

Summary

This sermon focuses on two of the seven churches addressed in Revelation 2: Pergamum and Thyatira. Both churches received praise for their faithfulness and good works, but both were also rebuked for allowing accommodating spirits to take root. Pergamum had tolerated the teaching of Balaam, which led God's people to justify sinful behavior through confirmation bias and cultural compromise. Thyatira had embraced a Jezebel-like Spirit that created a false division between sacred and secular life, allowing Christians to privatize their faith and excuse sinful participation in the surrounding culture as simply "doing business." The pastor emphasizes that spiritual forces, both holy and demonic, are real and that the ones we nurture will grow strongest in our lives and churches. Like a garden, if we water good things such as holiness, mercy, and obedience, those will flourish. But if we ignore the weeds of greed, idolatry, and immorality, they will choke out what is holy. The call to the church is to walk in step with the Holy Spirit, reject the spirits of accommodation and privatized faith, and live as whole people whose entire lives, including work and business, are submitted to God.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before You today as a group of people who want to know You more deeply and follow You more faithfully. As we open Your Word and discuss what You have spoken to Your church, we ask that You soften our hearts and open our eyes. Reveal to us the places where we have made accommodations for sin or divided our lives into the sacred and the secular. Give us the courage to hear hard truths and the grace to receive them with humility. May Your Holy Spirit guide every word spoken in this room today, and may we leave not just informed but transformed. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Ice Breaker

What is one hobby, habit, or routine that you have kept up consistently for a long time, and what has helped you stay committed to it?

Key Verses

- Revelation 2:12-17
- Revelation 2:18-29

- Numbers 22
- Numbers 25

Questions

- The pastor describes the spiritual life of a church like a garden, where whatever we water will grow strongest. What are some practical ways your small group or church community could be more intentional about watering holy things rather than allowing sinful ones to take root?
- Balaam could not get God to turn away from His people, so He changed His strategy to get God's people to turn away from God. In what ways do you see this same strategy at work in our culture today, and how can we guard against it?
- The sermon describes confirmation bias as our tendency to believe things that affirm what we already want to be true. Can you think of a time when you caught yourself doing this in your own spiritual life? What helped you recognize it?
- The pastor points out that both political and cultural pressures can lead Christians to make accommodations for certain sins while condemning others. How do we develop the discernment and courage to let Scripture, rather than our cultural tribe, define what is right and wrong?
- The church at Thyatira created a wall between their business life and their church life, essentially privatizing their faith. In what areas of your own life, such as work, finances, or relationships, are you most tempted to say 'God has no claim over this part'?
- The pastor says we are not called to stay out of the world, but we are called to live in it without engaging in sinful activities. How do you personally navigate the tension between participating in the world and maintaining your integrity as a follower of Christ?
- Jesus rebuked both Pergamum and Thyatira not for what they were doing right, but for what they were tolerating. Why do you think tolerance of sin within a community of faith can be just as dangerous as actively practicing it?
- The sermon ends with a call to submit our whole lives to God and walk in step with the Holy Spirit. What is one specific area of your life where you feel God is calling you to stop dividing the sacred from the secular and bring it fully under His lordship?

Life Application

This week, take some time to honestly examine one area of your life where you may have built a wall between your faith and your everyday activity, whether at work, in your finances, in your relationships, or in your entertainment choices. Ask God to show you if you have been accommodating sin or privatizing

your faith in that area. Then take one concrete step to bring that area under His lordship, whether that means changing a habit, having an honest conversation, or simply praying over that part of your life each morning. Share what you discover with a trusted friend or your small group next time you meet.

Key Takeaways

- The spiritual forces that have the most influence in our lives and churches are the ones we choose to nurture. Like a garden, we must be intentional about watering holiness and actively removing the weeds of sin rather than simply hoping the good will outgrow the bad.
- The Spirit of accommodation, illustrated by the story of Balaam, leads us to justify sinful behavior by finding loopholes or leaning on confirmation bias. We must be a people who seek truth even when it is uncomfortable and goes against what we want to believe.
- The Spirit of privatized faith, illustrated by the Jezebel figure in Thyatira, creates a false division between the sacred and the secular. God never intended for faith to be a private matter separate from business, work, or everyday life.
- Both Pergamum and Thyatira were praised for genuine strengths, yet both were rebuked for tolerating teachers who said accommodation to surrounding culture was harmless. Tolerating sin within the church gives a false witness of the gospel to the world.
- We are called to live fully in the world without engaging in its sinful practices. When we fall, we trust God, get back up, and keep trying. Every small act of faithfulness matters and contributes to the kingdom God is building.

Ending Prayer

Lord, we thank You for Your Word and for the honest mirror it holds up to our lives and our church. We confess that we have sometimes watered the wrong things, made accommodations for sin, and divided our lives in ways that kept You out of certain rooms. Forgive us, and by Your grace, help us to tear down those walls. May we be a people who walk in step with Your Spirit in every area of life, at work, at home, in our relationships, and in our community. Sanctify us wholly, not just on Sunday mornings but in every moment of every day. Give us the courage to confront what is false and the humility to receive correction from Your Word. We submit ourselves entirely to You, knowing that what is impossible for us is possible for You. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen.