

Sermon-Based Study Guide

Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church

Revelation 2.18-28 | May 15, 2022

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1. Introduction to this Study

This week we engage the Letter to the Church in Thyatira, who excelled in love, faith, service and perseverance, but tolerated false teaching. Such heresy seemed justifiable in the context of everyday life in Thyatira. As a center of trade and commerce, Thyatira was home to a number of guilds (think “trade unions”). To succeed in business, then, you had to be a member.

In the 1990’s, American Express ran an ad campaign declaring “Membership has it’s privileges.” And there were certainly privileges in Thyatira, too. But there were also demands. For now, let’s just say that such demands were more than merely paying your dues. We could easily imagine someone thinking, “But, I’ve got to make money! How can I feed my family and pay my mortgage unless I…”

What an important question for us today!

1. Connecting with One Another

What religious pictures or statues adorn the walls of your house – or your mind?

1. Study the Text
2. Read **Revelation 2.18-28**.

What are some thoughts that immediately struck you in this passage/message?

What cultural influences distract you from your relationship with Christ?

1. What comes to mind in the description of the Risen Jesus in **verse 18**?

How do you interpret the portrayal of Jesus’ eyes and feet?

1. What comes to mind as you read the list of the Thyatiran’s deeds in **verse 19**?

Are there similar types of faithful witness taking place at Good Shepherd? If so, what are they?

Which of the qualities in verse 19 applied to you this past week: Your love? Your faith? Your service? Your Perseverance? Why?

1. The name “Jezebel” had a powerful connotation for this letter’s original hearers (check out, for instance, **1st Kings 16.29-33** and **1st Kings 18**). Ancient references to Jezebel “painting her face” may even imply that she was a prostitute. Most likely, the “Jezebel” in Thyatira was not specifically named as such, but rather, this name was used to reference the sins of idolatry and sexual immorality.

Has anyone or anything played the role similar to Jezebel in your life? How did you get free from that influence?

1. In **verse 20**, we read that “Jezebel” calls herself a “prophet.” Though perhaps it goes without saying, “Jezebel” was not criticized because she was a woman. She was criticized because of what she was teaching the church!

What are some ways we may be guilty of idolatry even if not we’re not literally bowing down to idols?

1. There is often a connection in the Bible between idolatry and immorality. Why do you think that is?
2. Note **verse 24**, where Jesus engages the “rest of you” who haven’t learned the “deep secrets” of Gnosticism. One author explains: “Gnostics declared that to be real Christian men must know far more than the simple truths of the gospel, that a special secret knowledge was needed, and thy claimed to be able to supply it. They tried to make Christianity into an elaborate philosophy…

They claimed to be able to provide men with the really deep things of God. It is as if the Risen Christ was saying: ‘These men who claim that the gospel needs to be developed and filled out with their ideas and their speculative intellectualism are not really teaching you the deep things of God; they are in fact teaching you the ‘deep things of Satan.’”

Are there corollaries to this Gnostic idea in the Church or wider society today?

What do you do to help you stay on course spiritually?

1. What are some challenges we face as we seek to stay on course in an increasingly pagan society when the pressure is on to digress from God’s clear Word?
2. Taken literally, the treatment of Jezebel and her followers sounds pretty severe.

How should this impact how we think about sin of any kind in the church or in our own lives?

1. Pray
2. Pray for the ministry of Good Shepherd church – that we would truly hear and faithfully follow the voice of Jesus, the Son of God, in a rapidly changing culture.
3. Lift up all those who have been disconnected from gathering in Christian fellowship over the past two years – that God would draw them back into church and that the Spirit would prepare our hearts to welcome them.