



## Sermon Series Notes

### “Sexual Sin In The Church” (Revelation 2:12-17)

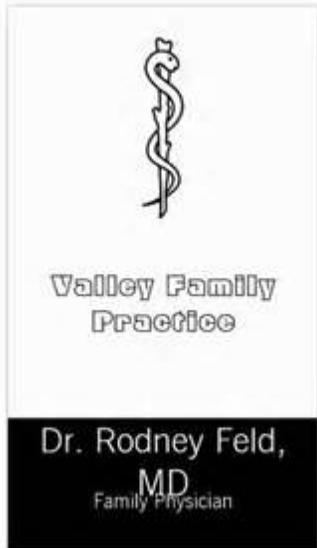
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Chapter one was the preparation for purging. One must have a fresh vision of Jesus Christ if they are going to prepare themselves for His soon return. Chapters two and three are the letters to the seven churches, with messages in each for the purpose of purging, purifying, & exhorting any church, anywhere, anytime.

The message to Ephesus commended them for their hard work, perseverance, doctrinal soundness. But they were rebuked because they had left their first love. They were not as personally passionate about Jesus Christ as they once had been. As a result, their relationships with one another were not as loving, intimate as at first. They are told to repent and to do those things they did at first (Acts 2:42).

There was no rebuke for the church of Smyrna. They are the suffering church, and from them we learned the positive side of suffering in the will of God.

Now we come to the church in Pergamum. A variety of gods were worshipped in ancient Pergamum. The four main ones were Zeus, Athena, Dionysus, & Asclepius. Asclepius was the god of healing. People would come from far and wide to seek healing in Pergamum. Galen, second only to Hippocrates in medical history, was born in Pergamum. Many looked to Asclepius as their “savior.” As a matter of fact, the most common title for Asclepius was Asclepius Soter, which means “Asclepius the Savior.” Interestingly, the emblem of Asclepius was the serpent.



Along with these gods, the Roman emperors were also worshipped. I mentioned in the message to the church of Smyrna that a temple dedicated to Tiberius Caesar was built there in 23 B.C. Six years before this the first temple to emperor worship was built in Pergamum by Augustus Caesar.

Read 2:12; Right away we know that Jesus is going to have some cutting things to say to this church! The word for sword here is “rhomphaia,” the long sword associated with authority and judgment.

v.13a Satan sets up his throne in places where they will allow him control, dominion. Pergamum was one of those places. Can you imagine living in a city where “Satan has his throne?”

v.13b The Commendation for Pergamum: Remaining faithful to the name of Jesus in a place where there is much satanic influence, a place where one may lose their life for their faith.

vv.14-16 The rebuke for this church: People who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans; Nico means “to have the upper hand,” to domineer. Laitans seem to be the “laity” of the church. So this seems to have been the domineering of church leaders over the congregation. Some believe the teaching of the Nicolaitans has to do with a moral laxness in the church. The second part of the rebuke is to people who hold to the teaching of Balaam, and this teaching is specifically stated – “who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality.”

Now before we look at this in greater detail, let me make a helpful point. Paul the apostle made it clear that simply eating food that had been sacrificed to an idol is not sin (see I Cor.8:4-13). So there is something more here than simply eating food that had been sacrificed to an idol. Paul helps us understand this in I Cor.10:14-22. In case you didn’t get it, there is a difference between simply eating meat that has been offered to an idol, and associating with those who offer meat to idols. This is the case in the teaching of Balaam.

See Numbers 22:12-14. Balaam makes an initial commitment to obey God’s Word. But watch what happens next; 22:15-19. Balak entices Balaam, and now Balaam wants to hear God say something different. See 22:20; Did God change his mind? Of course not. If we are determined to associate with those God has told us to stay away from, God will let us, in hopes of teaching us a lesson. Summarize 22:21-32. Balaam has a thy will my will attitude. He is a double minded man. Interestingly, Balaam confesses his sin

(22:34). Not only that, he prophesies (23:5, 16; 24:9b). But don't let Balaam's prophesying fool you. What he says with his mouth is not what is in his heart. When we read the full biblical account of Balaam, we see the clear plain truth about him. See II Peter 2:15; Jude 11.

