

Pergamos ~ Elevated for all the wrong reasons - Revelation 2:12-17

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[0 : 0 0] All right, so remember Ephesus, that was our church that was all about duty, but had lost their desire and their devotion, and they needed to do those first works again to repent.

Smyrna was the church that had no, um, oh, what's the word? They had no, um, they weren't chastised. There was nothing negative said about them. They were a church under persecution, and they were told pretty much just to hold on, and that the one who overcame death, that they would overcome through him as well. And now we come to Pergamos.

The name Pergamos means elevated, or it can also have the idea of marriage, and so Pergamos is a church that was elevated for all the wrong reasons. You know, a church called elevated.

I didn't make this up. Very interesting. Anyway, as we go through the word, we'll see what the word has to say about that. Um, our theme verse kind of for tonight is in James. We've looked at this verse a few times as we've gone through either Revelation or an Exodus. It applies. James chapter 4, verses 4 through 6. You adulterers and adulteresses, know you not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God. I mean, you can't be with friends with anyone who's not a believer. No, but when you are seeking the companionship and friendship of the world, well, the fact that you have essentially defrauded the Lord of what was his, you're now giving to the world. That's why he says adulterers and adulteresses. Whoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Do you think that the scripture says in vain that the spirit dwells in us? I'm sorry, the spirit that dwells in us desires jealousy or jealously. I spelled that wrong. Nope, jealously. I was right. The idea being that the

Holy Spirit within us is very jealous of us. Not that we have a spirit of jealousy, but the Holy Spirit within us, don't you think it's in vain that the scripture tells us that the Holy Spirit is very jealous for us. But he gives more grace. Thank the Lord. Wherefore he saith, God resists the proud, but gives grace unto the humble. And I think the idea there is when you have friendship of the world is you're not going to be acting in humility. Humility submits to the Lord. Pride seeks friendship and commendation of the world. So let's pick up in verse 12 here and figure out what is going on in Pergamos.

[2 : 3 6] And to the angel of the church in Pergamos, write. Again, this is who's saying this? Jesus, right? He's given us the outline for the book back in the end of chapter one. It says, write those things which you have seen, which are, and which shall be. We're still in that section of those things which are.

The church age, that which is. We have not yet gotten into what shall be. That starts in chapter four. And what you have seen, he's already seen the image of Jesus, the vision of Jesus. So that's what he's seen. This is Jesus saying to the messenger of the church in Pergamos, write, these things saith he, which has the sharp sword with two edges. And if I, if you had your sheet, you know, we go through, you have those, those seven things of the name of the church, Pergamos, the description of Christ. You can have a commendation for the church. You can have the concern that Jesus has for the church, and then exhortation to them of what to do going forward.

And then a promise to the overcomer, and then a closing. So here we have the name, and then we have, as Jesus is being portrayed, the description. And it's these things saith he, which has a sharp sword with two edges. Remember that sword? That was the one that was the heavy over the shoulder sword, and it was meant for destroying your enemies, and for cutting. Not the, it's not the small sword that was used, that's described in like in Hebrews, where Hebrews four, where it says the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. They're both describing God's word, different aspects of it. So Pergamos means height or elevation. It's a combination of Greek words, pergos and gamos, which can either mean citadel, or it can also mean united, like a unity, united by marriage. And you see here, Pergamos is a church that's unified, unfortunately, with aspects of the world. So the city was especially known as a center for the worship of a deity known as, I'm going to kill this name, Ascleopius, represented by a serpent. Ascleopius was the god of healing and knowledge.

There was a medical school at his temple in Pergamos. Because of the famous temple to the Roman god of healing, sick and diseased people from all over the Roman empire flocked to Pergamos for relief. Pergamos was kind of the religious capital of Rome. They had, here's their, a recreation of their famous altar. This is in Germany, I think, in a museum. You'd go up those steps, and then inside there would be an altar, this massive altar to their gods. They had so many temples and so many gods that they worshipped. But they had this one, this, what was his name again? Ascleopius.

And this was his symbol. Maybe you've seen that before. The symbol of a serpent on a pole, which is still used today, representing medicine, which goes all the way back to what serpent on a pole?

