

SRMBC Family Bible Study

Revelation - The Triumph of God

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Lesson 2: Pardon My Speaking the Truth

Revelation 2

What can we do to help a Christian who is ready to cave in under pressure? We'd probably try to encourage him or her by pointing to the positive aspects of the situation and giving hope for the future. Usually we wouldn't say that things are going to get worse before they get better!

In the seven letters to the churches in Asia Christ confronts believers who have compromised morally and spiritually. But he also encourages them. This kind of tough love is essential for spiritual health.

Group Discussion. Talk about how you have seen confrontation handled well—and poorly. Give some specific examples. What were the long-term results?



In Drumline – the confrontation and conflict was resolved amicably and everyone found a greater unity.

In Crimson Tide – there was a mutiny, and disagreement that nearly caused WWII.

Chapters two and three are like a cover letter (with seven personalized messages) to accompany John's visions which begin in chapter four. We will study each of these personalized letters one by one.

Ephesus: Read Revelation 2:1-7.

1. Why would forsaking "your first love" (v. 4) be so tragic for this church?

It is important to remember the many good things Jesus says about this church. It is also helpful for the group to know it would be very difficult for Christians to be faithful in Ephesus. It was a major religious center in which all kinds of religious and superstitious practices (Acts 19:19).

- Loss of Reputation - Ephesus was a church with a Great reputation – a light in dark area of false gods and false worship

- Loss of Relationship – they would not be as close to Christ or as close to one another
- Loss of Reward - Jesus would remove their assignment and opportunity to minister on His behalf forfeiting eternal reward (cf: I Cor 3:12 – 13; Rev. 22:12 -14).

2. Why do you think Christ's judgment would be so severe if they did not repent (v. 5)? If we have lost our first love, what steps can we take to renew our commitment to Jesus?

- Jesus will have nothing to do with loveless orthodoxy. (During His earthly ministry, Jesus expressed His harshest criticism for the religious hypocrites of His day.
- While a church may resist false teachers, it is not a church if people do not love Christ and each other.
- When a church (or individual) does not demonstrate the love Christ the witness to community is damaged making it danger to the Gospel.

Note: *The Nicolaitans were evidently a heretical sect. But apart from this reference, we know nothing about them.*

If we have lost our first love, what steps can we take to renew our commitment to Jesus?

Remember – “remember therefore from where you have fallen”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take an honest (biblical) assessment of your walk. • Review your conversion/salvation. • Ask the Lord to show you where you are and where you need to be.
Repent - “...unless you repent”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confession - Admit your wrong before the Lord • Contrition – Express sorrow (Ps. 38:18, II Cor 7:10) • Commit – Make a personal choice to change
Return - “do the first works”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change your mind – Renew out thinking • Change your heart – Renew out passion • Change your actions – Just Do it

Smyrna: Read Revelation 2:8-11.

3. Smyrna was noted for emperor worship. Refusal to worship the emperor brought martyrdom to some Christians. What does Jesus know about the believers in Smyrna?

- Jesus knows the trouble the Church is facing on a day-to day basis (*Physical, Spiritual, Financial*)
- Jesus knows their enemies (and has them on a leash)
- Jesus knows their time of testing (10 days – temporary)
- Jesus knows the end and as rewards for faithfulness

Note: “Ten days” (v. 10) may simply mean a reasonably short period of persecution.

4. How might Jesus’ statements about himself, as well as his promises, solidify their faithfulness and ours?

Jesus Statements about Himself	Encouragements
<i>“the First and the Last”</i>	Jesus knows the end from the beginning – nothing is taking Him by surprise.
<i>“who was dead, and came to life”</i>	Jesus has been through what we are going through – He has felt our pain – yet has overcome.
<i>“I know your works, tribulation, and poverty”</i>	Jesus knows our current situation – he knows and cares
<i>“I know the blasphemy of those...”</i>	Jesus knows we have enemies and has grace for us to endure and will deal with them in His time.

Jesus Promises	Encouragements
<i>“but you are rich”</i>	Jesus promises spiritual blessings that we may not be aware of and that the world/Satan can’t give or take away
<i>“you will have tribulation ten days...”</i>	Our trouble, no matter how intense is temporary. Jesus has set a limit.
<i>“I will give you the crown of life”</i>	There is an eternal reward – that is priceless and worth all the trouble. Jesus is a good employer who never lets His people work in vain.
<i>“...shall not be hurt by the second death”</i>	We will be safe, avoiding the 2 nd death. Our end will be secure. Thank you, Lord.

Note: The agent behind all enemies and blasphemy is/was Satan. Throughout the book of Revelation, John shows how Satan is at work in current events but only by the permission of God. Ultimately, as we will see, God uses Satan’s work to further his own purpose

5. Only the letters to Smyrna and Philadelphia mention no problem and give no warning. What role does affirmation play in helping Christians who are under spiritual pressure?
- It is possible – even under intense spiritual pressure, to live in such a way that pleases God.
 - Affirmation at just the right time, can keep a person on the edge from throwing in the towel
 - Affirmation can let people know that they are not alone in their struggles (Stop faking it)
 - Affirmation creates and fosters unity in the Family of God – you will want to be with people who encourage rather than discourage.

“Flatter me, and I may not believe you. Criticize me, and I may not like you. Ignore me, and I may not forgive you. Encourage me, and I will not forget you.”—William Arthur Ward

Pergamum: Read Revelation 2:12-17.

