

Pergamos: The Church that Compromised Doctrinally Revelation 2:12-17

Tonight we come to Revelation Chapter 2 - Jesus is writing to the churches. **Seven literal churches in Asia Minor**

A)When it comes to the book of Revelation - some people are tempted to breeze past these letters - not my church

B)Not my church - doesn't pertain to me! - **A Mistake**

C)There is an Exhortation that Jesus repeats in every one of these letters -seen at the end of each one.

1)Ch.2 It is seen in v.7,v11,v.17 v.29

2)Ch.3 It is seen in V.6, V.13 V. 22

D)Do you see it - "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

E)That means - these letters are for us too. - We need to take heed to these letters - come from the heart of Jesus

Remember the Titanic - It was the wonder of its day - they said it was an unsinkable ship.

A)After it sank it was discovered that prior to its sinking, **several messages were given to it by several different sources**

B)The sources were trying to get its attention and avert it from the course it was on,

1)because it was heading straight toward a group of icebergs.

C)But Message after message was ignored.

1)Finally a ship that was in the vicinity tried to break in its signal saying, 'Change your course!'

D)While that ship was trying to break in, the Titanic was busy talking folks at the next port it was headed to called Cape Race,

1)In Newfoundland - about 380 miles away

So the captain of the Titanic is busy on the radio with Cape Race - asking about the weather the food the accommodations and such things

A)The whole time another ship was trying to break through to warn the Titanic that trouble was ahead.

B)As that ship tried to break through, the message the Titanic sent back was this: **"Shut up. I'm talking to Cape Race.**

1)You're jamming my signals."

C)These letters to these Churches in the book of Revelation are Jesus way of trying to break through -

1)Grab our attention - to get us to examine our hearts - our direction and our practices

D)The Question is will we listen or will we ignore - the answer to that question is of utmost importance

Now if you were with us on Sunday - we started looking at the letters to the churches -

A)7 literal churches in Asia Minor

B)But what Jesus writes to these seven churches has great application to the church throughout the ages.

1)As well as to us today.

B)Of the seven churches - 5 of them had sin problems!

C)And the problems these churches were dealing with - The church throughout the ages has dealt with -

1)and the church today is dealing still with these problems

Now two churches didn't have sin problems - but they had challenges

A)And those challenges the church has dealt with throughout the ages

B)And they are challenges the church is still dealing with today.

C)Since the church is made up of individual believers in Jesus -

1)these problems and challenges are relevant to our lives individually as well.

Now if you were with us on Sunday - we started off by looking at the church of Ephesus - Love problem - left their first love.

A) If you can't join us on Sunday - please go online - watch/listen

B) I mentioned that we were going to take the rest of the month of June on Sundays and Wednesdays to look at the letters to these 7 churches

C) Our approach was going to be as follows - 3 of the problem churches had heart problems -

1) Meaning at the root of their issues was a problem of the heart - the churches of Ephesus/ Sardis/ Laodicea

D) Ephesus - The Loveless church/ Sardis the Lifeless church/ Laodicea was the Lukewarm church

E) Interesting in looking at each one of those churches is they looked good from the outside -

1) no blatant compromise - No immorality
.....addresses

From the outward appearance they looked active, fruitful, they looked happening - IG/ FB Alive

A) But there was a heart problem that Jesus saw - He saw them differently than they saw themselves.

B) I mentioned Sunday that we were going to spend the next 3 Sundays looking at these three churches with a heart problem

- 6/9 Ephesus the Loveless church
- 6/16 Sardis the Lifeless church /
- 6/23 the Laodicea the Lukewarm church

C) So three of the churches had a heart problem - and two of the churches had a compromise Problem

1) Pergamos / Thyatira

D) Tonight we are going to look at Pergamos - Compromised Doctrinally

1) Next Wed pm - Thyatira - Compromised by tolerating sin

E) Our last two studies of the month will focus on the two healthy churches that faced challenges.

Tonight Pergamos - 12 "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, (Angel - messenger = Pastor)

A) The city of Pergamum was 20 miles inland from the Med Sea

B) and about 100 miles north of Ephesus, and Smyrna was right in the middle of the two

C) Pergamos had the second largest library in all of the ancient world, second only to Alexandria in Egypt

1) 200,000 volumes - parchment animal skins

D) It was Also famous because it had the largest temple to Zeus anywhere in the Roman Empire

1) The reason for such a large temple to Zeus was because according to Greek mythology the Greek god Zeus was born in Pergamos

E) Pergamos was a place with many temples to pagan gods and the practices that went with them.

But in the midst of this pagan place God planted a church.

A) We don't know much about who or how the church was planted - but chances are it was a plant out of Ephesus

B) Noted on Sunday that Ephesus was a launching pad for the gospel to go forth throughout all of Asia Minor

C) But here we find the church many years later in not a good place - but Jesus comes to it - writes a letter -

1) Address the issues head on

Once again our outline for tonight - Same as Sunday.