[5 : 27] Remember? In Numbers, when Moses, the serpents infiltrate the camp as judgment upon the Israelites, and then Moses cries out to the Lord, and he says, hey, make a brass serpent and put it on a pole, and whoever looks to it will be healed. That serpent, that brass serpent, lasted all the way to Hezekiah, and at that time they were worshipping it. Hezekiah broke it up and ground it to powder and called it nehushtan, a thing of brass. But at that time it was a relic years later, generations later, when Hezekiah was king. And here you have a counterfeit, a mimic. The enemy seeks to mimic the truth, he has to, because the lie is unbelievable. He can't just float a lie. The lie has to have some truth with it, or nobody's going to believe it. Who's going to just believe a lie? So he puts some truth with it, and that's why he tries to mimic. Sufferers who went to this temple to get healing, they were allowed to spend the night in the darkness of the temple. And in the temple there were tame snakes. In the night the sufferer might be touched by one of these tame, harmless snakes that glided over it. And the touch of the snake was held to be the touch of the god himself.

And it was believed it would bring health and healing. So if you were sick, you weren't getting better, go lay in the dark with a bunch of snakes. Who's going to... When you reject the truth, any lie will do. But that lie is mixed with a little bit of truth, right? Well, at one time, this meant something. It meant healing. And then the enemy carries it into something to deceive people.

Pergamos was a very tolerant and welcoming church, but it was one without restraint. Tolerance means to allow to be done without prohibition or hindrance by not preventing, not to restrain. So to allow something to be done without any prohibition or hindrance by not preventing, not to restrain. Pergamos was a church that was very tolerant. If you went into that church, you would think, this is such... This is a welcoming church. I mean, this church is a happening place.

Everybody's welcome here. Everybody's tolerated. Man, they love everybody. But Jesus describes himself here, and he says, These things saith he which has a sharp sword with two edges.

Very specifically wants us to know about this sharp sword with two edges. Sharp, that word sharp means like quick, quick and powerful. Two edges means to divide, right? Two edges.

[8 : 00] It also has the meaning two mouths of a river. I thought that was kind of cool. Two mouths of a river. Two different directions. Two different flows that it divided. Hebrews 4.12 tells us the word of God is quick and powerful. It says it's sharper than any two-edged sword.

It pierces even to the dividing of sunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. God's word divides. Now, it's an interesting thing with something that divides that thinly, right? This is thinner than any razor blade.

I mean, the discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart, joint and marrow, how do you slice between a thought and an intent? I don't know, but God's word does. God's word discerns between that.

It's very interesting. At the point of division, it's hard to see the division. It's hard to really accept like, I don't know. It's so unified still.

As that river is going to part, those two mouths go in their different directions. Well, at the moment of parting, it all still seems not that big of a deal. I can't really see the division that well.

[9 : 10] But from the text here in Revelation, what do we see about God's word? God's word is spoken by who? Jesus. Jesus is the one saying this.

He's saying this to John, to give to the messenger, to give to the church. But it's Jesus himself saying this. We see that God's word, it protects the church. God's word is a sword. It's a sword that divides.

It's a protection. God's word exposes faults and shows the truth, right? As it divides, oh, I now know that's false. I now know that's true. It affirms what's true and it commends the faithful, as we're going to see here.

God's word never allows us to continue as we were. It demands division. So where Jesus says, hey, this is the one who says, these things say is he which has a sharp sword with two edges.

God's word demands division. Jesus said in Matthew 10, 34, think not that I'm come to send peace on the earth. That's not the purpose. Not to bring peace to the earth, but to bring peace to who?

[10 : 16] To the people of the earth. Not to bring peace to the earth. I am not come to send peace, but a sword. God's word always divides along the lines of eternity.

Along the lines of that which is eternal and that which is temporal. That which is true, that which is a lie. But it always demands division. You can never just, oh, well, well, we'll just tolerate that.

We don't need to divide. And Jesus says, I know your works and where you dwell. To dwell means to settle down, to abide, to live there. I know where you dwell.

