

Sermon #6: The Church at Thyatira

25 Feb 24

BREAKING THE ICE

- Share a time when you felt pressure in your career or school to do something that would have compromised your faith in Jesus Christ?

UNDERSTANDING THE TRUTH

Read the Passage (Revelation 2:18-29)

Thyatira was a small city well known for the development of its trade guilds (associations of merchants or artisans that oversaw the practice of their trades). These trade guilds became so important that they eventually took on both political and religious significance in the city.

1. In verse 18, how does Jesus describe Himself to the church in Thyatira?
2. For a city steeped in the trades (metal-working as one), what would “eyes like blazing fire” and “feet like burnished bronze” communicate to them? (How is fire used by a blacksmith? Consider traits of bronze & why feet are significant?)
3. Each time Jesus introduces Himself to a church, He uses key traits of His character that speak to the commendation or correction He will bring the church. Keep this in mind.
4. How does Jesus commend this church (vs 19)? What do you think of this church based on Jesus’ commendation?
5. What does Jesus’ confront about this church (vs 20)?

Much like the letter to Pergamum (vs 12-17) John’s mention of an Old Testament character - “that woman Jezebel” - most likely implies a reference to the well-known wife of King Ahab (see 1 Kings 16:31; 21:25). The same kind of deception and teaching that Jezebel did while ruling Israel with her husband seemed to be happening in the Thyatiran church.

The “sexual immorality” and “eating of meat sacrificed to idols” most likely refers to the spiritual unfaithfulness of people to God alone. God frequently uses the metaphor of adultery or sexual unfaithfulness to describe this in the Old Testament. Likewise, Jezebel’s story speaks little of sexual immorality but abundantly of idol worship and worship of pagan gods. Many commentators believe the people in Thyatira were compromising their Christian faith by embracing much of the political and religious views of the local guilds in which they belonged. Not doing so would hurt them financially and socially. Doing so meant being “unfaithful” to God.

6. What does Jesus’ promise to do to those who do not repent of this teaching (vs 21-23)?
7. How does this correspond to the “eyes like blazing fire” that describe Jesus?
8. Would you say the modern church in America is comfortable with this aspect of Jesus’ character? Why/why not?
9. What are Jesus’ words to those in this church who haven’t embraced this false teaching of “Jezebel”?
10. What promise does Jesus make to the faithful (vs 26-28)?
11. How do the images of authority and strength in vs 26-27 relate to the “feet like burnished bronze” Jesus used to describe Himself?

SEEING JESUS CHRIST

Jesus was tempted by a “Jezebel” as well. You might say the ultimate “Jezebel”. In Matthew 4:1-11, Jesus was tempted to compromise His faithfulness to His Father by the devil. Nothing Satan tempted Jesus with was evil in itself. Rather, it tempted Jesus with taking a short-cut (i.e. trust the devil’s means to acquire a God-given promise). Jesus refused. He was completely faithful to God’s process and God’s promise. Then, after being completely faithful to the process, Jesus, instead, experience the punishment and judgement of one who was unfaithful. Why? So you and I, who are unfaithful, could receive a promise we do not deserve.

- *How does seeing Jesus’ perfect faithfulness to the Father (knowing He would still be punished for our sake) move you to greater love & faithfulness toward Him?*

MAKING IT MATTER

1. How would you speak of a church today that had traits like Thyatira? Could you, like Jesus, speak positively of its strengths even though it had a significant fault?
2. In what ways do you see compromise in our church? How have you contributed to this?
3. Share a time when you gave in to social, financial or political pressure such that it compromised your faithfulness to God.
4. How does Jesus’ offer of repentance and His promise of authority and ruling with Him exhort us to greater faithfulness as a church?

PRAYING FOR GOD’S POWER

“This is the confidence we have before him: If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have what we have asked of him.” 1 John 5:14-15

When we pray according to God’s will it engages the power and guidance of God to bring about our transformation. If we apply these things in our own strength, then it is just legalistic obedience. But, when we humbly ask God to change us and empower us according to His will and by His Spirit, it becomes transformational AND it glorifies God.

1. Ask people to share one key, specific application from today’s lesson that they want God to bring about in their life. Then take time to pray for each other in these areas.