

The 4th Church: Thyatira

The city of Thyatira was a small town located inland in Asia Minor and was known for its color dyes. The city was constructed in a valley with many trade routes through it. It was a working mans town with many trade guilds. Lydia, Paul's first convert in Philippi, was a merchant from Thyatira. (Acts 16:14) The cities name means "_____".

The Designation of the Letter:

- 1) The _____ of Jesus: Jesus always addresses himself differently to each of the Churches. Here in Thyatira "he has eyes like a flame of fire, and feet like fine brass". The traits by which he reveals himself always fit the need of the Church and person in question. The problem in Thyatira was addressed by Jesus in such a way the he came referring to himself as the "Son of God". The phrase "Son of Man" refers more to His humanity, the phrase "Son of God" refers directly to His Diety and that brings with it a level seriousness!
- 2) The _____ of Jesus: The reference to His "eyes of fire" is a reference to His complete moral judgement. He see with the exactitude of perfect righteousness and judgement.
- 3) The _____ of Jesus: The description of Him having "feet like fine brass". The symbol of Brass was two fold in the Bible: 1) it meant judgement 2) it was oft use to represent humanity. Jesus aware of the sin that was being allowed, was ready to judge them having himself already become a man and walked through judgement himself (falsely) Remember Hebrews 4:13-15.

The 4 Commendations for the Church:

- 1) They were a _____ Church: Jesus in vs 19 mentions their works twice. They were an active Church not a passive one. The word used here is the word we get for deacon meaning servant. They were a working serving church making an impact in their community.
- 2) They were a _____ Church: Jesus also said "...I know your love." They had become known for their "Agape", Christ like Love.
- 3) They were a _____ Church: Jesus highlighted their faith. The Greek word "pistos" can be translated faith, faithfulness and are almost synonymous with each other. The church was loyal and dependable full of faithful people.
- 4) They were a _____ Church: Jesus' last commendation for the Church was patience. The meaning of patience literally means "staying power under adverse circumstances." When they pain and pressure came the Church stood her ground. Jesus even added to His praise when He said, "As for your works, the last our more than the first." The more pressure or persecuted they became the more faithful they became. We have to remember something though: Satan doesn't attack weak ineffective churches or people. So opposition is not an insult, but an indicator that the enemy doesn't like our direction as we press into Jesus.

The Problem in the Church: (vs. 20-23)

“Nevertheless, I have this against you: You _____ (ALLOW) that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of foods sacrificed to idols. I have her given her time to repent, but she is unwilling. So I will cast her on a bed of suffering and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am He who searches hearts and minds and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.”

On the Surface:

A female self proclaimed prophetess had come into some sort of authority either by manipulation or preying on the weak willed and had begun teaching something that was leading people into sexual immorality and participating in idol worship. The leadership was aware of what was happening and didn't address it. That's why Jesus said they had tolerated or allowed it to continue. Jesus isn't without heart here either: He gives her time to repent, BUT she chooses not to!

Going Deeper:

This a reference to a “Jezebel Spirit”. Yes its REAL! Kate and I have dealt with more than 4 of them in our time in ministry together. Its takes great discernment to recognize a person operating in it. Sometimes there is an influence and sometimes there is full blown spirit at work. How can we tell? Let me teach you what to look for:

- 1) Pray in the Spirit and ask for discernment.
- 2) Be aware of manipulation and motive. The how and the why of what someone wants, it will ultimately serve their motives and agenda
- 3) That spirit will look for leadership opportunities at high levels with/without proper credentials/training
- 4) They will follow leadership up to a point; then it becomes about their agenda
- 5) They will not give up control big or small. They will often refuse to bring alongside or pour into other leaders for fear of sharing influence
- 6) They are more than strong willed people and control enthusiast; often it’s the passive aggressive that will surprise you. Its control through unrighteous means: seduction, manipulation and intimidation.
- 7) It’s an equal opportunity spirit. We have seen both men and women have this. The strongest I have ever seen this spirit operate was on a gentlemen
- 8) The spirit can operate to a point without an “Ahab”. Old Testament, Jezebel was an actual prophetess in a cult leading Israel away from God. She got her control through Israel’s King Ahab. She remained in control by controlling Ahab and through seduction (2 Kings 9:30), manipulation (1 Kings 21:-28), and intimidation (1 Kings 19:1-2).

How do you deal with a Jezebel?

- 1) Pray and ask for discernment
- 2) Confront the person about their motives, behavior and control
- 3) Give them an opportunity to repent and submit to church authority
- 4) Remove them for a time from leadership and let them heal
- 5) If they wont repent and wont submit, you let them walk away.

Remember that our battle isn't with flesh and blood! Its with powers, authority and spiritual darkness in heavenly places! (Ephesians 6) The person isn't the enemy even though they may act like it. The person needs time and truth over and again to realize what's happening and repent. Sometimes they need time away from the body to do this. And some having done this take up the mentality of a victim and never come back.

Back to the Church in Thyatira:

The Jezebel Spirit had made its way into the Church by way a of a female prophetess and had begun to seduce its members into immorality. For some reason the leadership in the church had not rebuked the person and were acting like Ahab allowing it to continue.

Jesus' Message to the Cult:

He gives her 2 warnings:

- 1) The Threat of _____: He gives her a chance to repent. She refuses. So He warned of her of this judgement: "Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed." It means He will literally strike her with a debilitating disease. Figuratively, it meant that her bed of pleasure would now become a bed of pain through some judgement. It doesn't matter how so much as we remember that Hebrew says in Chapter 10:31, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God".
- 2) The Threat of _____: the warning was also to those who would commit adultery with her. They would find themselves in "great tribulation" unless they repented of their immorality as well. Jesus said, "I will kill her children." The spiritual byproduct of this immorality Jesus would not tolerate in His Church!

Jesus' message to the Christians:

"But hold fast until I come." These words are for those who didn't engage with the cult within the church. There were those who stood their ground and Christ encourages them to stand firm until His return. They knew what God expected and would not budge.

Jesus' message to the conquerors or they that overcome:

Christ made 2 promises to them:

- 1) The _____: He would "give power over the nations". He is quoting Psalm 29, a Messianic prophecy that applies directly to Him:
"He shall rule them with a rod iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potters vessels." Christ knowingly quoted that Messianic verse from Psalms and said those who remained faithful to the end would be given the same power to rule as He was given by the Father. This is a specific reference to the millennial reign of Christ.
- 2) The _____: the Promise is Jesus Christ himself. Revelation 22:16 He is called the "The Bright and Morning Star". One day most of us will fall asleep should Jesus tarry still, only to be awakened on a day in the future when the Bridegroom returns for His bride, the Church. Some of will alive but all who have stood firm to the end will meet the Bright and Morningstar and dwell with Him forever!

Let what Jesus said to the Church at Thyatira be watchwords for us as we wait with anticipation the Glorious return of our Lord and Savior Jesus!