

The Problem of Indifference

Title: The Church that was Next Door to Satan's throne

Text: Revelation 2:12-17

*Left
Prayer*

We have studied the church at Ephesus, the church that left its first love. Then we looked at the Chruch at Smyrna, the church that was both rich and poor. Tonight, we shall ~~look at the church at Pergamum, and we want~~ *we come to the church* *That had a problem with Indifference* *That had* ~~study the message that Christ sent them.~~ *That church*

Notice how Jesus reveals himself to these people. *in vs 12* *read v. 12*
~~He~~ *That* says, He is the one who has the sharp *Two edged sword* ~~sword with two edges~~. This means that he has power and authority. A man who comes with a sword comes as a conqueror and a judge. *So* Here is a church with sin in it, and the Lord God comes in power, ready to punish that sin. [I wonder what would happen today if Jesus came down to judge and punish all the sin in our church. I wonder if any one of us would escape. Jesus was never one to camoufage sin. Today it is mighty easy for us to overlook sin. But Jesus says, "Repent, or I will come upon you with the sword of judgment and punishment."

But while this sword would strike terror to the sinners in the Chruch at Pergamos, it would also give courage to the saints. (Read V. 13) { This church was next door to Satan's throne and every power at the devil's command was being used against them. Jesus says, "I know what you are suffering, but look, I bear the sword of the conqueror. I will never let Satan overcome you." [Thank God the same Saviour is on our side today. Jesus promised always to be with us. He promised never to forsake us? *and* Thus, we can say, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

Jesus appears with a sharp sword, ready to punish the sins of this church and at the same time ready to conquer all of their fears.

Now I let us

want to share from

from

look at three things in this letter.

FIRST. THE FAITH OF THIS CHURCH

I think

We can appreciate this church more when we see where it was located. The city of Pergamos contained many heathen temples. It was ~~the center~~ headquarters for the Roman pro-consul. Historians tell us that when a certain evil cult was driven out of Babylon, its leaders settled in Pergamos. ~~surely~~ ^{Now} if they had been driven out of wicked Babylon, they must have been pretty bad. Pergamos was a ~~certain~~ ^{city} of pagan worship. This is why Christ said that Satan's throne was next to the church.

^{Now}, imagine, the contrast presented in this city of Pergamos. Pergamos, the center of pagan worship on the one hand. And on the other hand here was a little Christian church trying to hold its own and win converts in a city ~~where~~ ^{where} Satan was working overtime. Isn't that a picture of today? Satan is not in hell. He is not locked up in the bottomless pit as he will be someday. He is the prince of this world. He is the god of this age. He is seeking always to pull ~~men~~ ^{folks} from the love of Christ. Our cities today are just as pagan. Crime - poverty - hunger - the worship of ~~Satan~~ Satan ^{is} found in all parts of our land. In a city black with sin, the Christians of Pergamos were holding high the light of the Lord Jesus Christ. May God help us to do likewise.

Friends,

In Verse 13, Jesus tell the church that he knows of ~~their~~ ^{their} faithfulness. This church of Pergamos had ~~it~~ denied the faith. They had been called upon to do that. They had been persecuted almost beyond ~~endurance~~ ^{endurance}, but they hadn't denied the faith. ~~the~~ ~~the~~

(Public example of faithfulness)

On , 1968

Now The church did lose its pastor, Antipas. The word "Antipas" was probably not his real name, but a name given to many of the martyrs of that day. The name means "against all." His enemies were simply saying that he was against everything and everyone. They could say that because he was on the opposite side of all that was sinful and evil.

The story is told of a Christian who was called upon by the emperor to denounce his faith in the deity of Christ. The Christian refused to do so. The emperor then said, "The whole world is against you." Then," said, "The Christian, "I am against the whole world." Sometimes when we stand up for Christ it seems that the whole world is against us. But we ^{must} remember that Christ is still with us and that gives us a majority position. I can imagine that as these Christians followed their pastor to the grave, they said, "He has set the example for us, so we will be true to Christ 'til death." ^{So, you see} ~~es~~, there were some good things ^{about} ~~about~~ this church at Pergamos.

secondly Notice **II** THE FAILINGS OF THE CHURCH (V. 14-15)

After commending the church, ~~Christ~~ ^{Jesus} tells a few things that He had ~~against~~ ^{against} it. He mentioned two false doctrines in the church, doctrines which he hated. He didn't say that all of the people were guilty. Maybe just a few were guilty, but a few wrong people in a church can ruin the life and influence of that church.