Even where Satan's seat is. Well, then I would get up and move into a different seat. Before we look at what Satan's seat is, that tells us something about Satan though, right?

If Satan has a seat, that means Satan is limited. Satan is localized, right? Satan is not omnipotent, omnipresent.

[11 : 15] He has limits. He is a created being. And they are dwelling where Satan's seat is. And that you hold fast my name and have not denied my faith.

Jesus knows where we live. And Jesus knows where we work. Because he's there too. Jesus is there. He says, man, you're dwelling in Satan's seat. I know where you live. It's right in the enemy's living room.

But he doesn't leave us alone. He's there too. Pergamos was a church that dwelt in the midst of the enemy. Satan's seat. That would be that Asclepios, whatever that guy's name, that God is.

Asclepios Soter. Soter in the Greek is Savior. And that's what they would call him. That God would be their Savior God. The one who saved them. The one that healed them. And it's just a cheap copy of the enemy, isn't it?

Bunch of snakes, right? The enemy's copies doesn't have a leg to stand on, doesn't it? Snakes. No leg to stand on. Yeah. But those jokes go over better on Sunday mornings.

[12 : 19] I don't think they go over better than either. Anyway. And you have not denied my faith, even in those days where Antipas was my faithful martyr who was slain among you, where Satan dwells.

So Jesus says again, I know your works. I know where you dwell. And he says, and what are those works? You've held fast to my name and you've not denied my faith. The commendation is hold fast and do not deny.

To hold fast is to possess, to have in hand. Because you've held fast to my name. You've possessed my name. You've held on to that. Despite all their tolerance.

Despite what we're going to see they are tolerating. And despite the fact that they are a church that dwells in the midst of the enemy. He says, man, you've held on to my name.

Good job. You've owned that. You've possessed that. And you've not denied my faith. That means to disown. You haven't disowned my faith.

[13 : 17] Even when it was costing your lives. You didn't deny me. Galatians 2.20 says, I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live, yet not I.

But Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God. Who loved me and gave himself for me. It's not even our faith.

It's his. You've not denied my faith. Don't set it aside. It's a precious thing. And he gives it so freely. And we don't have to rely on ourselves to work it up.

And he says about this unknown person. He says, you've not denied my faith. You've held fast to my name. Even in those days where an Antipas was my faithful martyr.

That word faithful martyr. It's faithful witness. We've already seen that in Revelation chapter 1 verse 5. Where it says, and from Jesus Christ who is the faithful witness. That's that same word.

[14 : 13] Faithful martyr. An Antipas' name. I've read different things what Antipas means. But the definition I like is it means like the Father. So just as Jesus was a faithful witness.

Jesus the image of his Father. And here you have Antipas as well who was faithful. Who was this guy? I have no idea. And nobody does. He was unknown to us.

But he was known to God. He was known to God. God said, this man held fast. He didn't deny. Even in the days of my faithful witness.

The church held on. I don't know who he is. But God does. God knows every martyr. God knows every faithful witness. No sacrifice goes unnoticed to God.

So the church of God is able to survive and thrive right under the enemy's nose. And that must drive him crazy. I think it drives him. I know it drives him crazy.

[15 : 08] Here we are surviving and thriving right here. You know, I think he probably thought, finally, I got that location shut down. It's going to be a parking lot or a car lot.

Oh, and then here comes a church that's a group of people willing to be led by the Spirit and stick to God's Word. He's like, oh. And what can he do? He's got a bunch of cheap counterfeits, right?

The church is able to survive and thrive right under the enemy's nose. And Jesus answered and said unto him, blessed are you, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood is not revealed unto you, but my Father which is in heaven.

And I say also unto you, you are Peter, Petros, a little rock, a little pebble. And upon this rock, the truth that Jesus is the Son of God, I will build my church.

And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Not only will the gates of hell not prevail against the church, the gates of hell can't keep the church out to where church is dwelling, where Satan's seat is.

[16 : 12] You see, the presence of the church is a constant reminder that the enemy is powerless. And we said that he's localized, he's limited, he's powerless.