A) A Revelation of Jesus to the church - how he reveals himself

B) A Recognition: What Jesus notices about the church that they are doing well.

1) **A Rebuke:** Where and how Jesus confronts them about their problem

C) A Remedy: How they can right the ship and get back on course

D)A Ramification: A negative ramification if they ignore Jesus - and a positive ramification if they listen to him

‘These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: 13 “I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. 14 But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. 15 Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. 16 Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.

17 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.”

A Revelation: ‘These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword:

A)Now this is not just any sword, but the word that Jesus uses here is the Greek word “rhomphaia” (from-fi-a)

B)And this type of sword would have been well known to the people of Pergamos

1)because it was a sword used by the Thracian army in the area and during that time

Picture of the Thracian sword rhomphaia

C)It was the only weapon in ancient warfare that caused the Romans to change their uniform and armor –

1)the blade was so sharp it could cut right through the first generation of Roman armor,

2)so they changed it because of this sword

And what Jesus is saying to this church is I have in my hand something that can cut through all the pretense, all the compromise in your life.

A)And I will use it if I have to. -

B)Because I love you and things need to be cut out of your life

His Recognition:

13 “I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

I know your works:

A)Jesus is into works - he noticed our works

B)Paul wrote in Ephesians 2 - we are saved by grace through faith and it is not of works -

1)no boasting - the gift of God

C)But then James wrote that faith without works is Dead!

D)Two together to form this Idea: True faith is a faith that works - true faith is manifested in Works

So Jesus commends works:

A)I don’t think the Lord sees anything wrong with church that is busy as long as Jesus is still the reason we are meeting,

B)As long as He is still the passion of our hearts, and they are not busyness for busyness sake alone

C)Jesus commends many of these churches for their works and labors

He also Commends them for Standing strong and holding fast to his name while living in a hard place

A)I love that he says - I know where you dwell - reside - permanent residence - I know where you live

B)You dwell where Satan’s throne is - how would you like that for an address? What did that mean?

C)It could have been a reference to the temple of Zeus.

D)It also could have been due to the fact that Pergamum was the birthplace and capital of the “Imperial Cult.”

1)The Imperial Cult was the practice of worshipping the Roman Emperor as God.

It probably meant that it was a spiritually dark place where Demonic activity was prevalent

A)and presence of darkness and the enemy was really strong

B)We like to call Vegas Sin city - but talk to anyone who lives there and they will tell you -
1)refers only to a small portion - the strip

C)The Rest of Vegas is pretty normal.

D)Not Pergamos - **there was a strong Satanic Presence over the whole place.**

But some of the believers were standing strong - some had even died for their faith

A)In V. 13 Jesus mentions Antipas - awesome guy -church history records that Antipas was not a pastor,

B)He was not a church leader, he was a Dentist, he was just a person in the congregation of Pergamos who had a real job,

C)Who had a real life, but stood against the temptation of the day and suffered greatly because of it

D)This Dentist, Antipas, when asked to recant his faith would not

And so they beat him, and then they encased him in a metal bull

A)The city officials then put that metal bull over a fire to heat up the metal skin of that bull,

B)The record indicate they heated it until it glowed

C)The people could hear him screaming inside, until the screaming stopped

D)Antipas was burnt to death as a lesson to the other Christians that refused to worship Zeus

1)I love that Jesus names this guy!

So some like Antipas were standing Strong in the midst of the Evil!

A)Jesus commends them for that.

B)As I was thinking about this today I couldn't help but see a bit of a parallel to living in Cali today

California is becoming a hard place to live

A)The politics are about as far away from Biblical truth as you can possibly get

B)The Cost of living makes it unaffordable for young people to buy a home and make a life

C)And for those reasons and many others as most of you know, people and especially conservative Christian people

1)Who have fled California to places like Texas, Tenn, Florida, Idaho

D)Places where the cost of living is lower and a where the politics lines up a little more with their values

1)And I understand that - I get it - I really do.

I have no problem with seeing people do that if it is what God is calling them to do.

A)Key: **Did God call you to do that?** - You need to do that - if you didn't do that - out of the perfect will of God

B)I left California once too. - Except I went to an even more liberal place at the time - Oregon -
1)God called us there - to plant a church

C)So I do believe that God calls some people to leave - to flee - but he calls other people to STAY AND STAND

D)Like these people in Pergamos - stand and shine as lights in the darkness!

E)**Vista needs us - NC - needs us - Cali -needs strong Christians** who are staying and standing for the truth.

So here is Pergamos some were standing their ground - but others were compromising to try and fit in.

A)Lowering their standards - adjusting their beliefs to fit in with the culture.

