



Sermon Series Notes

“The Consequences of Sin” (Rev.2:18-29)

Danny Hodges – NT3595

Intro: It could be that some of us are anxiously awaiting our study to move beyond these seven letters to seven churches, because we long to get into the prophecies of the end times. But let's not forget that the messages contained in these seven letters are for the purpose of preparing us for Jesus' soon coming. So even though we may be looking forward to studying the prophecies contained in this wonderful book, let's be sure to listen carefully to the messages to these seven churches, so that when He returns, we will be ready for Him.

Background on Thyatira: Other than the message to the church of Thyatira, the other most biblical thing it is noted for is that a businesswoman from Thyatira named Lydia was led to Christ in Philippi by the apostle Paul (Acts 16). Lydia was a dealer in purple cloth. The dye for this cloth was produced in Thyatira. Lydia would more than likely have been a part of one of the many trade guilds in Thyatira. They were kind of like professional fraternities, or ancient trade unions. These guilds would periodically host feasts, and at these feasts offer food sacrificed to one of the local gods. Acts 16 tells us that Lydia was “a worshipper of God.” Because she had sought to worship God, God gave her greater revelation of Himself through the Apostle Paul. Now Lydia was a Christian. Life back in Thyatira, especially as a businesswoman, would take on fresh challenges. She would have become a part of the church in Thyatira, and she likely heard the message we are about to read.

Read the text.

v.18; Penetrating scrutiny (Heb.4:13), Divine judge

v.24 Jezebel's teaching seems to have involved “Satan's so called deep secrets.” Whatever that means, it suggests spiritual knowledge others did not possess, and along with that spiritual pride, an immoral and self-indulgent lifestyle.

Commendation

Both the church of Pergamum and the church of Thyatira had tremendous words of commendation from Jesus. See 2:13, note again 2:19. But even though both received very encouraging words of commendation, they also both received words of rebuke. And the rebuke for both involved the same sins – eating food sacrificed to idols, and sexual immorality. Now we learned last week that simply eating food sacrificed to an idol is not sin. No, it is association with those eating food sacrificed to idols. See Num.25:1-3. It was Balaam in the church of Pergamum. It is Jezebel in the church of Thyatira. What's the difference? Balaam is a man, and Jezebel is a woman. Let that sink in. Sometimes it's a man leading the way to sexual immorality, and sometimes it's a woman.

In almost every local church there are people you should associate with, and there are those you should not associate with.

- I Cor.11:19 No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval.
- I Cor.15:33 Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character

Right after I became a Christian I went to what is now Liberty University. When I arrived I assumed that everyone there was a Christian, and that every Christian there was committed to Christ. Boy was I in for a surprise! All incoming freshmen had to take a class called Christian Life, taught by a man named Sumner Wemp. He was full of life and zeal for the Lord, and I was encouraged by his enthusiasm for Christ. One of the things we had to do for this class was memorize Scripture. I'll never forget the first test we took on Scripture we had memorized. The class met in the sanctuary of Thomas Road Baptist church, and there were several hundred people in the class. Dr. Wemp told us to take out a sheet of paper, put our names on the top right hand corner, then with our Bibles closed right out our memory verses. I couldn't help but notice some students around me with their Bibles open. I couldn't believe what I was seeing – people cheating on a Christian life test!

Later during that first semester, two students came back to the dorm completely drunk. My dorm was a Ramada Inn Motel, so there was no security guard or gate. From the second floor balcony where my dorm room was I watched these guys get out of their car and stagger to their rooms.

I was really shocked to learn that some students had gotten kicked out of school because they were caught committing sexual immorality.

Then there was the time when an evangelist came to Liberty (I believe it was James Robison). A number of students received Christ as their Savior. One was a guy named Karl Hess, a well-known basketball player for Liberty. I'll never forget Karl getting up in chapel

and telling everyone what a phony he had been. His own parents thought he was a Christian, when in reality he was a really good hypocrite.

Then I was really shaken when one day I went to my school mailbox and opened a letter from my mother. She informed me that my youth pastor back home had been fired as a result of several sexual affairs with young women in the youth group, as well as at least one woman in the church. Mike Cassidy was a classic youth pastor, funny, full of life, & a great communicator. But sexual sin ruined his ministry and his marriage, had very negative effects on a church youth group, as well as the church itself. It was devastating.

So I learned early on that there are some people in Christian school I should not hang out with, and some people in the church I should not hang out with. And I learned that some people in the church are outright hypocrites. I did not want to be a hypocrite.

The church of Pergamum “tolerated” this sin. It should have been confronted and dealt with. But to confront the spirit of Jezebel in the church takes courage.