The church, us puny people, we don't have anything apart from the Lord. It's a constant reminder to the enemy that he is completely powerless. There's so many people that, in a sense, are waiting for something magical, like to touch them and change their lives.

There's people who lay in that temple in the dark and the serpents crawl over them, hoping for something, but the enemy is just completely powerless. And so many people are empty and broken and realize that.

When they get to a point, they realize there's nothing this world has to offer. There's nothing else out there. There's a point of despair and hopelessness. And unfortunately, at this time of year, for us, it's a joyous time of year.

For many other people, it just shines a light on the fact that this world has left them empty. But it gives us an opportunity to go out there and tell people, hey, the enemy is powerless.

[17 : 20] Don't look for the serpent to touch you. Look to Jesus. Look to the one upon the cross. Not the one who's crawling around in the dark, but the one who's held up as a light for all.

So Jesus says, good job, guys. That's your commendation. You've held on. You're in the enemy's presence. You're thriving. And then he says, but I have a few things against you.

Right? You did a good job. But, oh boy. You know, the Lord is so gracious. That word there, I have a few things against you. That word, few things in the Greek, means small in intensity, in number, in sight.

The Lord's like, they're literally nothing. But when you reread these, these are huge. They're like false teachers and immorality in the church and like bishops and priests lording it over people.

And the Lord's like, this is nothing for me. It's so small. How could he say that? Because we're eventually going to read where he just says, hey, repent. Just turn. Just turn.

[18 : 23] Let the word divide. Let the word make that cut and divide. You repent. Turn away from that. Let it divide away. It's nothing. It's a few small things. These are not big things.

I have a few things against you. Because you have here them that hold the doctrine of Balaam. Hold means to hold on to with power and authority.

So this doctrine of Balaam, this teaching of Balaam is held to with power and authority. It's an authority in the church. It's driving the church and giving direction to the church.

Balaam, his name means destroyer of the people. I also read one guy who said in the Greek, it means perhaps. I like that too. Well, perhaps. Eh. Is this a good idea?

Yeah, perhaps this will work. You know. Perhaps. Hold the doctrine of Balaam who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block. Balak means devastator. Before the children of Israel.

[19 : 24] To eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication. So, who is Balaam? Anybody remember who Balaam is? What is noteworthy about, one of the noteworthy things about Balaam?

Mm-hmm. Yep, the donkey. He's the one that donkey spoke to him. He's beating the donkey. And the donkey's like, why are you beating me? I've always obeyed you. And then he talks back to him.

Well, it's because. But in Numbers 22, you can turn there or you can read along with me if you squint. Well, we're just going to look real quick just to give us a little background to Balaam so we understand.

And the children of Israel set forward and pitched in the plain of Moab on this side Jordan by Jericho. They've not crossed the Jordan River yet. They're still on the east side. And that's where Moab's over there. And Balak, the son of Zippor, saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites.

And Moab was sore afraid of the people because they were many. And Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel. And Moab said unto the elders of Midian, Now shall this company lick up all that is round about us as the ox licks up the grass of the field.

[20 : 32] And Balak, the son of Zippor, was the king of the Moabites at that time. Remember his name meant... What did his name mean? Just devastator.

Devastating king. He sent messengers therefore unto Balaam, the son of Beor, to Pithor, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people.

Come out from Egypt. Behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me. Come now, therefore, I pray you. Curse me, this people. For they are too mighty for me. Peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land.

For I know that he whom thou bless is blessed, and he whom thou curses is cursed. So Balaam has some type of reputation that it seems that whoever he places his magic spell upon is either cursed or blessed.

There's some type of validity here that seems to be, you know, hey, even a broken clock is right twice a day, right? And God said unto Balaam, thou shalt not go with them.

[21 : 41] Thou shalt not curse the people, for they are blessed. But Balaam wanted the money bad that Balak was willing to pay him. Balak kept upping the price. If you just come, and eventually God says, fine, go.

Go. But you only speak what I tell you to speak. And Balaam's like, okay, good deal. Let's go do that. And that's where, on the way then, the angel of the Lord is in the way to kill Balaam.

