

Revelation 2:18-28

What's the last thing you heard that was shocking? Perplexing?

Ephesus—major metropolis (Lead city; Lead church=Jesus to Eph. “**Lost first love**”);

Smyrna—Beautiful, wealthy (=persecution)=(**poor, but rich**) Jesus conquered death=**don't fear!**

Pergamum—a city on a hill; **Educ; med; polit.; relig. Center**: “**Satan's Throne**”—**allowd world infl ch**

Sardis: King Cyrus defeated Croesus: “**Rich as Croesus**”—Incredibly wealthy city (**U alive, but dead**)

The City of **Thyatira**: *not* a large or significant town or cultural center. This is “anytown USA” -a small hard working blue-collar town that manufactured wools/dyes. Made clothes/fabrics/linens because near large swaths of land for agriculture -leather & shoe making. Notable **Gladiator school**. Christ's letter is to an avg. sized church, full of avg. hard-working people, doing good min. =**US!!!**

***Our spiritual condition, our spiritual health & vitality are connected in part to the doctrine & preaching we submit ourselves to. *Why did you choose this Church? Doct?**

What are we listening to? reading? watching? scrolling? Our spiritual life is shaped by what we put into to it the doctrine (good/bad) that we allow! (good gas v. cheap good food v. junk)

-Jesus wants purity in us & in Ch.!! He designed *you* for real food=true spiritual nour. **In a Real Ch.**

To the Church in Thyatira ¹⁸ “**To the angel of the church in Thyatira write:**

Identification:

These are the words of: **the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze**. Jesus again identifies Himself here with His characteristics of holy eyes and holy feet: That He sees all and that what He sees is filtered through the white-hot flames of refining fire and that where He goes (walks) He does so with white-hot, glowing holy fire (refining fire) **in that all that Jesus sees and touches are forever changed (nothing is unchanged/untouched by fire: it is all consuming)** **Jesus is holy**; His cause is holiness (Christlikeness) and He will not tolerate unrepentant sin, pride, or unholiness in His presence. His righteous judgment is **just**, sure/**certain**, and **eternal**.

Let the Church take notice:

Commendation:

¹⁹ **I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first**. Jesus affirms that as this church continues in learning, loving, and leading – it has been a hardworking, faithful, and fruitful church. The church is growing in discipleship and its ministry reach in the city. Jesus commends this church for their love of God and Jesus; for their continued ministry to the church *to disciple them in truth*; for their perseverance in hardship and through persecution; and in their gospel fruitfulness – their ministry reach and impact is growing. Jesus blesses them for this. **How are we doing? How's our church doing in loving/reaching/disc.? What are you doing to lead our church in these ways?**

Correction:

²⁰ **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**. This Lady in the church has *assumed a leadership position* and is teaching/discipling young/immature Believers into believing that that one can still be a “good Christian” and engage in sexual immorality, participate in orgiastic feasts, and entertain idolatrous acts. She is discipling these wayward believers that Christ does not care about their sexuality, their sexual practices or partners or their idolatrous behavior.

That these secret sins don't matter to God. And yet, Jesus calls her out and her false discipleship, her lies, and her heart. She is in danger!!

***We are noticing a theme in these first century churches (Ephesus; Pergamum; and Thyatira) that there is a pervasive and pernicious “sin creep” within the Body. Sexual sin, Idolatry, Prejudice are three key areas where Satan attacks the souls within the church. Perennial issues -for us too!

Fornication:

Sexual Sin is “whole body,” sin; *holistic sin* (**Fornication=sexual immorality**: any sex outside of a cov. union w/ your spouse) which affects our *own* bodies; our *heart/minds*; our *spirit* with the Lord; our *spouse* or future spouse; the *other person* we sin with & their family. This is never just a harmless private sin. This sin takes what God has created as a beautiful picture of spiritual/physical intimacy between one man/woman in covenant union for life – and we treat it casually and twist it into selfish, objectifying self-gratification. This hurts the Lord and defiles His purpose for sexuality and robs God of His glory. [Every time Paul lists sins in Scripture, he always begins with sexual sin] -1 Thess. 4:3 “For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality” -Is any part of this unclear?? [I know this a real challenge in our culture; ease to sordid pics/vids; illicit relationships; unfaithful & Jesus stands to forgive/cleanse/unburden/free us **IF** we will repent, expose sin, invite oth into w

Idolatry:

Then, Jesus mentions **Idolatry**. Idolatry=we take something that is a gift to us, and we in-turn make it a ‘god’ to us-we worship the gift and ignore the gift-Giver. Anything we give more attn. to than God. Anything that distracts us from God. Anything that we give ourselves to – more than Him. We turn our blessings upside-down and miss the point -we expect the gift to give us life, comfort, hope, security, Ident = it's a LIE! And we rob God of His glory. Lord, please forgive us!! -What in your life distracts you from the Lord? Takes you away from time w/ the Lord? Given yourself to? Relationship? Spouse? Kids?/schedule? Money? Job/position? Materialism? Comfort?

