

Message: Confronting and Removing False Teachers

Scripture: Revelation 2: 18-29

Introduction: In the previous letter to the church in **Pergamum** Jesus confronted the problem of **wrong doctrines**. Here in His letter to the church in **Thyatira** Jesus commands the church to confront **and** remove a **false teacher**. Thyatira was a small community in comparison to the other cities yet Jesus concern was the same. Thyatira was the **home of Lydia**, who was one of the first converts Paul led to Christ in the region of Macedonia, according to **Acts 16:14-15**. She and her household were saved and she opened her home for Paul to stay and use as a base of ministry.

As in the first 3 letters Jesus introduces Himself with words which speak to the concern in the church. Jesus then commends the church, shares the concern and closes with encouragement.

A. The Picture of Christ-(vs. 18)

1. **Son of God** – indicates **His Deity** and **His Authority** as Head over the church. **These** truths were being attacks by the false teacher
2. **Eyes of Flame** – reveals His Holiness & ability to see through the phoniness and pinpoint sin.
3. **Feet of Bronze** – Refers to His qualification to serve as Judge over the church and world.

B. The Commendation- (vs. 19)

1. **Deeds/works** – They lived a life of service to God and others
2. **Love**- the word is “agape” which is the highest form of love
3. **Faith** – trust in action
4. **Service** – ministry- using gifts and talents to make disciples
5. **Perseverance /patience**- a steadfastness, endurance
6. **Growth in ministry** – their influence for the Kingdom was growing. “**Deeds of late greater...**”

C. The Problem (vs. 20)

1. The problem was the church’s **toleration and following** of a false teacher. The reality of a false teacher was not the problem. Paul had warned the churches he planted that false teachers would rise up in the church. (**Acts 20:28-30**) The problem was toleration.
2. Jesus called this false teacher –“the woman Jezebel”. This could have been her real name. Most likely it was a reference to her character and actions. The Jezebel in the Old Testament was the wife of King Ahab. She influenced her husband and led the children of Israel to worship Baal. Jezebel’s goal was to destroy the worship of Yahweh. In the end God brought her to a terrible death. (1 Kings 21 / 2 Kings 9)
3. Jesus listed **several serious issues concerning this woman**. (evidence of false teaching)
 - i. She was a self- proclaimed prophetess. This means she claimed to have authority which did not come from God. She claimed to speak for God.
 - ii. She was teaching the followers of Jesus to commit acts of immorality.
 - iii. She encouraged them to join in the meals which were sacrificed to idols. This is more than just getting the left-over meat at the market. It refers to eating as a part of the idol worship.
 - iv. She claimed to know “deep things” which Jesus said were of Satan which led astray some of the believers. 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 warns that Satan and his followers often appear as angels of light.
4. **The problem was the toleration and the following of this woman**. When a church is following Christ and growing as this church was experiencing, it becomes a target of Satan’s forces. Often the attack will come from within ministries. Once the false teacher is recognized the church must act quickly to remove the person from positions of influence. The temptation is to ignore due to a desire to keep people from leaving and to avoid conflict. We should never go looking for conflict. We should also never run from needed conflict.

D. The Warning (vs. 21-23)

1. Jesus tells this church He gave her time to repent and she did not want to repent.
2. This reveals a very important truth we must understand and apply. The truth is that God has a limit of His tolerance of sin. God has a limit for each individual. God has a limit for groups of people.
3. **Scriptures**
 - i. **Genesis 15:16** – Amorites
 - ii. **Matthew 23: 32-36**-Scribes & Pharisees
 - iii. **1 Thessalonians 2: 16**-Jewish leaders opposing the Gospel

4. **Other Biblical examples of sin reaching God's limit**
 - i. World population in days of Noah (Genesis 6)
 - ii. Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19)
 - iii. Israelites who rebelled against Moses (Numbers 16:28-35)
 - iv. Ananias & Sapphira (Acts 5)
5. **God sees sin differently due to His Holiness.** We live in a culture where tolerance is worshipped as much as consumerism. Both of these idols have affected the church.
6. **What is sin to God? (7 Biblical descriptions of sin)**
 - i. Transgressing (disobeying) the revealed law/will of God
 - ii. Falling short of the mark God has set for us to reach
 - iii. Overshooting the limits God has set for us concerning our conduct
 - iv. Disobeying the voice of God through failing to listen and /or refusing to obey
 - v. Doing only part of what God has commanded us to do fully
 - vi. Choosing to do evil
 - vii. Choosing not to do good
7. **How do we respond to this truth of God's limit to sin?**
 - i. If we have received God's gift of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ, we know that God has removed our sin. The fact that God has emptied the bowl of judgment we deserve does not mean we should try to fill it up again! If we do sin we face God's discipline.
 - ii. If we **have not trusted** in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of our sins we must understand that every sin moves us closer to the limit God has determined for us uniquely. Each time we reject His love and offer of grace we may find it was our last offer from God. Jesus said He gave this woman time to repent and she did not want too!
8. **God said He would deal with this woman.** The "bed of sickness" was the means through which God dealt with her. 1 Corinthians 11:28-30 – an example of God's discipline -sickness
9. All those who followed the false teachings of Thyatira's Jezebel committed spiritual adultery and would face great tribulation if they did not repent. **Repentance is God's desire!** Those who had followed her and as a result did not truly know Jesus as Savior were in danger of spiritual death. It is far better for the church to discipline than to allow the false teacher to lead many astray, damage the testimony of the church and cross the line of God's limit to sin.

E. The Encouragement (vs. 24-29)

1. Jesus placed no other burden on those who had remained faithful other than to stay faithful.
2. A day will come when overcomers will rule with Christ over the nations which will be placed under the feet of Christ. The nations bringing the persecution will one day be no more yet the one who endures and overcomers will walk with God forever. We overcome by the blood of the lamb and the word of our testimony!
3. Overcomers will receive the Morning Star which is a reference to Christ Himself. Jesus is our reward. Jesus is all we need!

Final Applications

Where do you stand concerning the truth that Jesus is God and the only way of salvation? You cannot be neutral. To delay faith is the same as to reject God's offer of grace.

Would Jesus describe your ministry with the words love, faith, service, perseverance?

Are you grounded in the truths of God's Word or are you a good target for false teaching?

Are you careless in your attitude towards some sins?

Are you holding firmly to your faith and staying faithful to Him while looking for His return?