

What Jesus Says To A Tolerant Church

Seven Letters To Seven Churches, part 4
Pastor Bob Johnson, September 29th, 2019

Jesus' Fourth Letter: Revelation 2:18-29

How Jesus is described:

- 'Son of God' refers to Jesus' ...
- 'piercing eyes' refers to Jesus' ...
- 'polished feet' refers to Jesus' ...

How the church is described:

- D _____
- D _____

How the church is challenged: Rev. 2:20

Insights for us today:

1. With progress, don't ...

(1 Cor. 10:12-13, Revelation 2:21, 1 Kings 16:31, 2 Kings 9:22)

Tolerate = getting comfortable with something that should be ...

2. Prosperity may be an expression of God's ...

(Romans 2:4, Galatians 6:7-8, Revelation 2:22-24, Matthew 18:6)

3. We are never so 'spiritual' to ...

(1 Corinthians 14:20, Matthew 10:16, 1 Corinthians 8:1-2)

4. Finishing well ...

(Revelation 2:25-29)

What is offered to overcomers:

- I _____ (Rev. 2:26-27, Psalm 2:6-9)
 - I _____ (Rev. 2:28)
- (Numbers 24:17, Luke 1:78, Revelation 22:16)

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This Week's Discussion Guide:

Welcome to week 4 of our Fall small group season at GPC. It is our prayer for our Sundays and small groups to provide the encouragement we all need to support each other as we desire to grow closer to God and build friendships in the coming weeks. This small group season will be for 7 weeks and wrap up the week of Sunday October 20th. In the weeks ahead, we will continue to discuss some insights from the first few chapters of the Book of Revelation where seven letters are written to seven different churches. These letters can provide insights in helping us grow closer to God and to each other and make a more positive impact with our lives in the world around us.

Getting Started:

Before we get started with some questions related to last Sunday's message, let's catch up a bit. What is something encouraging or not so encouraging that happened in the last few days that you can share. Let's take a little time to celebrate with one another and support one another.

This fourth letter was written to the church in Thyatira which was known as a manufacturing center of various things including wool, linen, leather work, pottery and bronze. If you opened up a business to produce and sell something, what would interest you?

We all started somewhere. What was your first job? What was the best part of that job? What did you buy for yourself with one of your first pay checks?

Bob told the story of Rulon Gardner who was the Olympic wrestler. After winning the gold against impossible odds, he lost an easier match because he 'dropped his guard'. We've all been there! When did overconfidence lead to a humbling experience for you?

After facing a set back due to being a bit careless and learning from it, when were you more careful which led you to accomplishing something you are proud of?

Jesus told the church in Thyatira that if they are faithful to the end, God will reward them with more authority and influence. Early on or more recently, where have you experienced more influence or responsibility because of your diligence and faithfulness for a period of time?

As we start our Bible study time, read again the letter to the Church in Thyatira. (Revelation 2:18-29)

From this passage and last week's message, what was helpful or encouraging to you? Was there a question that you thought of after listening to the message we can discuss together?

Digging Deeper:

In Revelation 2:18, Jesus is described as the "Son of God". This refers to His authority as God's Son who is able to confront the false teachers and negative influences affecting this church. Early in Jesus' ministry, he established his authority. Read Luke 4:16-21. What insights do you see from this passage? What responses do you think those who were there had in Nazareth where he grew up?

In Revelation 2:19, Jesus affirms the church with five specific encouragements. We all had some good moments this past week. Which of these qualities do you think Jesus could have said about you lately and why? Which one(s) would you have liked to have seen more of in the situations you experienced?

How can our group pray for you related to the need for one or more of these qualities or something else related to what you are experiencing?

In Revelation 2:20, Jesus confronts this church for being too tolerant with a certain woman who resembled Jezebel in the OT. She was a self-proclaimed prophetess (truth teller for God). From this letter, she obviously was a false teacher influencing others to make some poor decisions. As Christ followers, where are we to be tolerant and where are we to not be tolerant? (try and be specific) What are the two gutters related to tolerance that we need to avoid?

In each generation, including ours, there are talented people who do more harm than good. Even highly gifted people are not infallible intellectually or morally. Sadly, too many have used their charisma to draw people away from a godly lifestyle. Knowing this, it is important for us to stay on our guard and consistently test the claims of teachers and others with the clear teaching of God's Word.

Read Galatians 1:6-10 and 1 John 4:1-6.

What insights do you see from these two passages related to being careful with who we allow to influence us?

In Revelation 2:21, God gave this first century Jezebel time to repent and no longer spread confusion and carnality among the church in Thyatira. Sadly, she didn't heed the warnings and so we read God is about to bring judgment on her and the other leaders trained up by her. God's patience has limits and when it runs out, his judgement does not go unnoticed.

Read the following two passages related to God wanting his people to turn back to Him when they have an opportunity. In the book of Amos, God is calling his people to repent and turn back to Him. Their hearts were cold and compromised while their external actions looked so spiritual. Amos was sent to warn them before God chose to bring judgement.

Read Amos 5:18-24. What insights do you see from this passage?

Also read 1 Peter 3:8-12 and share any insights you have.

Jezebel was teaching that immorality was not a serious matter for Christ followers. (Revelation 2:20). The Bible has a lot to say about avoiding sexual immorality.

Why is sexual immorality so serious?

Read 1 Corinthians 6:18-20.

Also, read 1 Corinthians 10:12-13. What guardrails have you put in your life to protect yourself related to sexual sin?

Lastly, in Revelation 2:28, Jesus says he will give the morning star to the faithful. Jesus is described as the bright morning star in Revelation 22:16. A morning star appears just before dawn, when the night is coldest and darkest. When the world is at its bleakest point, Jesus can burst onto the scene, bringing light and hope.

How has Jesus brought light and hope in your life when you have needed him to lately?

Who do we know that can use some more light and hope in their lives that we can pray for?

Before we wrap up, let's share some prayer requests and pray for each other. We are better together!