This 1st Cent. lady “Jezebel” is likened to the OT queen of Israel who in 1 Kings 16 *usurped* her husband Ahab’s power (**overly opinionated/domineering woman; insubordinate; controlling & manipulative influence**) attempted to erase all true worship of YHWH and **forced** Israel worship the false god Baal (idolatrous & sexual worship) and she tried to silence the voice of God’s true prophet Elijah. She’s a liar and purveyor of lies & false doctrine. Her doctrine promotes **self-interest, self-indulgence, and self-gratification** (works righteousness which are filthy, dead works)=deadly form of religion and destroyer of our souls.
=Toxic & fatal 3000 yrs ago AND was **Toxic Christianity and a False gospel then/now!!** =Fatal!

²¹ I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. This is amazing!!!! What manner of grace is this??? This lady is leading immature Christians into spiritual ruin, and Jesus is still giving her time to repent. Do you see what kind a Savior He is? Love/Gracious...waiting...

*Notice, that there is **NO** sin too great that our immeasurably loving Jesus won’t forgive.
-Does that give you hope today??

And yet, Jesus judges **unrepentant souls, those who know what is right, but who refuse to *do* what is right -repent & turn to God! Those who continue to ignore or reject God’s call to holiness; those who deny conviction of sin in their life and are comfortable in their sin. Jesus gives her a chance to repent and find salvation in Christ alone. He gives her a season to repent.

But that season will run out and **His judgment is sure!** Do you feel the Spirit bringing conviction in your life? What will you do about it today?

****Notice, don't miss this Church: Jesus takes sin in our lives and in the church seriously!!**
= Unrepentant sin is devastating ..for you, for your family, for your community!

-How does Jesus respond to known/public sin in the church? =He offers conviction and a chance to repent of known sin. To expose that sin and have them cleansed, the person restored =HOPE!!!
Rev. 2: 21: **I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. So what happens to the UNREPENTANT??** Those who have been given a chance to admit sin, confess, rep.

Rev. 2: 22 So I will cast her on a bed of suffering (sickness), and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer **intensely**[great trib.], unless they repent of her ways. Jesus gives more time for them to confess/repent through conviction, then discipline (Suffering). At times, our suffering is God's divine/severe mercy to bring us back to Him. Nothing like suffering will get your attention and draw you back to what is important in your life!!
(pain has a way of focusing you: Birth Labor -more & more intense =serious pain-get that baby out

23 AND I will strike her children dead [kill children w/*plague*/lit. *death*]. This is a severe penalty for sin. Sin never just affects us =whole family. -Her fam./disciples=reaping conseq. of mom's sin! BUT, likely "**what the parents do in moderation, the kids take to excess.**" These teens/young adults fully aware of mom's teaching, complicit, & passionate in leading others astray! =**GUILTY!**
=Their due penalty as well – God's divine wrath and Judgment =death! (no one escapes His eyes)

...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. (repentance OR unrepentance) -**LIKE ANANIAS AND SAPHIRA IN ACTS 5:11** "And great fear came over the whole church and all who heard about these events." -Jesus is Holy! And He is deadly serious about holiness in His Church!

-Jesus is forecasting what He will do (a prophecy) in order to prepare the church for cleansing holiness. **Thyatira: He will purge the church of this lady and her family.** -"A little leaven..." Ga 5:9

-**Just as God struck dead the firstborn of the families of Egypt** (complicit in their sin of slavery & hatred of the Jews), **so Jesus will take out the family of one who is causing irreparable harm to His church** (causing the young/immature disciples to be led astray into sin). He is bringing true Matthew 18:6 "**Anyone causing a little one to stumble...millstone...**"

Jesus is stating that the Church is NOT to knowingly tolerate sin; To confront it; accountability
-**You Kill a wolf on sheep's clothing.** You don't spare the unrepentant, wicked, you destroy it. -
=**eradicate the Cancer**

24 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,²⁵ except to hold on to what you have until I come.'

Call to Action:

26 To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations — **27** 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.

Jesus is reminding believers who persevere in their faith, in their faithfulness to Christlikeness, in their self-denial of worldly pleasures and the world's lies that "we can gratify our flesh however we want and *still* be in right standing with God"... to those who flee temptation and lean into Christ's presence and provision in the face of worldly temptationto these faithful ones....

=They would be rewarded with reigning with Christ in the Millennial Kingdom & beyond; That under His Authority, they would be holy models and leaders over peoples and nations – exalting Christ and His holiness for 1000 years to those who need to see and experience Christ’s Truth in the Millennial Reign & beyond.

=This is a reward of **leadership**, to be a leader of souls/peoples (**headship**). Integrity matters to God. -Lk 16:10 =Paraph. “**To be faithful with a little is to be trustworthy of more**”

²⁸ I will also give that one the morning star.

