



Seven: Letters of Revelation
Letter to Pergamum
Revelation 2:12-17
05/26/2019

Main Point

The Word of God, the ways of Jesus, and the works of Jesus provide a stable, unshakable foundation for our faith.

INTRODUCTION

When has there been a time that you used the statement, “You can’t have your cake and eat it too”?

Why is making choices so difficult in life?

What have been some choices in your life that you tried at first to compromise to have it both ways, but then you ended up having to choose one way versus another?

We would like to think that we can live by the old Yogi Berra statement, “when you come to a fork in the road, take it” mentality when it comes to choices. But in reality there comes a point of where we choose which way we are going to go. The same is true for churches as we will see today with the letter to Pergamum. They wanted to be able to go both ways and find a place of compromise being both in the world and out of the world, or hot or cold for the Lord, and yet it ended up they were living a double life. The call from Jesus was to decided whether they were in or out in following Him. The same is true in our personal lives, God allows us to see the road that is before us and He doesn’t want us to live a double-life, rather He wants us to see the impact that can happen when we go all in for Christ!

UNDERSTANDING

| Have a volunteer read Revelation 2:12-13.

¹² “And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write:

The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this:

¹³ ‘I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

How were the Christians in Pergamum being tested? (Pergamum believers both resisted false teaching and endured persecution).

Why might Jesus' letter have been comforting to the church at Pergamum?

What did Jesus commend about the church's behavior? Why was it important to note Antipas' faith to the church?

What impact does it make in your life to see other brothers and sisters in Christ enduring for the Lord?

Share how you have been encouraged by someone's faith during difficult times.

Jesus commended the congregation for maintaining their commitment to Him. Twice Christ noted the presence of Satan in the city where these believers lived. The devil had used his stronghold in the city to make life miserable for the Christians. While believers in other places might have buckled in the face of such pressure, Christ complimented the believers who did not renounce their faith.

Sermon Notes:

| Have a volunteer read Revelation 2:14-15.

14 But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality. 15 So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

Given their testing, why do you think this church tolerated false teaching?

What are some of the ways in our culture that we might be tempted to tolerate false teaching in the church?

What does it mean that someone becomes permissive towards compromise?

What does it mean that the most dangerous lie is that which is closest to the truth?

When we look at the church in Pergamum, they held true to some things, but they compromised on so much in order to not offend anyone. They had watered-down the truth so that it was appealing to everyone. Truth and the gospel are going to offend people because it questions their beliefs. We are called to share the truth in a loving way as well as to hold true to the truth no matter what.

Sermon Notes:

| Have a volunteer read Revelation 2:16-17.

¹⁶Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth. ¹⁷He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.

What does Jesus call for the people to do in these verses?

Why is repentance valuable to the Christian walk? Why is repentance more than just stating that you have done wrong?

Christ responded vehemently. They must repent, recognizing and forsaking their sins. The penalty will be severe for those who do not. The church members had become Christ's enemies. He threatened to unleash among them the awesome power of judgment He intended to use against His enemies, represented by the double-edged sword coming out of His mouth (v. 16).

Why does God take false teachings so seriously? Why should we?

What do we communicate to God when we allow something other than His Word to guide our lives? What about when we know His Word, but our lives don't reflect it?

The church at Pergamum was guilty of religious tolerance, and Jesus was aware of it. How might our church be pressured to participate in the kind of tolerance that Jesus corrected here?

We live in a day and time that champions tolerance. Unfortunately, tolerance comes at the cost of compromising the truth. We must find the balance between loving those far from Jesus and tolerating sinful teaching. We must, in other words, love each other and others enough to tell them truth, just as Jesus did to this church. In 1 Timothy 4, Paul warned Timothy, a young spiritual leader, against false teachers. Paul took this opportunity to teach Timothy—and us—how we might grow in our relationship with Christ by keeping the gospel of salvation by grace through faith central to our thinking and actions.

Sermon Notes:

APPLICATION

What do we, as a church, stand to lose if we choose to tolerate false teaching?

Why is it important that we “speak the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15) as we seek to correct false teaching?

How might we, as a group, help one another recognize and be on guard against the influences of false teaching? How might we help one another hold fast to the gospel of Jesus Christ?