As in the other letters to the 7 Churches, Jesus identifies Himself to this Church through a description of Himself. Look at how Jesus describes Himself to this Church of compromise.
- **Read verse 18.**
 1. Christ says that He is the Son of God. He is the One to whom a person owes his life. Christians do not own themselves but belong to Jesus Christ who has purchased them through His blood. We are not to compromise with the world.
 2. Christ says that His eyes are like a blazing fire. Christ sees all. He sees us when we make compromises. There are times in Scripture that we see fire being used as purifier, (i.e., the refiner's fire).
 3. Christ says that His feet are like fine brass. Christ can step down hard upon all seductive teaching and compromise. He rules and He judges. His feet will crush those who compromise with the world.

I. Church Commendation.

- This church had done several things right. This church was a very active church, involved in all kinds of works for the Lord.
- **Read verse 19.**
 1. They had works of love and service.

- This church had ministries that helped the sick and hurting, the lost, etc...
2. They had done works of faith and patient endurance.
 - These would include ministries that demanded strong faith and endurance to carry them out. Just because this church didn't have enough money or people to do something didn't mean that they didn't trust God and do it anyway.
 3. There was even a significant growth in the ministries of the Church.
 - The church grew and expanded. It reached out more and more. It was apparently as active as it could be, ministering to the community in every way that a Church should, and it continued to grow.

II. **Church's Complaint.**

- Although the church was doing well in this area, Jesus did have some complaints concerning this church.
 - **Read verses 20-21**
1. The church was tolerating a false prophetess to teach within the church.
 - Note that she called herself a prophetess. She claimed that God had called and gifted her to teach and proclaim the truth. Therefore, the church appointed her as a teacher and gave her the right to teach within the church. (Jezebel **1 Kings 16-21**)
 - **"Seduce"** means a fundamental departure from the truth. This prophetess was leading the church away from God.
 - She, Satan's false doctrine, was one that says it is on par or supersedes God's Word.
 2. The church tolerated false teaching, seduction, fornication, and idolatry.
 - This false teacher was teaching things contrary to the Word of God, and no one was doing anything about it.
 - This false teacher was being allowed to seduce the Lord's servants. She was arguing, presenting reasonable arguments, deceiving, and misleading the servants and followers of the Lord and the church was allowing it.
 - She was seducing the believers to commit fornication, that is, all manner of immoral acts. How could such teaching be allowed within the church?
 - Idolatry and compromise are, in the Bible, pictured as fornication and unfaithfulness to the marriage vows.
 - In our church, and in our lives today, we have to be careful of seduction, fornication and idolatry.
 3. Some church members were apparently putting their jobs and social acceptance before God.
 - They were attending the social functions to be socially acceptable and to secure their jobs and to prosper in the world. But the inevitable happened: they were influenced by the world and caught up in the compromise of the world. All because of some Jezebel, some false teacher in the church.
 - Notice that Jesus Christ had given this false teacher, this Jezebel, a period to repent. This means that she knew down deep within her heart that she was teaching contrary to God's Word; but she refused to change; she refused to repent.

- It is interesting that the church Ephesus didn't put up with false teachers and struggled with love and pride (elevating leadership). While the church in Thyatira allowed "love" and acceptance, to embrace false teachers and beliefs to take hold in the church.

III. Christ's Caution.

- Jesus warns those who compromise and are corrupted.
 - **Read verses 22-23.**
1. There is a warning to Jezebel. She is to be cast upon a bed of suffering and sickness. Listen very carefully when I say this. Sometimes we are sick because of sin in our lives; but just because you're sick doesn't mean it is because of some particular sin.
 2. There is the warning to those who gave in to her seduction and lifestyle, to those who refused to turn to Christ and to separate themselves from the world. They were to suffer great tribulation. Again, sometimes we go through difficult situations because of sin; but not all trials and tribulation are because of sin in your life.
 3. There is a warning to the children of Jezebel. Who are they? Real children or those who swallowed her false teaching and worldly lifestyle? In either case, they were to be killed. What does this mean? It could mean the second death, the judgment of eternal death when we stand face to face with Christ in the final judgment day.
 4. There was still time for all of them to repent. Christ tells them that this will only happen if they did not repent.
 5. Notice why Christ is going to judge those who compromise with the world and corrupt the church. Christ is going to judge those who compromise so that all the Churches may know and acknowledge that He is the Christ, the Sovereign head of the universe. He is the One who searches the minds, thoughts, and hearts of people. Christ is going to judge those who compromise so that every person will be treated fairly and justly; so that justice will be executed within the Church and the world—perfectly executed.

IV. Christ's Counsel.

- **Read verses 24-25.**
1. The counsel was to not fall for what Jezebel was doing.
 2. The counsel was to hold on to what they had until Christ came back. What did they have? Remember this church was ministering well. Jesus was saying keep ministering, loving, and being faithful just like you are right now, and I will remove this Jezebel and her followers.

V. Those Who Heard and Heeded.

- For those who are overcomers, there are 2 promises given. Please recall from the last 3 sermons who the overcomers are. (True believers)
 - **Read verses 26-28.**
1. The overcomer is given power over the nations. This is clearly the promise of ruling and reigning with Christ throughout eternity. The day is coming when Jesus Christ will return to earth and conquer all the forces of evil. Every knee shall bow and confess that Jesus is Lord. The overcomers will participate in that day, the glorious day of redemption with Jesus Christ. We will be given positions of rule and service throughout the universe.

2. The overcomer is given the morning star. This is Jesus Christ Himself. **Revelation 22:16** calls Jesus, “**the bright and morning star.**” The overcomer will be with Jesus Christ for all eternity.

Conclusion

Read verse 29.

I think that we need to see something very clearly in all these messages so far. If you’ll notice, there’s a common thread that really got Jesus hot under the toga.

In the churches of Ephesus, Pergamum, and Thyatira, they had all fallen sway to the perverse teachings of Balaam, the Nicolaitans and this false teacher Jezebel. The common thread that ties all three of these false teachings together is this: They all tried to assimilate wicked things from their culture into Christianity to avoid the stigma or false reputation of Christ.

Not everything in culture is evil.

* Some things in culture are GOOD, like good art, music, patriotic events, and so on, which the Christian can participate in with a good conscience.

* Some things in culture are NEUTRAL, like what style of music you like or what hairdo is the “in” thing right now—those kinds of things.

* But some things in our culture are clearly evil, sensuality, its pleasure-seeking, its materialism, its drunkenness and wicked revelry, its rebellion against authority. It’s these things that we should not participate in, we should not accommodate in our lives, or that we should not approve of.

When we’re asked to participate in sinful activities or do things that go against our conscience, we must draw a line in the sand and stand against it, even if it means loss, persecution, or ridicule.

There’s no foolish Jezebel in our church calling people to go out and get drunk at a function and commit fornication as part of that function and then just show up for Sunday School and church and everything will be hunky-dory. But don’t be fooled! You’re faced with the temptation to compromise your stand for Christ every single day. When you face that temptation, remember...

James 4:4: “Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

Believers don’t tolerate sin in your life and don’t accommodate your behavior to the world. Live holy and faithfully for our Lord Jesus Christ until He returns and be a friend of God.