This refers to seeing and being with Jesus in all His glory and splendor forever.

²⁹ Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

APPLICATION

1. Holiness: Jesus is fighting for a holy church. Jesus is at war with sin in our life!! In our church! He is working in us and through us to purify His Church
We are to be:
 - A called people
 - A set apart people
 - A pure people (for their Lord and for His purpose)
2. -We have been declared Righteous (Imputation)/Justification
-We are called to pursue righteousness (Impartation)/Sanctification
3. Holiness is a community project - this happens best in a **church** (known, loved, accepted, & held accountable). No private Christian lives.... “**Other than the prison system, the church is the only other institution on the earth built for bad people**”...WELCOME!!! WE need each other!

COMMUNITY GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Jesus introduces Himself as “*the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze.*”
 - What do these descriptions reveal about Jesus’ authority and insight?
 - How does remembering who Jesus truly is shape how we live and worship?
2. Jesus praises Thyatira for their “*love, faith, service, and perseverance.*”
 - Why is it significant that their “*latter works*” were greater than the first?
 - How can our church or group keep growing rather than coasting spiritually?
3. The church was rebuked for tolerating a false teacher called “Jezebel.”
 - What does unhealthy tolerance look like in the modern church?
 - How can we hold both truth and love without compromising either?
4. Jezebel led believers into “*sexual immorality and eating food sacrificed to idols.*”
 - What might spiritual compromise look like today?
 - What helps believers discern when they’re drifting from holiness?
5. Jesus says, “*I am he who searches hearts and minds.*”
 - How does this truth bring both comfort and conviction?
 - What areas of life do you think Jesus might want to examine more closely in us?
6. “*Only hold on to what you have until I come.*”
 - What does it practically mean to “hold fast” to faith in a culture of distraction or pressure?
 - What helps you remain steadfast when faith feels costly or wearying?
7. Jesus promises that the overcomer will share His authority and receive “*the morning star.*”
 - What do these promises teach us about our future with Christ?
 - How can hope in Jesus’ return and reward motivate faithful obedience now?

The role of Church Discipline in a Congregation.

The context of church discipline is holiness unto the Lord.

The Lord call each of His followers/disciples to be holy. 1Pt. 1:16 “Be holy as I am Holy”

-Matthew 18: The context is **holiness**; we are to cut out whatever is in our life that is unholy.

(If we have a life-destroying cancer in our body, we don't mess around/flirt w it; its not cute = we must cut it out; kill it; destroy it or it will destroy us)

-Gal. 5:9 “A little leaven leavens the whole bunch”

-Matthew 18:7-11

7 “Woe to the world because of *its* stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to the person through whom the stumbling block comes!

8 “And if your hand or your foot is causing you to sin, cut it off and throw it away from you; it is better for you to enter life maimed or without a foot, than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into the eternal fire. 9 And if your eye is causing you to sin, tear it out and throw it away from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fiery hell.

10 “See that you do not look down on one of these little ones; for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually see the face of My Father who is in heaven.”

*Jesus gives clear instructions in each of our lives that whatever proclivity you have to sin, where you are most greatly tempted, in your deepest internal struggles – cut out that sin/opportunity to sin.

-Don't let anything in your life hold you hostage to your spiritual growth/best/blessing.

-Jesus died that we would no longer be slaves to sin/**enslavement**

-In **Church discipline**, the context is holiness (closeness to the Lord, His Church, His cause:)

=Anything that will hinder that relationship, damage relationships in the church, or delay His

cause on this earth =to spread the gospel to the Lost and the least of these, IT MUST BE CUT OUT!!

Church Discipline is the loving act of spiritual confrontation of known/public sin in our life/family

-Matthew 18:15-20

15 “Now if your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that on the testimony of two or three witnesses every matter may be confirmed. 17 And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, he is to be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. 18 Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.

19 “Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. 20 For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.”

Jesus gives clear instructions for the Church how to handle known, unrepentant, public sin:

The purpose of church discipline/corporate confrontation is to win a brother back to the Lord:

A-Conviction (repentance) = restoration to Jesus (personal walk with Christ)

B-Restoration **to** their family (personal relationships restored)

C-Restoration within the Church Family (communion restored) : We worship Jesus together & honor/celebrate His sacrifice for us through *Union in Community* = COMMUNION

1. A spiritually mature brother/sister who has a relationship with that person is to lovingly confront them with the hearsay of sin in their lives. Ask them to confess; repent; and be restored to Christ
2. If they refuse, 2-3 others are to go with and re-confront the unrepentant sinner. If they still refuse:
3. The Church is to be informed. The Elders, then the church membership is informed

-For the purpose of prayer (and care to the family)

-For the Notice that the unrepentant is not to participate in communion b/c they are a member not in good standing with the Lord and His Church

-For the purpose that others would in love confront and try to win back a brother in sin/need b/c an unrepentant sinner is acting like one who actually lost/never converted (*are they born-again?*)?