"The greatest danger to the church today is not persecution from without, but compromise from within."

His Rebuke V.14-15

14 But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. 15 Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

The Problem was they were compromising in the area of Doctrine

A) They were tolerating the doctrine of Balaam and the Doctrine of the Nicolaitans which thing I hate.

B) Now if you were with us on Sunday - we noted that Jesus commended the Church of Ephesus for calling out the Nicolaitans

C) The church in Ephesus didn't tolerate it they hated it - they resisted it - but that was not the case with Pergamos

D) They allowed it to live and grow - Note: False teaching travels - looks for a home

1) Traveled up the road and found a home in Pergamos

The doctrines of Balaam and the Nicolaitans - was one of mixture

A) Mixing in worldly practices and ideologies into the Church.

B) Recall on Sunday - The Doctrine of the Nicolaitans - recall was most likely started by Nicolas of Antioch

C) Basically said: Since you are under grace it doesn't really matter how you live. God will forgive you

D) Dabble in idolatry - no problem - engage in Sexual immorality - no problem - the grace of God covers that.

1) A view of Grace that excuses sinful behavior

¹¹ For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹² teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age. Titus 2:11-12

The doctrine of Balaam was similar

A) Traces back to Numbers 22-25 - This prophet named Balaam was hired by the Moabite King Balak

B) Balak wanted Balaam to pronounce a curse on the people of God

C) But every time he tried to pronounce a curse - God put a blessing in Balaam's mouth -

1) Balak got angry - I told you to curse them not bless them

Funny thing When Balaam was on his way to go Balak - God tried to stop him - Angel in the road - Only the Donkey could see

A) His Donkey kept running him into the wall - Balaam keeps beating his donkey

B) Finally - the Donkey turns around and speaks to Balaam - why are hitting me

1) The most amazing part of the story is not the talking donkey but the fact that Balaam talks back - arguing with ..

C) Listen if you go home tonight and your DOG starts talking to you - warning you about sin -

1) Don't talk back - don't argue - that is not normal

Well after a couple of failed attempts to curse the people of God - Balaam really wanted to get paid

A) So he says to Balak - I know how you can get them to curse themselves

B) Have your young pretty girls sneak into the camp of Israel to seduce the men into having sex with them

C) Tell the girls to pull out their little idols and explain to the men that having sex with them is part of their worship to the idols

D) Well the men of Israel went along and cursed themselves

Doctrine of Mixture: Lets compromise - Have sex and call it worship.

A) The Doctrine of Balaam and the Nicolaitans -

B) You can love Jesus and be married to the world or embrace the ideology of the World

C)They compromised both their spiritual purity and their sexual purity

The Church in this city was becoming far more concerned with looking like the culture around them rather than the Savior within them.

Some people today want to say: Doctrine doesn't really matter

A)Why should we make a big stink about doctrine? It doesn't really matter.

B)Doctrine is not that important.'

1)Now if you think like that, take careful heed to this little letter because Jesus Christ disagrees with you.

C)Also note this word doctrine mentioned in verse fourteen and fifteen,

1)is mentioned 37 times in the New Testament.

D)I would say anything mentioned that often we ought to take heed to.

The Early church in Jerusalem continued steadfastly in what?

A)The apostle's doctrine and fellowship, breaking bread and prayers.

B)Paul told Timothy said, '**Until I come, give attendance to reading, exhortation, and doctrine.'**

C)To Titus he said, '**Speak the things which become sound doctrine.'**

D)Right teaching, Correct teaching that's what doctrine means..

In fact, there are two places in the New Testament where Paul said we should divide over doctrine.

A)Were you aware of that? One of them is Romans 16:17. Paul said, ¹⁷**Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.** Romans 16:17

B)The other is in 1 Timothy 6

If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness.....From such withdraw yourself. 1 Timothy 6:3, 5

C)False doctrine is nothing to be toyed with; it's dangerous.

And sadly, the doctrine of Balaam and the Nicolaitans is still around today.

A)Satan loves nothing more than to see the church make light of how important sexual purity is to God.

B)At the time of this writing this is what was happening in the Roman world,

1)it was culturally acceptable to have orgies as part of temple worship. / **They had temple prostitutes.**

C)They would have feasts to various gods, and part of the public worship was sacrificing meat to idols

1)and them eating it and indulging in various sexual activities in public

D)It's interesting the cult of the Goddess Cybele originated in Pergamum.

1)The priests of this cult would emasculate and mutilate themselves and dress in fine woman's clothing.

Sexual compromise in the church today:

A)Pornography is accepted as a common struggle -even though Paul wrote clearly in 1 Thessalonians 4 to:

abstain from sexual immorality and that each person should know how to possess his own body in sanctification and honor

B)Today many Christians turn a blind eye to sexualized entertainment

C)Premarital sex adultery and divorce are rampant

D)And now we are seeing -in the name of love an affirmation and acceptance to LGBTQ lifestyles

Listen Compromised pulpits lead to compromised people.