And then the donkey turns out of the way, and then he goes into a different path, and he's there. And he eventually gets in a narrow path between two walls, and it says it crushes Balaam's leg against the wall. And Balaam jumps off and starts beating the donkey, and then the Lord opens the donkey's mouth to speak to Balaam.

And even then, he keeps going. He doesn't turn back. And then he gets there, and Balak makes a bunch of altars. They go way up high on a hill, and then he sees Israel, and he sees them spread out before him, and they make like four different altars and sacrifice.

And then Balaam begins to prophesy. And he took up his parable, and he said, Balak the king of Moab has brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me, Jacob, and come, defy Israel.

[22 : 50] How shall I curse whom God has not cursed? Or how shall I defy whom the Lord has not defied? For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him. Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.

Who can count the dust of Jacob and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his. And Balak said unto Balaam, No, no, no, no!

What have you done unto me? I took you to curse my enemies, and behold, you've blessed them. And you already cashed the check. And he answered and said, Must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord has put in my mouth?

And Balak said unto him, O come, I pray thee, with me to another place from whence you may see them. And there you shall see but the uttermost part of them, the backside of them.

And shall not see them all. Curse me then from thence. Then he tries again, and the same thing happens again and again. But eventually, Balaam says, as he's about to go back home, he says, Listen, this is how you take care of God's people.

[23 : 52] Numbers 25, jumping way ahead in Numbers, says, And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods.

And the people did eat and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baal Peor. The anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. As Balaam says to Balak, Hey, get all the girls dressed up, bring them down in there with their false gods, and get them to sin against the Lord.

God's not going to wipe out his people. But God will chastise his people. In Numbers 31, jumping further, Moses is having an issue because they're bringing in Midianite women into the camp.

And Moses was wroth with the officers of the host, with the captains over thousands and over hundreds, which came from the battle, because they kept them alive. And Moses said, Have you saved all the women alive? In other words, not just they didn't kill them, but they brought them home.

Behold, these caused the children of Israel through the counsel of Balaam to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor. And there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord at that time.

[25 : 02] So, back in Revelation, tells us there, faithful, where are we?

But I have a few things against you, because you have there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Israel to sin by casting a stumbling block before them.

And what were the two things they did? They ate things sacrificed to idols, and they committed fornication. Those two things. The danger of tolerating false teaching leads to immorality and idolatry.

It's taught as an authority. It's held to be just an alternate lifestyle. Because the teaching of Balaam was that we can accept immorality and idolatry into the church.

God's people can still be God's people and have idolatry and immorality. And it's given the same place as God's word. He says, you have there them that teach the doctrine.

[26 : 08] They hold to the teachings, the doctrines of Balaam. What was Balaam's teaching? Well, in Numbers 22, we saw what it was, but there's three other times in Scripture, well, two other times, other than here in Revelation, that it talks about Balaam.

There's the way of Balaam, the error of Balaam, and the doctrine of Balaam. That's in 2 Peter, Jude, and Revelation, like we just read. The way of Balaam, what was his way? What was marketing gifts as gain?

That became a normal thing. Hey, let's see. Let's see what kind of gain we can get from this. You know what? We're going to make some money off of this. We're going to make our church really big and really amazing and market it.

The error, sacrificing the eternal for temporal gain. That was his error. He thought, he even said in there, let me die the death of the righteous, but he doesn't because he chose the temporal over the eternal.

And then his doctrine. His doctrine is promoting sin and idolatry among God's people, and this is what was being tolerated at Pergamos. There's a lot of sin and idolatry that's tolerated in the church of Pergamos that exists today in our world.

[27 : 12] The dangers of tolerating false teaching. The stumbling block of Balaam was to teach God's people to tolerate and participate in acts of oneness with sin.

What did the word say there? But he caused them, he taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel to eat things sacrificed unto idols and to commit fornication.

The stumbling block of Balaam was to teach God's people to tolerate and participate in acts of oneness with sin. It was like, this is okay. This is a lot. Well, but I love him. I know we're not married, you know, or, well, you know, I only drink that on the weekends, you know, or, well, I'm an adult, I can watch that.

