

sermon study summary

October 14 / 15, 2023

Revelation Part 4 – When Tempted to Compromise

Speaker: Dr. Henry Schorr

Pergamum was the center of emperor worship as well as the worship of many pagan deities including Zeus. Satanic influence was prevalent in all sectors of the city. In the middle of all these Satanic cults was a little church. Jesus said of this church, “I know where you live where Satan has his throne.”

Jesus knows all about the spiritual darkness and immorality that surrounds you.

“Yet you remain true to my name.” Antipas, one of the key church leaders, was put to death there for his faith in Christ. And in spite of all the temptations to false worship and the threat of losing their lives if they didn’t worship Caesar, the church remained true to Christ.

The church at Pergamum believed all the right things; they were vigilant, resisting life-threatening persecution from outside forces demanding that they worship the Emperor, but they were either blind or indifferent to those in their church who were teaching a distorted gospel (v. 14).

Some in their midst were sexually immoral. They followed the teaching of Balaam and the Nicolaitans. Balaam destroyed Israel from within by corrupting them with sexual immorality. The Nicolaitans used the concept of God’s grace as a licence to compromise to live sexually immoral lives. Essentially they were saying, “As Christians we are covered by the grace of God, so we can do whatever we want.”

The Bible teaches that sexual intimacy is to be between a man and a woman who are united in marriage. (See Genesis 2:24 and Matthew 19:4.) Properly controlled and expressed within marriage between a man and a woman, sex can be beautiful; but outside of a committed loving marriage, it is destructive. Sex is an act that involves the whole self, the very essence of a person’s being. And that is why Jesus hated the teaching of Balaamites and the Nicolaitans in the church at Pergamum. They simply didn’t get it that we violate our real self when we use our bodies contrary to the way God intended for us to use them.

To those who are not whole today because you have given a part of yourself away in a relationship outside of God’s moral standard for sex, I have two words: STOP and REPENT. Stop fusing your body and soul to the body and soul of another. Turn around and go in the opposite direction. God can make you whole again as He did for David.

Some worshiped counterfeit gods. An idol is anything which takes the focus off God and puts it on something else. The heart of idolatry is putting your trust and pouring your passions into something or someone other than God. We are to worship God exclusively.

Idolatry and sexual immorality are not neutral acts. They open up those who do them to the unseen realm of spiritual forces which Paul refers to as ‘demons.’ Yes, we are physical beings living in a physical world. But we are also spiritual beings living in a spiritual world. And in this spiritual realm there is a very real battle going on for your soul.

So why is Jesus intolerant of false thinking about idolatry and sexual immorality or other issues? Because falsehood enslaves us. On the other hand, God’s truth and grace redeem us, transform us, and set us free.

Jesus promised the believers at Pergamum two wonderful gifts—“hidden manna,” that is, all you need on a daily basis, and “a white stone with a new name written on it,” that is, a new identity and a new destiny.

sermon study guide

IN – PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. Share one simple thing you do not want to do, yet you still do it.
2. How do you feel that Jesus knows all about you? Has your opinion changed over time? If it has, how?

UP – PURSUE GOD

1. Read Revelation 2:12-17 in 2-3 different versions. Describe the cultural and religious environment of Pergamum. What were the good, bad and the ugly ways the church responded to their environment? How might outsiders have viewed this group of Christians?
2. In Rev 2:12, what is the importance of the sword coming from Jesus' mouth in relation to all that follows in His message to the church? Reference also Heb 4:12.
3. What do Jesus' promises in verse 17 mean? How might they be an incentive for the church, or yourself, to overcome compromise?

OUT – PURSUE MISSION

1. In what ways does culture influence the church and us to compromise? How can we protect ourselves, our families, and our churches from the influence of Satan?
2. Most of the letters to the churches contain an affirmation, a problem, a warning and a promise. How can we apply this pattern as we care for another believer ready to cave in under pressure?

For Personal Reflection / Prayer:

1. *Would you, like Antipas, die for Jesus? Would you be willing to trust, honor and live for Jesus no matter the cost by resisting compromise? Share your decision with someone.*
2. *How are you putting God first? What areas still need God's grace and truth? Live for God wholeheartedly.*
3. *Read Psalm 51:10-12 and pray it as a prayer of repentance. If you know the tune, sing it or listen on YouTube, "Create in me a Clean Heart" by Keith Green. Journal your testimony of God restoring you.*

THE WORD

Revelation 2:12-17

¹² "To the angel of the church in Pergamum write:

These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword. ¹³ I know where you live—where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, not even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city—where Satan lives.

¹⁴ Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality. ¹⁵ Likewise, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. ¹⁶ Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

¹⁷ Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Psalm 51:10-12

¹⁰ Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. ¹¹ Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

This week's writers: Elsa Henderson, Gene and Karen Gibbs, Sandi Somers, Mark Eckstein and Jorel Quemuel