**THE 7 CHURCHES OF REVELATION**

**Thyatira, Revelation 2:18-29**

Sunday, July 16, 2023

**WE Slide 1 If our church is representing Christ well/He’s using us to make a spiritual impact, but we tolerated someone to promote unbiblical teaching that leads some to sin, would Jesus be OK with that? We’re doing things mostly right, so He’s probably good with that.** Bring it closer- You’re doing most of life Jesus’ way/He’s using you to make spiritual impact, but you tolerate some unbiblical beliefs so you rationalize an area of ongoing sin, would Jesus be OK with that? **1st cent church lived in a society of TOLERANT INTOLERANCE- tolerated everything except the worship of Jesus/lifestyle He calls His followers to live.** Things haven’t changed and I could give you examples but they end up getting us focused on the examples and not on the point that Jesus is making to we who call ourselves His followers. **EX: Sparkle Creed- I think people missed the point- Where are you, me, misrepresenting God/not being effective because we’re redefining God/compromising with society in our lives?** So, no examples of society’s TOLERANT INTOLERANCE, just focus on Jesus’ message to Thyatira- MISREPRESENTING JESUS through tolerating unbiblical teaching/lifestyles in the church/personal life is not acceptable and Jesus will deal with it. **Slide 2**

**TURN TO Revelation 2:18, pg. 1226 and as you do here are some details about Thyatira. Slide 3**

1. **A major center of commerce during the 1st century.**
2. **Had the largest number of trade guilds in the Roman empire.** **Archeology has found…**
3. Guilds/unions for wool, linen, garments, dyers, leather, tanners, potters, bakers, slave dealers, bronze smiths.
4. Had to be a member of a guild, worship the god of that guild, in order to buy/sell.
5. Typically, believers would be kicked out/unemployed unless they compromised their worship of Jesus.
6. **Lydia one of the first believers in Philippi was from Thyatira (Acts 16:14).**
7. **Apollo, son of Zeus, god of prophecy/oracles, was the chief god; emperor worship not popular.**

**Doesn’t seem to be a lot of persecution in this town after all Jesus complements spiritual impact, only addresses an internal issue, and Lydia seems to have kept her business after placing her faith in Jesus.** Let’s see what Jesus as to say to this church. **READ Slide 4-5** **As usual He starts with a description of Himself and this one sounds a lot like the description in OT Daniel/Ezekiel.**

**GOD**

1. **DESCRIPTION OF JESUS, Revelation 2:18**
2. **Son of God-** Reminder that Jesus is the true Son of the true God, not the Caesars, not Apollo.
3. **Slide 6 Eyes Like a Flame of Fire-** Jesus sees all things in the life of a church/believer (minds, hearts 2:23) and He’s ready to discipline/purify His church/believers who tolerate unbiblical teaching, lifestyles.
4. **Slide 7 Feet Like Burnished Bronze-** Jesus stands as the only untarnished/holy/sinless one.

**We know there is an issue that needs to be addressed but He starts with the good He sees in the lives of these believers.** Most in this church are REPRESENTING Jesus well- meaning, living life like He lived. **That’s the believers only reason for being on this earth.** We’re given the privilege/responsibility to represent Jesus- show others what Jesus is like so they will be drawn to Him for salvation. **The more we grow spiritually/live life like Jesus the more accurately people will see who He is- not us, Him in us!** Jesus starts by saying He knows they’re REPRESENTING HIM WELL and making greater/greater spiritual impact. **READ Slide 8-9 The majority of believers in this church are obedient, growing and Jesus is working through them to make a spiritual impact in their society.**

1. **DESCRIPTION OF THE CHURCH, Revelation 2:19-23**
2. **Most Believers Accurately Represented Jesus, 2:19**
3. He knows their deeds- ergon; accomplishments, context: living consistent with Jesus’ commands

**What do you think those deeds were? Invite people to give answers. Don’t go to Slide 10 until I say to.** Their deeds showed Christ-like love which is a really good Christianese phrase. What is Christ-like love? **Slide 10**

1. Love- agape; commitment to meet others’ needs no matter the pain, discomfort, it brings to you.
2. Believers in Ephesus had lost this motivation- lost their willingness to help even if it hurt.
3. **How would this be shown?** Husbands/wives, etc., not ripping boss/guild if let go, helping/food/money to believer they’re not necessarily fond of, not responding in the same manner as the one who hurt them.