Or, well, you know, it's just an alternate lifestyle, but God loves everybody. It doesn't really matter. Now, remember what the Lord said? Hey, these are just a few small things.

Man, that's nothing for the Lord. It's not something we beat someone over the head with or we judge. There's tolerance and then there's intolerance, right? Tolerance is the cheap imitation of grace.

[28 : 21] It's the world's version of grace. Well, God loves everybody. God does love everybody freely, but he doesn't leave us in the state that he finds us. He receives everybody, but his grace changes us.

Tolerance, the opposite, would be intolerance. We don't want to be an intolerant church. We don't want to be a tolerant church. We don't want to be intolerant either. No. I mean, if your skirt doesn't reach down to your ankles and if you play cards, you're out of here.

No. In Romans 1, verse 32, it says, Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Convincing the church that it's convincing God's people it's okay to tolerate and participate in acts of oneness with sin. It's okay. You know, take pleasure in those things. I found this quote.

The law of love tolerates no vice, no sin, and patronizes every virtue. We don't tolerate sin. We encourage the truth.

[29 : 26] We encourage righteousness. But we don't have to do that by being intolerant. We do it by being gracious. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

We looked at the Nicolaitans before. If you remember in Revelation 2, speaking to Ephesus, that was one of the things they were commended about, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which Jesus says, I also hate.

Well, here we have, So hast thou also them that hold the doctrines of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Essentially, you are tolerating them, Pergamos. Again, hold with power and authority.

And Nicolaitans means to conquer of the people. So conquer of the laity. There's the priesthood, you know, and then there's the laity. There's those who command with authority and power and tell you what to do in your lives, and then there's just those that are down.

Isaiah 61.8, the Lord says, For I, the Lord, love judgment. I hate robbery for burnt offering. And I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, speaking of his promise to Israel.

[30 : 32] But I like that where he says, I hate robbery for burnt offering. He hates the fact that someone would use something that was supposed to be honoring to God and a blessing to his people to take advantage of them.

And that's what those who lorded over the laity do. Taking advantage of something that God had meant for a blessing and using it to rob the people. The enemy could not defeat the church in a pitched battle.

I mean, here the church is living in the presence of the enemy. So, like Balaam, the enemy found a way to join the church instead. When Cyrus conquered Babylon, the priesthood in Babylon moved to Pergamos at that time.

And from Pergamos, they spread into Rome. And from, in Rome, they became what we know of as today as the Roman Catholic Church. very much of the Roman Catholic Church is influenced going all the way back to Babylon.

The enemy could not defeat the church, so he found a way to join them instead and to do practices and, and, and to hold to ideas and teachings and doctrines that are contrary to God's word and that do exactly what God just said.

[31 : 44] It causes robbery instead of blessing. Paul warned of this. Remember in Acts 20 on the shores of Miletus? He says, For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. He says, Hey, the enemy's going to try to join you. They can't beat you. So they're going to try and join you.

They're going to come in as deceivers. It's going to look religious and holy and righteous and spiritual. What do we do? Well, we watch and remember. Therefore, watch and remember that by the space of three years I cease not to warn every one of you, every one night and day with tears.

We watch and remember. And how do we watch and remember? By being in God's word. Remembering God's word. Seeing through the eyes of God's word. Repent! Here he comes with his, can I remember these words?

I wish I needed my own sheet up here. There you go. Exhortation. Commendation and exhortation. Should use different words. Mix them up. Here's the exhortation. So he says, What do you need to do?

[32 : 46] Well, you need to get in there. You need to root them out. You need to go on a hunt and you need to be a sin sniffer. Repent! Says the church. Repent! Or else I will come against you quickly.

Quickly is without delay. And we'll fight against them. Oh, there's a change in tense there. Or pronoun. With the sword of my mouth. I will come against you quickly. Jesus holds the body, the church body, responsible for the teaching it tolerates.

We're responsible for the teaching that we tolerate. You're responsible for the teaching you tolerate. If you tolerate my teaching, you're responsible. Know that it's according to God's word.

