



"DEAR CHURCH", PART 5 THYATIRA: A CHURCH AT THE CROSS ROADS

August 11th, 2019
Randy Remington

BIBLICAL TEXT(S)

*"What are we tolerating?
Are we tolerating something that risks our joy and our peace and our life in Christ?"*

—Pastor Randy

MAIN TEXT:

"To the angel of the church in Thyatira write:

These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze. I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first.

Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.

Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets, 'I will not impose any other burden on you, except to hold on to what you have until I come.'

To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations—that one 'will rule them with an iron scepter and will dash them to pieces like pottery'—just as I have received authority from my Father. I will also give that one the morning star. Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (Revelation 2:18-29)

ADDITIONAL TEXTS:

There was none who sold himself to do evil in the sight of the Lord like Ahab, whom Jezebel his wife incited. (1 Kings 21:25)

I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat. What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked man from among you. (1 Corinthians 5:9-13)

Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while—yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. (2 Corinthians 7:8-10)

MESSAGE SUMMARY

In Revelation 2, Jesus writes his fourth letter, which is addressed to the church at Thyatira. Thyatira was actually a smaller city, though it had a large impact on trade as it was at a crossroads in the area. While Jesus commends this church for growing in faith and continuing to serve him, there is a major problem in the church.

A woman, who Jesus refers to as Jezebel (not her real name, but a pseudonym that harkens back to a queen in the Old Testament), is preaching and convincing some in the church that they can follow Jesus and still participate in the religious practices in the city, which included idol worship and sexual immorality. This was appealing to many whose livelihoods were dependent upon craftsman guilds. Membership in these guilds often mandated worship of local deities. Jesus condemns this practice and warns that this woman will be judged harshly for her actions, as will those who follow her. However, for those that are willing to remain true to their faith, they will ultimately be victorious.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage and the speaker's message, helping

LEAN IN

These are icebreaker/warm up questions, mostly just to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. Have you ever been taken in by a lie or false promise? What happened?
2. What's the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the word "tolerate"?
3. What example or story stood out to you in the sermon? Why was it significant to you?
4. Last time we met, we talked about [whatever you talked about]. Has anyone had a chance to put that lesson into practice? Has it has an impact on your life in anyway?

LOOK DOWN

These are questions on the passage and observations about what's been read.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. How does Jesus describe himself in this letter? What is the promise that he makes the church at Thyatira?
2. What is the church at Thyatira doing well? What does Jesus call them out on?
3. Who was Jezebel in the Old Testament and why does Jesus compare a woman in Thyatira to her? (It might be helpful to look up the word Jezebel in an online Bible search or Bible Dictionary or Concordance to answer this question)
4. The judgement against "Jezebel" is pretty harsh. According to this passage, what was this woman doing that was so heinous? Are there any other Scriptures that you can think of that relate to the seriousness of what she was doing?
5. Verse 27 contains a quote from Psalm 2. Read that passage. How does that passage relate to Jesus' message here?

LOOK OUT

These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. Jesus rebukes the church at Thyatira for being tolerant of a false prophet. What does the world tolerate mean to you? What does it mean in the world at large? What does it seem to mean in this passage?
2. Are there things that you think the church (either our church or the church at large) is too tolerant of? What are those things?
3. In the ancient world, many people were members of guilds (similar to unions today) that supported their work. These guilds often revolved around pagan religious practices, making being a Christian in a guild difficult. This may be why "Jezebel" is preaching what she is, that Christians can still be apart of pagan religious services. Where do you see these same kinds of pressures for Christians in our world today, in the workplace and in society at large? How have you seen people react like Jezebel? How have you seen people react like Jesus is calling the church to?
4. In verse 19, Jesus commends the church for their deeds, love, faith, service, perseverance, and doing more now than they did at first in their relationship with Jesus. Who do you know that also fits this description (either someone you know or know of)?
5. Where in history or the world at large have you seen Jesus make good on the promise he makes to the church at Thyatira, that the ones that follow God will be victorious in the end?

LOOK IN

These are questions that help you consider personal application.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. What does Christian tolerance mean to you? How can you be loving, as Jesus calls us to,

**DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS,
CONT.**

- while still holding to the truth and being intolerant of evil?
2. Is there anything that you've been tolerating that you shouldn't be?
 3. Have you ever felt pressured to compromise in your faith or to tolerate something you know is against God's word or are you in a situation currently where that is happening? What happened? What would you do again? What would you do differently?
 4. Do you think Jesus words in verse 19 describe you? Why or why not?
 5. How have you seen Jesus make good on the promise he made to the church in Thyatira, that those who follow him will ultimately be victorious? Do you think this is a promise that God actually fulfills? Why or why not?

LIVE IT OUT

These action steps help apply this week's message to day to day life.

Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. How can you prepare now to stand up for truth in your life? What can you do today to strengthen your faith so you aren't tempted to compromise?
2. How can your group pray for you as you seek to be tolerant of what God is tolerant of and intolerant fo what he is intolerant of?
3. Where in your life do you doubt that God will ultimately be victorious? How can your group pray for you as you wrestle with this?

NOTE: On the following page (for most weeks) you will find a set of sermon notes created by Charissa Burns, an artist who calls B4 home. We include them purely for your enjoyment and encouragement, courtesy of Charissa. You can follow her on the 'Gram @charissaburnsstudio