**They were able to help to the point of hurt because they had FAITH/TRUST in what Jesus said/promised. Slide 11**

1. Faith- pistis; trust/belief based on the reliability of the one teaching/making a promise. They continued to trust Jesus’ way was best though some believers weren’t living right. They kept doing life Jesus’ way when they lost their income knowing He’d provide for their needs. Unbelievers saw this and turned to Jesus.

**That love and faith- trusting Jesus’ promises motivated their SERVING. Slide 12**

1. Service- diakonia; voluntary humble ministry to the needs of others; **used of Jesus in Mark 10:45**.

**Like the youth/men who knocked out some needed projects Thursday morning/evening.** All this ACCURATELY REPRESENTING JESUS in the midst of a culture that didn’t worship Jesus showed they had perseverance. **Slide 13**

1. Perseverance- hupomone; they didn’t “grin/bear”, but faithfully represented Jesus while being disciplined/pressured to not represent/obey Him knowing Jesus was at work in/through them.

**It’s no wonder their spiritual impact was GREATER now than it was at the beginning- most lived as Jesus commanded, unbelievers turned to Jesus, which meant more people in the church and more opportunities to live like Jesus commanded.** Despite all the good stuff going on this church had a THREAT from WITHIN the church. **READ Slide 14-17 The church at Pergamum was COMPROMISING with society due to pressure from the outside, this church was TOLERATING wrong teaching/lifestyle choices within the church.** Jesus expects His entire body/each believer in a church to represent Him accurately.

1. **Misrepresented Jesus, Revelation 2:20-23**
2. Tolerate- apheimi; to let something happen, distance oneself from something
3. “Let’s focus on our mission and not get caught up in conflict.
4. They didn’t want to seem harsh, critical, judgmental, be called a hater/phobe, by pointing out the wrong.
5. **“Afterall God’s blessing us so what she/they are doing can’t be that bad, can it?”** **It is to Jesus!**
6. **Slide 18** Jezebel- woman teaching unbiblical lifestyle in the church **Best to understand…**
7. Symbolic of OT Queen Jezebel, worshiped Baal, persecuted faithful Jews, her husband, King Ahab, was weak/easily manipulated and didn’t do anything to stop her.
8. Thyatira had a popular female prophet/fortune-teller, the Sambathe, new believers would probably assume the church would have someone similar to their previous religion.

**What was unbiblical about Jezebel and her teaching? 1st Jesus identifies her as “the woman Jezebel”. Slide 19**

1. The problem with Jezebel and her teaching.
2. 1 Timothy 2:9-3:7 God’s order in creation/Eve deceived, women aren’t to teach/have spiritual authority over men in church. **Controversial today/1st cent., people didn’t want to upset people.** Add to that…
3. Teaching led believers astray- planao; mislead, cause to wander from truth, misrepresent Jesus
4. Taught that believers didn’t have to stop the unbiblical lifestyle they lived prior to coming to Jesus- “sexual immorality/eating things sacrificed to idols/worship of gods” speaks to that unbiblical lifestyle.
5. Believed the spirit saved by Jesus was separate from the sinful flesh so it didn’t matter what they did.

**Jesus gave instruction on how to deal with sin in the church but since the church didn’t address it He has to step in. Slide 20** Jesus says He’s given her time to repent, but she’s stubborn, didn’t repent, and His patience has run out. **For the sake of His reputation and effectiveness of His church He said… Slide 21**

1. Jesus’ response to Jezebel/followers/”children”.
2. He will throw “her on a bed of sickness”, followers “into great tribulation”, “kill her children with pestilence.” **Not physical children, but the 2nd generation of followers.** Church’s been around for 40+ yrs by now.
3. Normally His discipline is experiencing the consequences of wrong thinking/beliefs/choices.
4. **Is this literal/figurative/spiritual?** **Debated.** Let the Bible interpret the Bible- there are examples of the impact of unrepentant sin on a person’s health; here’s just 3. **Slide 22**
5. Psalm 38:3-8 King David’s unrepentant sin caused physical symptoms of anxiety attacks.
6. 1 Corinthians 11:30 unrepentant sin caused weakness, sickness, and death in some cases.
7. James 5:14-16 unrepentant sin caused sickness/elders called to pray/person confess sin for healing.