A)There are no perfect pastors or perfect churches.

B) But we need pastors today, in our high and haughty nation,

1)who care far more about what Jesus has to say than what a politician has to say,

2)or what a celebrity has to say, or what the news has to say, or what the enemy has to say.

**C)We need pastors who are not concerned about appeasing the human powers that be
1)but fearing the One who wields ultimate power.**

**D)We need prophets and pastors who call people to repentance for their immorality and idolatry,
1)not give them an affirming excuse to STAY in it.**

Can you see why these letters to these churches are important for us to study today?

A)Here is the truth about compromise - when you compromise to appease your flesh -

B)the flesh can never be satisfied - thirst that is never quenched

C)Paul Harvey illustrates this by the describes in vivid detail how an Eskimo kills a wolf by preying on its thirst for blood

**D)Coats a sharp knife blade with blood freezes it blood popsicle -
1)Places the knife - blade up in the snow -**

When a wolf follows his sensitive nose to the source of the scent and discovers the bait, he licks it, tasting the fresh, frozen blood.

A)He begins to lick faster and more and more vigorously, lapping the blade until the keen edge is now bare.

B)Feverishly now, he licks harder and harder.

**C)So great becomes his craving for blood that the wolf doesn't notice the razor sharp sting of the naked blade on his tongue
1)nor that his thirst is being satisfied by his own warm blood.**

D)His appetite craves more and more until he is dead in the snow."

1)It starts with a lick but it ends in death!

The Remedy: - Repent

A)Recognition of our sin that results in a change in our behavior

Aa)Doing a 180 turn from Sin - turn to Jesus

B)We live in a world much like Pergamos

1)the Devil and his morals are alive and well out there

**C)And as a believer you and I have a choice
➤ to stand against it, as Antipas did, or join in –**

Have you allowed compromise to invade your heart?

A)God sees it and he hates it - He hates it when we mix with the values and passions of this world

B)He doesn't hate you - but he hates the sin

C)He hates when we compromise with the values of the world,

1)because He knows it takes away from you a hunger for Him and will eventually destroy you

D)And it is high time as church culture we start hating the things that God hates,

And please don't misunderstand me, God does not hate people who are struggling with sin,

A)He hates the sin and what it is doing to them

B)He wants us to be overcomers - he wants us to trust in Jesus - produce in us - grace that results in righteousness

C)Repent - See your compromise for what it is and make a decision tonight to turn from it

Ramifications:

The Negative: 16 Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.

A)A lack of repentance is like picking a fight God.- How do you think that is going to work out?

**B)When we as the Church or if we as individuals accepts human wisdom, and live in godless ways, and adopt worldly philosophies -
1)Jesus is against us.**

C)Jesus is saying there are two ways to deal with sin - One way is to repent and remove it yourself

D)The other way is to not repent and I will come and remove it from you - but that is going to be painful.

E)I love you too much to let it remain!

The Positive:

17 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.”

Jesus said that the devil is a thief and a robber who comes to kill rob and destroy-

The Devil wants to take from you

A)But then Jesus said - But I have come that you might have life and that more abundantly

The Devil wants to take from you and Jesus wants to provide for you

Three things

A)#1 – **Hidden manna**- John 6 today: **I am the real bread from Heaven**

B)Come to me believe in me I will nourish you I will satisfy you - I will sustain you

C)#2 **A white stone**

- A white stone in Old Testament times was a symbol of innocence

D)judges in those days when you were tried, they would hold out a white stone if you were innocent

E)and God is saying that all you must do is come to Him is repent,

1)and He will render you innocent- for the first time or the hundredth time

He will give you three things

#1 – Hidden manna

#2 – A white stone

#3 – A new name

Here is the interesting thing - for those who live in Compromise -

A)Your sin and compromise ends up defining you.

B)An addict - an alcoholic - addicted to pornography - lust - your bitter – resentful- victim

C)Your identity - Defines you

You repent, Jesus sets you free and gives you a new identity -

A)**Jacob** - whose name means “deceiver, and heel catcher”

B)But God wants to change your name like he did his, to call you Israel, governed by God

Is God is speaking to your heart?.

A)Will YOU be like the Titanic and say, 'Holy Spirit--sssh! You're jamming my signals.

B)Or are you going to realize tonight - The HS is speaking to you -

1)Loves -you and he is warning you - avoid a disaster

Close: In Switzerland there is a cemetery where a mountain climber died and has his name, date of his birth and death, and underneath it says, **"He died climbing."**

I Love that -That's what I want. Not 'he died sliding' or 'he died vegging in the Spirit.' He died climbing.

A)New heights. Further along. No compromising. **CLIMBING**