

## Third in the sermon series “Church Are You Listening?”

### By: Pastor Timothy Corder

#### 1. Commission (2:12a).

“Pergamum” they were tolerating compromise in some of their members. Compromise is the cancer of the church.

#### 2. Character (2:12b).

In Rev 19:13 Christ is called the Word of God and then, in 19:15, we have the statement about the sword that proceeds out of His mouth and by which He will slay the wicked.

#### 3. Commendation (2:13). The exalted Christ knows three things about the church in Pergamum. First, Jesus knows that this church lives in Satan’s hometown.

Apparently, Pergamum was the center of idolatry.

The second area of Christ’s knowledge centered on the faithful witness of the Pergamum believers. Jesus says that they continued to “hold fast My name.” this is not to different form the rebuke of Jehoshaphat:

As we saw a couple of weeks ago following Christ it is essential to love what he loves and hate what the wisdom of God hates. Remember to the church of Eph. a commendation was that: 6 But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. Remember I emphasized what the word of God pointed to concerning the character of the God of his Word; I too hate the practices not the people.

The third area of Christ’s knowledge is their endurance under persecution. What an inspiration Antipas must have been to this church. He would not cower to the political correctness of his day and was executed for his faith. .” This is especially encouraging for these are the same terms used of Jesus in Rev 1:5. In dying a martyr’s death Antipas was indeed Christ-like Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. He receives the designation “My witness, My faithful one.” Please notice the emphasis is upon being “faithful” in our witness. We are all to be longing for the word of our Lord greeting us home “well done good and faithful servant”.

#### 4. Condemnation (2:14-15) sandwich.

Jesus says, “I have a few things against you.” This ought to send chills up our spine. It should grab us by the lapels and jerk us to attention. Jesus then goes on to say that the church has “some there 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.”

The story of Balaam is found in Num 22-25 and 31. Balaam was a Gentile who knew God. During the time of Israel’s wilderness wanderings, God’s chosen people defeated the Ammonites, and Moab looked surely to be the next to fall. When Balak the king of Moab received a report that the Israelites were advancing his way, he knew there was no way his army could defeat Israel. In desperation Balak called on Balaam for help. The Moabite king said, “I’ve got an assignment for you. I want you to curse these people. And I’ll make it worth your while.”

Balaam sold his gift. The story of Balaam is found in Num 22-25 and 31. He

tried to serve God and money. So it was then that he devised a plan to get God to curse them; by enticing them to sin. And also the practices of the Nic's. The church in Pergamum stands in stark contrast to the church in Ephesus. Our Lord could commend the saints at Ephesus because they hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans (2:6), while the church at Pergamum was willing to let it go on unchallenged. They probably tolerated impurity in the name of love. Does this sound familiar?

Many churches are making this tragic mistake today. They refuse to uphold the standards of God's Word. Rather, they believe that love, acceptance, and tolerance are more important than what God has declared. I love people. In my sinful flesh I would join these ranks. But the new man in me loves God's Word—it alone is truth! If that isn't motivation enough, remember: He wields a sharp two-edged sword!

5. Correction (2:16). Because of the acts of idolatry and immorality. Jesus calls the church of Pergamum to "repent."

Biblical repentance involves changing one's mind in a way that affects some change in the person. It is important to note that the call to repent is addressed to everyone in the church. We all bear responsibility for the sins of one or a few. There is more to our spiritual walk than individual standing with Christ, there is corporate standing; watchmen / prophets of the old testament were to be held responsible for the actions of rebellious individuals in the ranks of God's chosen people if they just walked circumspectly before the Lord but failed to tell others the error of their way. From the beginning we see this with Cain—"am I my brother's keeper" the answer to that was supposed to be YES!

Jesus follows up with an "or else" statement: "or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth." The church must deal with sin or else Jesus will, make no mistake Jesus is ready to rumble with them.

6. Challenge (2:17). "He who has an ear,

First, Jesus says, "To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna." Christ knows our situation every bit as well as He knew the Church of Pergamum's. He knows the things we are doing right and He knows the things we are doing wrong. He expects the church, and especially the leaders, to be on the offensive when it comes to the things He would condemn. Christ isn't happy and never satisfied with a blemished church but is seeking a pure church. We should never be satisfied either. He will also show us mercy, patience and grace. If we seek to be obedient to His Word as a church, Christ will also grant us repentance. Let's never settle for meat sacrificed to idols, which is an unholy substitute, when we can feast on the true manna from heaven... Jesus Christ.

The Gift of Hidden Manna

God promised manna to His people in the wilderness. Remember from our Bible reading in Exodus the manna from heaven? Rather than eating this manna, God's people were tricked by Balaam into eating meat sacrificed to idols. God says He has hidden manna. As the church, we must avoid this deadly error, the error of substituting false manna for the true manna.

John 6:30-35 (ESV)

So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? [31] Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is

written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' " [32] Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. [33] For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." [34] They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always."

[35] Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.