**Unrepentant sin has a psychological/emotional/spiritual impact on people and Jesus’ BIG POINT is that unrepentant sin is extremely serious to Him.** He will do what He needs to motivate us to repent- including allowing it to impact our physical health/life. **Every good parent gives their child a little pain to keep them from greater pain.** **SIDE NOTE:** **Tolerating sin in our church?** *1st cent. church- 1 church/city, persecution made it easy to know who’s truly saved, committed, and address sin as Jesus commands. TODAY- church on every corner, upset/sinful Christian can jump churches; membership- vol. commitment to support church family/personal accountability so we address unrepentant, public sin. Reg. att.- won’t address it unless it comes up in conversation.*Well, as with the other churches Jesus looks forward and gives some promises to those who show they are believers by living faithful lives- overcomers. **READ Slide 23-27 First a promise to the “rest”- those who faithfully represented Jesus and didn’t buy into Jezebel’s teaching.**

1. **PROMISES OF JESUS, Revelation 2:24-29**
2. **No Other Burden on “the Rest”, Revelation 2:24-25**
3. The Rest- those who have not “known the deep things of Satan”. Anything we add- religious or not- to our worship of Jesus/living life for Jesus that is not taught in the Bible Jesus considers “of Satan” because He’s not commanding it and it works against Him.

**Those representing Jesus well would not have any other extra burden placed on them. Slide 28**

1. Burden- baros; oppressive, hardship- only job: get rid of this teaching from their church. **Just…**
2. **Slide 29** Hold fast to what they have- Jesus Christ, His deeds- doing/living life His way until He returns- referring to the rapture of the church which we’re still waiting for.

**Then Jesus looks way into the future, into our future even and gives these last 2 promises.** 1st is… **Slide 30**

1. **Authority Over Nations, Revelation 2:26-27**
2. Overcomes- nikao; conquer, prevail, win the event
3. Authority- ezousia; the right to control or command authority, power, warrant
4. Rule- poimaino; to watch out for other people, to shepherd- protects, rules, governs, fosters.
5. Must be talking about believers reigning with Jesus in the Millennial kingdom, Revelation 20.

**How does the promise connect with the issue?** **Believers will need to address sin when they have authority over people in the Millennial Kingdom so we need to be doing it now.** Satan will be incarcerated but those born during the 1000 years will have sin natures and still choose to break Jesus’ laws. **Believers will be the police, mayors, governors, etc. under Jesus.** The last promise made to the churches is… **Slide 31**

1. **Given the Morning Star, Revelation 2:28** Jesus referring to Himself, **READ Slide 32** Revelation 22:16 Christ is our spiritual eternal life through whom we experience the new heaven and new earth.

**As we close, what is Jesus’ command to the churches, including us today? Slide 33 He who has an ear, let him hear (and obey).** Are we listening to what Jesus is saying to us as He searches our minds, hearts? Here’s some questions to ask Jesus as He searches your minds/heart. **Slide 34**

**YOU TAKEAWAYS**

1. **Jesus do you consider my deeds now of greater impact than when I first placed my faith in you?**

* Are you making a spiritual impact anywhere in your life?
* Or are you tolerating the sin of complacency, fading away? I’ll give you a little hint as you evaluate.
* If you’re not spending time with God in His Word/prayer, not worshiping weekly with your church family, not serving, and not actively concerned about the unbelievers in your life then the answer is No. **Those are the 4 basic, Christianity 101, things that God says followers of Jesus do.**

1. **Slide 35 Where in your life are you tolerating wrong thinking, teaching, and/or lifestyle choices?** Do you know what Jesus considers wrong thinking/teaching/lifestyle choices, what misrepresents Him?
2. **Slide 36 If there is an area in your life then repent, commit today to no longer tolerate it, and do what needs to be done to grow in your love/obedience to Jesus Christ.**

**PRAY**

**PODCAST: Pastor Harald takes us through Jesus’ words to the church at Thyatira- a tolerant church. Revelation 2:18-29;** Psalm 38:3-8; 1 Corinthians 11:30; James 5:14-16; Revelation 22:16