6. Pergamum was also a center of emperor worship. This may be why it is called the place “where Satan has his throne.” In addition, temple prostitution was prevalent. How had the church responded to the lure of these temptations?

Temptation in Pergamum/Pergamos	Church Response
<i>“...where Satan’s throne is.” ...where Satan dwells</i>	<i>“And You Hold Fast To My Name”</i> – They continued to witness/worship Jesus exclusively – standing out as Jesus followers/worshippers – despite the attacks of Satan
<i>“...Antipas was My faithful martyr...was killed among you”</i>	<i>“...did not deny My faith”</i> – No going back or compromising – even though it cost the life of one of their own.
<i>“the doctrine of Balaam...a stumbling block; the doctrine of the Nicolaitans”</i>	They overlooked or even accepted the false teaching/teachers among them – things that even Jesus hates
<i>“to eat things sacrificed to idols”</i>	Mixing worldliness with their worship and their lifestyles
<i>“to commit sexual immorality”</i>	Greasy grace – loose living as it relates to Christian sexual ethics. (fornication, adultery, divorce, etc.)

7. What temptations lure the church today?

- **Persecution** – intense opposition designed to bring so much fear that we will deny the Name and Faith of Christ.
- **False Teaching** – There is a teaching inside and outside the Church that distorts or rejects Biblical Truth.
- **Compromise** – Instead stand for truth, we are tempted to be silent or look the other way.
- **Worldliness** – To mix the ways of the world with the lifestyle worship of the Lord in order to fit in.

Should a Christian be tolerant of others' religious beliefs? Yes, in the classical sense. However, Jesus is the truth. Christians are called to tolerate – and even to love – people without accepting their false beliefs.

8. The proconsul of this provincial capital was granted the “right of the sword,” the power to execute at will. In light of this, how is verse 16 a contrast to the way we often think of Jesus’ coming?
- We often think of Jesus 2nd coming as – Him coming as “Santa Claus” – descending from on High with gifts and presents for everyone on the “nice list” (we believe everyone is on the “nice list”).

- But Jesus is coming not meek and mild as a Lamb but as the Lion of Judah – Man of War and as King wielding the sword of Judgement
- If the rulers of this world exercise power and authority – imagine how much more swift, intense and righteous the judgment of the Most-High and Holy God will be?

Thyatira: Read Revelation 2:18 – 29.

9. Jezebel (v. 20) is an Old Testament character who symbolizes spiritual adultery (1 Kings 16:31). How was the so-called prophetess in Thyatira like her namesake?

Jezebel” is a name that is the epitome of the wicked woman. Jezebel was the daughter of Ethbaal, who murdered his own brother. Jezebel followed in her father’s evil footsteps.

- Ordered the extermination of the prophets of the Lord (1 Kings 18:4, 13) and set up altars to Baal.
- Jezebel vowed to kill Elijah (1 Kings 19:1-2). Elijah fled from her wrath to the wilderness (1 Kings 19:3-8).
- Plotted to have Naboth falsely accused put to death to take his vineyard and give it to Ahab (1 Kings 21:1-16).
- Jezebel was thrown out the window to her death - trampled by the horses’ and almost entirely consumed by dogs.

The terror visited upon Jezebel was a testimony to the Israelites, and to us, that God’s power is supreme and those who defy Him will meet a terrible end.

Jezebel – 1 Kings 18 – 21 OT	“Jezebel” – Rev 3:20 – 22 NT
Plotted to have Naboth falsely accused put to death to take his vineyard and give it to Ahab (1 Kings 21:1 - 16).	20 Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess...
Ordered the extermination of the prophets of the Lord (1 Kings 18:4, 13) and set up altars to Baal.	20... to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.
Jezebel was thrown out the window to her death, trampled by the horses’ and almost entirely consumed by dogs.	22 Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds 23 I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts

Despite how bad this “Jezebel” is, Jesus is giving her ample time to change, to repent, to turn from her wicked ways before the judgement comes. We should never confuse God’s patience as approval of our disobedience.

10. Jesus used her name to refer to a woman who led the church at Thyatira into immorality and the worship of false gods (Revelation 2:20).

11. Jesus charges this godly and loving church with being too tolerant of evil in its midst. In what areas are Christians today too tolerant?

- Jesus Was Narrow About the Way of Salvation.
- Jesus Was Intolerant Toward Hypocrisy.
- Jesus Was Intolerant Toward Selfishness

12. Each of the letters (except the ones to Smyrna and Philadelphia) contains an affirmation, a problem, a warning and a promise. How might Jesus' example guide us as we care for a brother or sister ready to cave in under pressure?

- Be Discerning – Seeing others and situations from a Spiritual/Scriptural perspective.
- Be Honest – About the struggles, the hardships, the rewards and the warnings.
- Be Encouraging – The focus is to assist the person to be the best they can
- Be challenging – Serious and not “Sugar – Coating” problems or issues.

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:23 – 25)

Pray for someone you know who is under pressure to compromise.

Keys For Living



As the Lord and Head of the Church, Jesus has the authority and ability from the Father to assess and judge every Body of Believers.



All of our works – whether good or bad, are seen and will be rewarded by the Lord Jesus at the Judgement (I Cor. 5:9 -11)



It is possible to consistently live a life that pleases God despite the temptations and pressures of this world. Believers should encourage one another so that we don't give up.