Jezebel was the queen of Israel, married to King Ahab. Here’s what the Bible says about Ahab:

I Kings 21:25 There was never a man like Ahab, who sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the Lord, urged on by Jezebel his wife.

The context of I Kings 21:25 is the story of Jezebel coming home to find her husband sulking because he could not acquire a man named Naboth’s vineyard. So Jezebel devised a wicked plan to have Naboth killed. After having him killed, she told her husband the vineyard was his.

Jezebel was responsible for the deaths of many of the Lord’s prophets. A godly man named Obadiah hid a hundred prophets in two caves to save them from Jezebel. She killed the Lord’s prophets, and she provided for false prophets. I Kings 18:19 tells us that four hundred prophets of Asherah ate at her table. The worship of Asherah involved regular participation in sexual immorality.

Jezebel was a woman to be reckoned with. Even the great prophet Elijah ran for his life when threatened by Jezebel (I Kings 19).

Last week we looked at the story of the men of Israel being seduced by the Moabite women, and of course it was Balaam who devised this plan. But have you ever read the rest of the story? See Numbers 25:5-13. I know this is Old Testament, and may seem extreme,

but it tells us how serious sin is, and how serious we should be in dealing with it. See I Cor.5.

The goal of the kind of discipline mentioned in I Cor.5 is “that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.”

Question: What if those confronted about their sin choose to not repent? That’s the exact situation in the church of Pergamum. The Lord says “I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling.”

The consequences:

- A **bed** of suffering; God would now turn the bed of immorality into a bed of suffering.
- Dead children (David & Bathsheeba’s child)

Note carefully with me the end of verse 22 in our text (saw at 8:59 a.m. Saturday) The time to judge Jezebel had come, and those being led astray by her would be judged as well, unless they repent of **her** ways. This ties in with what the Lord says in verse 23. The judgment of Jezebel would be an example to others of the consequences of sin that has been confronted in someone’s life but they are unwilling to repent of.

This is not the only time in the Bible we have an example of the consequences sin as a result of an unwillingness to repent.

Before we look at a few examples, let’s remember what John says in I John 5:16-17 (Turn and read).

- Nadab and Abihu (Lev.10:1-3ff),
- Balaam (Num.31:8; Joshua 13:22)
- Jezebel (I Kings 21:23; II Kings 9:30-37)
- Ahab (I Kings 22:34, 37-38)
- Samson (Judges 15:20; 16:31)
- Ananias & Sapphira (Acts 5)

How much time was the Jezebel of Pergamum given to repent? How much time would those who followed her ways be given?

I Thess.4:6b; Hebrews 13:4; I Cor.10:6-13; I Cor.11:30-32

Prov.29:1 A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed – without remedy.

An Exhortation – Hold on to what you have until I come (v.19)

A Promise for the Overcomer

- Authority over the nations (Psalm 2:9; Rev.20:6)
- The morning star Not a newspaper; The morning star is the first one out after the night has been the darkest. In Roman times Venus (the morning star) was the symbol of victory and sovereignty. See II Peter 1:19; Rev.22:16.

Sexual temptation is perhaps the greatest temptation to resist, because it is so powerful. And it is a God-given desire. It was sexual sin 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 by the Lord. It was sexual sin that brought down some at the Christian college I attended. It was sexual sin that ruined my youth pastor's ministry and marriage. And it was sexual sin that brought down Pastor Bob Coy. If do not keep my guard up, sexual sin 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.

Practical Points In Overcoming Sexual Sin

1. If you are involved in it, repent
2. 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)

3. Flee (Genesis 39:1-12; I Cor.6:18)

4. Develop and maintain self-control (I Thess.4:4; II Peter 1:6; Psalm 101:3).
5. Develop and maintain godly relationships (I Cor.15:3; I Tim.5:1b-2).
6. Renew your mind (Rom.12:1-2; Col.3:1-4; Phil.4:8)

CONCLUSION

- A very important question in closing: Were those being judged in the church of Thyatira Christians? For me, it's not completely clear. I'm pretty certain the Jezebel of I & II Kings was not "saved." And I'm doubtful that the Jezebel in the church of Pergamum knew the Lord.
- II Tim.2:19 says the Lord knows who are his. And Jesus said "My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me." So the Lord knows who are his, and we know if we are his. Be assured of this, the consequences of sin in this life for those who are not saved does not compare with the eternal consequences of sin for those who have never trusted Christ as Savior and Lord.
- See Matthew 25:31-46
- Heb.10: 26 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, 27 but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.