Don't tolerate anything that's not. The body is responsible. This is to the church that Jesus is saying, Hey, I will come against you quickly. And we'll fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

Jesus is willing to go to war over his word. Because it cost him his life. Like, I'm going to fight against them. I'm going to war against them. Once in Christ, we are no longer part of them, are we?

[33 : 46] Jesus, or I mean the Lord, speaking in Isaiah, through the prophet Isaiah, in Isaiah 40, says, Comfort you, comfort you, my people, saith your God. Speak you comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished.

That her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received at the Lord's hand double for all of her sins. We, our warfare is accomplished. God is not warring against us. It's against them.

Who is the one doing the warfare? Does he say, church, go and fight against them? No. He says, I will come against them with what? The sword of my mouth.

The church has no authority apart from God's word. Jesus is the one who determines how his word is used. Jesus is the one who uses his word to put down these false teachers.

False teachers are dealt with through tolerance, are not dealt with, oh, I have left out a word, are not dealt with.

[34 : 47] I'm going to add it. False teachers are not dealt with through tolerance and acceptance by the swift division of God's word. Jesus says, hey, I'm going to come and I'm going to war against him with what?

The sword of his mouth. It's quick. It's powerful. It's sharp. It happens fast. God's word is swift and it divides. We don't do that.

His word does. You know, we don't have to take a poll. We don't have to do surveys of people. You know, it's like some new person comes in and say, hi, can you please fill out this questionnaire? If you get 90, you can stay.

If you get 85, we'll talk on, you know, and counsel you and below that, you're out of here. You don't need to do that. Thank the Lord. All we have to do is present God's word faithfully and it'll take care of that.

Now, as God's word divides between the thoughts and intents of our hearts, hopefully, we turn and repent. Repent just means to turn. We turn away from that and we let the wrong thought and the wrong intent and the wrong idea go.

[35 : 49] Hopefully, we don't go with it. But sometimes, people do go with it. People who thought, man, I thought like, and now they're, you know, God's word takes care of that.

We don't have to do that. We don't have to flush out bad doctrine. Like, sure, if someone's actively promoting bad doctrine in the church and trying to draw away disciples of themselves, like Paul said, we want to be intervening in that.

But if someone's sitting there and they've got different ideas or that are contrary to God's word or contrary to the ministry, we don't have to figure that out. We just let God's word take care of that and he will do that.

Again, hopefully, when God's word divides and says, hey, that thought needs to go, when it casts down an imagination and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, the person doesn't go with it. Sometimes they do. Verse 17, he that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says under the churches.

We've looked at that phrase many times, but maybe a different way of looking at it. He's saying, he that has capability, opportunity, and choice. He that has an ear, he has the capability to hear. Let him hear.

[36 : 52] There's opportunity and there's a choice there. He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says under the churches. 1 John 5, verses 4-5.

To him that overcomes, will I give to eat of the hidden manna? And John tells us, for whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.

Who is he that overcomes the world? Not me. Not on my own, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God. Whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world. So when we read that, to him that overcomes, oh man, I gotta overcome this.

No, he's already overcome. We overcome by believing. And then we overcome because of a new birth. It's through him. Whatsoever is born of God will overcome whatever is born of false teaching.

It's never gonna overcome us. So these two, two things here quickly. To him that overcomes, will I give to eat of the hidden manna? And will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knowing, which no man knowing, knoweth, saving he that receives it.

[38 : 01] No one else will know except the one who receives it, and obviously Jesus who gives it. So that's cool. A stone. Some manna. Well, hidden manna. What is manna? If you remember, right, in the wilderness, Israel was complaining there was nothing to eat, so God sent manna, and they said it was angels' food.

It appeared like dew in the morning, and tasted like coriander seed, whatever that means. They eventually complained about it, and then God sent the quail and judged them through that, but for 40 years in the wilderness, God supplied them.

So hidden manna. It's something that's unnoticed and unknown to the world. Think like Antipas, right? Who is he? Unknown to us, known to God.

It's lasting sustenance, fulfillment, and nourishment. This is not something that is temporal. It's something that Jesus is giving. It's worth the price, worth the price of what it takes to overcome, worth the price of putting our faith in Christ despite the fact we may be persecuted for that.

