



Seven: Letters of Revelation
Thyatira: More Tolerant than God
Revelation 2:18-29
06/02/2019

INTRODUCTION

Do you or someone you know have a hobby or interest that no one else has? (Allow for responses) Ask: Why is it tough to understand or explain why the hobby means so much? (The difficulty comes because people either (1) have not experienced the hobby or (2) it is something they just don't have a passion for in their life.)

How can explaining why the church is called to love and obey Jesus be difficult in our culture? (Our culture, similar to someone understanding a hobby, has not had a true experience of Jesus or they don't share in the passion for following Jesus for the church)

Today we are discussing as a group about how to maintain biblical convictions in a world that does not love Jesus or believe the Bible. Similar to the church in Thyatira, we are in a culture that doesn't share in our same passions about Jesus and often we can bow to the pressures of the culture just to be accepted. However, Jesus' message is clear, stand firm and stay true to God's Word through all things, and how to deal with pressures within the church just as much as what was surrounding them.

UNDERSTANDING

| Have a volunteer read Revelation 2:18-19.

“And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: ‘The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze.’¹⁹ “I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first.”

From this passage, what do we learn about the strengths of the church at Thyatira?

Christ's compliment to the church at Thyatira is similar to what has been said about other churches (read Ephesians 1). They are growing in their many activities. They are known for their love, faith, service, and perseverance. They were not content to stand still in loving

deeds and faithful perseverance. They had grown in faith and thus were stronger in love than when they first came to know Christ.

What are some of the positive things that you see that the church in Thyratira was doing that are similar to New Vision today?

What difference does it make in your life to know that Jesus see's the impact that we make for His glory?

Transition: What can happen if we aren't careful is look only for the good things that are happening and miss the opportunities to take a stand for truth. As we will see in the next passage, the church will experience drift that comes from tolerance.

Sermon Notes

| Have a volunteer read Revelation 2:20-23.

20 But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. 21 I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. 22 Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, 23 and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works.

From this passage, what do we learn about the weaknesses of the church at Thyatira?

The criticism Christ has is severe. All their growth in love and faith was overshadowed by the success of a teacher, code-named "Jezebel." (Read about Jezebel in 2 Kings 9:7-37) As a result of her teachings and actions, some Christians of Thyatira were brazenly practicing open sexual immorality in the name of "being tolerant."

Verses 21-23 include Jesus' harsh word of warning to the guilty in Thyatira. Why is the tolerance of sexual immorality so serious in God's eyes?

The sermon speaks about how we have become more tolerant than God when:

1. We have redefined tolerance.

There were two types of tolerance defined:

Traditional tolerance: Giving people freedom to have different beliefs and practices while at the same time allowing others the freedom to propose a different opinion or belief in humility and love.

Tolerance redefined: Everyone is right no matter what they believe or what they do and anyone who expresses a different viewpoint is seen as intolerant.

How have you seen tolerance redefined in Christianity today?

Why it is never acceptable for us to accept teaching that contradicts what the Bible states?

Are there areas in your life that you have accepted as true that contradict the Bible? Why it is better to repent and live by God's Word rather than trying to be tolerant of sin?

Second, we have become more tolerant than God when:

2. We don't come under authority, but we become the authority.

In our culture today there are three ways that people approach the authority of Scripture. They either: come under its authority, reject it, or change it. What would be examples of the last two that you have seen happen before in our culture?

What does it mean that you will live under the Bible's authority?

What are some areas that you struggle with living under the Bible's authority?

What are some things that your group can do to help you grow in being someone living under God's authority?

Finally, we become more tolerant than God when:

3. We fear the wrong judgment.

| Have a volunteer read Revelation 2:24-29.

²⁴ But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. ²⁵ Only hold fast what you have until I come. ²⁶ The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, ²⁷ and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. ²⁸ And I will give him the morning star. ²⁹ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

Notice how Jesus affirmed those in the church that did not hold to the teaching and held true to the faith even when the pressures came. Their fear was not in the judgment of man,

instead it was the fear of God and living under His authority that motivated their actions. The Bible affirms using this same type of motivation in other teachings to His disciples (Matthew 10:28; Proverbs 29:25)

Looking back at Revelation 2:18-29, what do you think Jesus' promise in verses 26-27 means? What do you appreciate most about His promise to those who overcome temptation in this section?

How might Christians appear different to a fallen world if we lived up to a higher calling in regard to sex, marriage, resources, as Jesus challenged the church at Thyatira to do?

As western culture continues to move away from its Christian roots, our Christian lifestyles will seem increasingly odd and old-fashioned. What then does it mean to be relevant in our methods but firm in our message?

Jesus' letters to these churches include several promises to those who stood firm in their faith throughout the various threats and temptations they faced. All of these promises center around eternal life with Jesus. Christ knew these churches intimately, even their most extreme sins. But He still offered them the hope of eternity with Him if they repented of their sins and persevered in their faith. This truth stirs up both conviction and repentance in our hearts as well.

Sermon Notes

APPLICATION

What characteristics of your life consistently show others that you are a different and changed person, focused on the cause of Christ above your personal desires? In what areas of your life do you need to work on this?

Practically speaking, how can being laser-focused on the cause of Christ help us run from sins that we tolerate?

Spend some time in prayer and reflection about areas of your life that you have been tolerant in that God is calling you to repent of today. Reflect as well of what changes would need to occur for this change to be made a reality in your life.