First, Jesus said that some of the people held the doctrine of BALAAM.

OK What is the doctrine of Balaam? We must go back to the O.T. to get our answer. The children of Israel were on the way to the Promised Land. King Balak wanted to stop them. He offered Balaam, a mysterious prophet, a huge sum of money to curse Israel. When Balaam tried to curse Israel, God would not permit it. Instead He put a blessing in his mouth for Israel. But Balaam did not want to lose that money, so he did something else. He enticed some of the men of Israel to go to the heathen temple and defile themselves with the temple prostitutes. *and* *Now* this idolatry and fornication brought the curse of God upon Israel. *So this is the* dangerous doctrine which had entered the church at Pergamos. Some of the people said, "We are Christians now. We are on our way to heaven. We are saved by grace. God will never let us fall, so we can live as we please." And they joined themselves to the world, in fornication, in idolatry, in indifference to God's commands.

you see, The essence of Balaamism today is indifference. Satan first tried to destroy the power of Christianity by persecution, but the church grew ~~stronger~~ stronger than ever. Now he seeks to ~~Nullify~~ nullify its power by causing Christians to be indifferent. Let the other person do it. Let the Preacher do it - after all he is getting paid to go calling. And when you let somebody else do your ^{ministry} job for you, right then, you are losing your christian influence through compromise. This was the trouble with the church at Pergamos and to a great extent one of our problems in ^{the} church.

We are to be in the world, but not of the world. The Christian must be in the world, but not let the world get in him. A ship in the water is a thing of power and beauty, but when the water gets in the ship there are tragic results. You can go out in this world to your office, to your store, to your place of business, to your place in society, and you can be a strong witness for Christ through a consecrated Christian life. Or, you can go out in the world and mix with it, become indiffererent to the calling of God, and your power as a christian will soon be gone.

12 The other doctrine that Christ hated was "the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes." Church history does not list a group ^{known} as Nicolaitanes. So, we must get the meaning from the ~~word~~ word itself. This word means "to Rule" and "The people". Evidently some people who had gotten into the church had some selfish ambitions. They were trying to set up some kind of system so that they could rule the church. They were trying to develop hierarchal system.

^{Baptist} This is way in our tradition, we have always said that Christ should be the head of each church, the Bible should contain all the rules necessary for the church, and the Holy Spirit should be the guiding principle and power in the church. Every individual Christian is to have direct access to God, without any high church official in between. So Christ has said, "I have found some good things in the church, but these two things must be cast out. You must purge the church of those who follow these two false doctrines."

^{Lord it over others} ^{NOTION} ~~III~~. THE FUTURE OF THIS CHURCH (Read 16-17)

We now hear Jesus saying in verse 16, "Repent, or else I will come upon you and will fight against you with the sword out of my mouth." Here we see Jesus coming to judge. He doesn't say that he is going to harm the faithful Christians, but only those who are not living as they should. What would happen today if Christ came upon ^{our} church with the sword of Judgment? How many would be cut off? ^{How many would} ~~Would you~~ be among those who ~~would~~ would suffer? Only you can answer that question, for only you know how you are living, only you know the secrets of your heart, only you know your motives and desires. There were two groups in the Pergamos Church which Christ would fight against - those who were mixed up with the world and indifference and those who wanted to Lord it over others. He would treat the same group in our church the same way today.

Then, fourth

In Vers 17

1) In ~~closing~~ Jesus makes two promises to those who overcome. First, he will give them to eat of the hidden manna. Manna was the food given to ~~the~~ Israel in the wilderness. The psalmist called it "angel's Food." This manna was a type of Christ. All that he is and means is hidden to the person who is not a Christian/. But to the **Christian** all the sweets and ~~the~~ joys of Christ will be ours to feed upon and enjoy.

2) Then ^{word} Jesus promised to give them a white stone. In ancient times this white ~~stone~~ meant acquittal. When a man was tried by the court, the jurors would lay down a white stone to signify that the man had been acquitted of a crime. So Jesus here was saying, "I am giving you the white stone to signify that all of your sins are gone. They have been forgiven. They have been cast into the deepest sea." Oh, the joy of that wonderful thought- our sins are all gone.

you know

~~Today this same~~ Christ calls upon us to repent of our sins. He promises every wonderful thing to those who live for him.

Are you living for Jesus? Or is indiffence to the things of the Spirit pulling you away from Christ and his church? *If not, then repent, and return to Jesus.*

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