Look what happens right after Balaam finishes prophesying (see Num.25:1-3). I wonder how these women were dressed. Ladies, don't be used by the enemy to entice men into sexual sin (See I Tim.2:9a).

The account in Numbers does not tell us, but Revelation does. It was Balaam that was behind the seducing of these Israelites. And please note the way they were seduced. These men did not simply go hop in bed with Moabite women. The first step was accepting an invitation "to the sacrifices of their gods." It was not the eating of food offered to idols, but association with those offering food to idols. With that said, food was involved in luring these men. "The way to a man's heart is through his stomach." Phil.3:18-19 ...many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach...Satan used food to tempt man in the Garden of Eden.

What was Balaam's first mistake that put him on a reckless path? God had said, "Do not go with them." And what did Balaam do? He went with them.

I Cor.15: 33 Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character."

So what was happening in the church at Pergamum? Some Christians had developed some ungodly associations (relationships), and those relationships had led them into committing sexual immorality. Repentance for this church would mean not only ceasing from sexual sin, but continued victory would mean no longer associating with those who were enticing them to sin. No more happy hour with work associates, not accepting the invitation to that party where you know you will be tempted; ending the relationship with him/her.

And for those who would repent, see Rev.2:17

- Hidden manna
  - God had Moses put some manna in a jar and place it in the ark. Manna of course represents Jesus Christ, the True Bread that came down from heaven.
  - Heavenly food that the world has no access to; Speaks of eternal satisfaction verses temporary satisfaction.
  - I John 2: 17 The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.
  - Physical satisfaction is never enough; see King's Cross, chapter 3
- White stone with a new name
  - Access; Stone called a "tessera" which served as an invitation and means of admission into a banquet. See Rev.3:20.
  - Innocence; In some ancient courts judges had little white and black stones, and when the case was finished, they would walk by an urn and drop one stone into it. Black was for condemnation, and white was for acquittal. This is where the phrase "black balled" comes from.
  - New status; Abram to Abraham, Jacob to Israel, Simon to Peter
  - Intimacy; Nicknames

1. Realize the seriousness of sexual sin
  - Why it is wrong (Eph.5:31-32; II Cor.11:2; I Cor.6:13b); Sex is the most intimate act two people can experience together; Sex is holy when enjoyed in the marriage relationship (Hebrews 13:4a).
  - Those who sin sexually are rejecting the Lord I (Thess.4:1-8; Gen.39:9b; Psalm 51:4).
  - Sin against your own body (I Cor.6:18-20); I got some fresh insight from the Lord on the meaning of this (I Cor.6:17; Eph.5:31b)
  - Sin that God promises to judge (Heb.13:4b)
2. Flee (Genesis 39:1-12; I Cor.6:18)
3. Develop and maintain self-control (I Thess.4:4; II Peter 1:6; Psalm 101:3).
4. Develop and maintain godly relationships (I Cor.15:3; I Tim.5:1b-2).
5. Renew your mind (Rom.12:1-2; Col.3:1-4; Phil.4:8)

## CONCLUSION

- 24,000 men died after committing sexual immorality with Moabite women. And while God does not literally strike dead everyone who commits sexual sin, each one who does experiences spiritual death that prevents intimacy with Christ, and never satisfies one's soul.
- Sexual temptation is perhaps the greatest temptation to resist, because it is so powerful. And it is a God-given desire. It was sexual temptation that brought down David, a man after God's own heart. It was one of the main failures of Samson, a man used so powerfully used by the Lord. And if I do not keep my guard up, sexual temptation could destroy me...or you.
- Proverbs 7:24-27 Now then, my sons, listen to me; pay attention to what I say. Do not let your heart turn to her ways or stray into her paths. Many are the victims she has brought down; her slain are a mighty throng. Her house is a highway to the grave, leading down to the chambers of death.