It's received. I will give to eat. Well, it's something that has to be received and partaken of. And then, the hidden manna is given by the bread of life, isn't it?

[39 : 17] In John 6, Jesus says, I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven.

If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever. And the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. And so, this hidden manna, it's given by the bread of life.

And he says, and I will give you a stone and on it a new name which no man knows saving him that received it. So, what is this stone? Well, it was supposed that this could be an allusion to the public games.

They were not only conducted with great pomp, but they were also for those that participated had a white stone given to them with their name inscribed on it, which badge entitled them during their whole life to be maintained at the public expense.

So, this is one of the like rewards for winning, conquering in the public games. You were given a white stone. Your name was on it and it entitled you to be essentially part of the welfare system for your whole life.

[40 : 25] These were called tesserae among the Romans and of these there were several kinds. Tesserae convivales, which answered exactly to our cards of invitation, kind of like if you're inviting someone, or tickets of admission to a public feast or banquet when the person invited, they would produce their tesserae to show that they were admitted.

But the most remarkable of these were the tesserae hospitales, which were given as a badge of friendship and alliance and on which some device was engraved or logo or picture as a testimony that a contract of friendship had been made between the parties and producing this stone would then get you the benefits of it.

So, Jesus says here, if that's what it is alluding to, either way, he's giving a white stone and a new name. This new name that Jesus gives, it's permanent, it's pure, it's on a white stone, it's not derived from or of value to this world.

They could care less about it, they don't know what it is, but it's of great value. And again, it has to be received. And just as the hidden manna was given by the bread of life, well, this new name is given by the name above all names, Philippians 2.9, wherefore God has also highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name as Jesus gives this name to those who overcome.

So, the church of Pergamos, elevated for all the wrong reasons, needed to be divided from the world, instead was married to and unified the world.

[41 : 59] Tolerance is not a virtue, but simply a refusal to make a division. Tolerance just refuses to make a division where there should be a division. Persecution, threats, and death could not destroy the church at Pergamos, but compromise and tolerance could.

So, Jesus warns them. How do we not become a church like that? Colossians 3.16, Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Let the word, the dividing word of Christ dwell in you richly. That's how you keep. That's how we keep from being a church like Pergamos. Man, it can seem so friendly to tolerate.

Well, I don't want to drive them away, you know. But which would we rather be? You know, a church that stands on God's word and lets God's word divide.

You know, this is how many of us are here. We could do other things to bring people in and tolerate things just for numbers, but we don't want to be the church of Pergamos.

[43 : 09] So we let the word of Christ dwell in us richly. We let it divide and we let it decide which mouth of the river we follow. And then I like where he says, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

That's, you know, I think of our worship. It needs to be doctrinally sound. But I also think that this is, it's not a hard heavy thing. Jesus is like, yes, teach one another.

Man, make up some songs through songs and hymns and spiritual songs singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. Grace, not tolerance. Tolerance is a cheap imitation of grace.

So, let's be, instead of elevated for the wrong reasons, let's elevate Jesus and be about the right reason.

His grace and his word, right? So, Lord, we thank you for bringing us through another, another church, Lord, another picture of a church and Lord, a picture of our church possibly, in part, in ways, I don't know, picture of my heart at times.

[44 : 16] Lord, it's always there. There's always the temptation to just get along to get along. There's always the temptation to not want to be the one to divide again.

There's always that temptation that, you know what? I mean, I'm not promoting that. That's, that's those who hold the doctrine of Balaam. That's hold, those who hold the doctrines of the Nicolaitans.

That's not me. I mean, they're just here. It's always tempting, Lord, just to tolerate. Lord, what you gave your life to save us from.

Lord, remind us of that. when the enemy says that compromise and tolerance is okay, Lord, when the false teaching entices us, Lord, to turn from your word.

Remind us, Lord, that you gave your life for this, that you are willing to war over this. You will go to war over your word. And Lord, give us the faith to just present your word and let the word do the work and not to try and do these things on our own.

[45 : 18] We love you. We thank you. Thank you for your word. In Jesus' name, Amen.