

# (Revelation Thoughts From the Book) 3. the Letters to Pergamos and Thyatira

by Roy Hession

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*Roy Hession's sermon explores the letters to the churches in Pergamos and Thyatira, highlighting their commendations and condemnations while urging faithfulness amidst trials.*

**Duration:** 56:37

**Scripture:** Revelation 2:10, Revelation 2:13-14

**Topics:** "Thyatira"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses a widespread error that was a big threat to the early church. He refers to Jude 4, which talks about certain men who have crept in unawares and turned the grace of God into lasciviousness. The speaker emphasizes the need to judge and expose sin in order to maintain a holy church. He also mentions that some individuals within the church may be playing with sin, which is just as bad as committing the deed itself. The sermon highlights the importance of repentance and warns against having a form of godliness without the power thereof.

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## Transcript

Now will you turn to the book of Revelation, chapter 2. The book of Revelation, chapter 2. I want to read from verse 12. Chapter 2, verse 12. And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, These things saith he which hath the sharp two-edged sword.

I know thy works, where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat, Satan's throne is. Terrible place, Pergamos. And that's where they lived.

And thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith. Even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of Nicolaite. It's really just old Nicholas. Yes, you know who he was, Nicholas of Antioch.

One of the seven deacons chosen in the book of Acts, chief of whom was Stephen. And the last on the list was this fellow Nicholas, and he turned out a bad lot. Nicholas of Antioch had followers who followed his

pernicious teaching, which thing I hate.

Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. To him that overcometh 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 knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.

And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write, these things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass. I know thy works, and love, charity, and service, and faithfulness, and thine endurance, and thy works, and the last, to be more than the first. Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee, because thou hast, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce my servants, to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, revised standard version has into a sick bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am the Lord which churcheth the reins, or the mind, and the hearts.

And I will give unto every man, every one of you, according to your works. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the deep things of Satan, as they speak, I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already, hold fast till I come.

And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, unto him will I give power, or rather authority, over the nations. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron, and as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers. Reference to the Messianic Psalm, Psalm 2. Even as I received of my Father.

So what is said of him is going to be said of the glorious position of authority which the saints are going to occupy with him. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

I'm not intending to make any attempted explanation of that phrase and the promises associated with it to him that overcometh. It's said at the end of each of the seven letters, and I believe it's a fruitful study in itself. But we cannot undertake that here.

Now you may have noticed that I have omitted verses 8 to 11. That is the letter to the angel of the church in Smyrna. We can't, we haven't time to cover every part of these chapters.

The church in Smyrna was the church to which Jesus had not got a word of correction. There were two of them. But even the word of encouragement he has for them is pretty urgent.

Verse 10 of the last half, Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. They were likely to be in the midst of such persecution that faithfulness to Jesus Christ might cost them their death. We'll be willing for it, he said.

And I will give thee a crown of life. As I say, we're here in the midst of the atmosphere of persecution and impending great tribulation, in which extraordinary pressures will be brought upon the saints to deny the Lord, to rescind their faith in him, because the only alternative to that, faithfulness to Christ, might well cost them, if not imprisonment, then their death. And so even this epistle, in which there's no word of

correction, has this urgent call to faithfulness even unto death.

We're not even prepared sometimes to be faithful even to the losing of a job, or to forfeit promotion. Because if you were faithful possibly and stood up for that which is right and couldn't go along with some things, you might forfeit that. Well, this is a word then for us.

Be thou faithful unto death or whatever possible loss there is, because, dear brother, there's a crown. And it says elsewhere in these chapters that no man loses crown. We may not lose our salvation, surely not, if we're truly born of God, that we may well lose the crown, the reward that is awaiting for those that have been willing to go the whole way.

And we don't, well, we haven't been subjected perhaps always to those pressures. But there are small things, straws in the wind, which might well indicate which way you would go if the pressure was stepped up. So this is still this word to the church in Smyrna, a searching word to all of us.

But I want to look together at the letter to the angel of the church in Pergamos and that in Thyatira, because the situation in both was very similar. And it is interesting to note that part of the revelation of Jesus, which is extracted to put at the head of these two letters. To Pergamos begins, These things saith he which hath the sharp two-edged sword.

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of the Jesus we saw in chapter one. And then when it comes to Thyatira, These things saith the Son of God, who hath eyes like unto fire, and feet like brass. You remember the reference we made to that, and that is, well, just as challenging.

So here is Lord speaking a very searching, challenging word. Eyes like as fire, feet as brass. And out of his mouth goes the two-edged convicting word of God.

Now in both these two letters, we have that gracious, sympathetic word of commendation and appreciation of what there was to appreciate. I know thy works in both cases, and in both cases, they are enumerated very much the same. He knew in the case of Pergamos where they lived, where Satan's seat was.

Oh, it's easy to do. I've looked up a few books and I could rattle off what historians tell us about Pergamos. Just take it as read.

It was a tough spot, wholly given to idolatry and licentiousness. And yet in that place of all places, this little bunch of Christians had remained faithful, and they had not compromised their faith. And they refused to back off, even when one of their number suffered martyrdom for Jesus Christ.

And they were prepared to go the same way if they were caught upon. And Jesus says, I know it. I know it.

It's precious in my eyes. And with regard to the church in Thyatira, verse 19, I know thy works, thy love, thy service, thy faithfulness, thy endurance, they stuck it out against all odds, and thy works, and the last be more than the first. They didn't tail off.

They seemed to abound in work for the Lord and in their attempts to propagate the gospel. And in both cases, Jesus has to say, nevertheless, nevertheless, I have a few things against you. And they're very important things.

In the one case, that which I have against you is that you have some among you who hold the doctrine of Balaam. And you tolerate it. You haven't taken a stand against those that hold the doctrine of Balaam.

What that is, we shall see in a moment. And in the case of the other, this I have against thee, because thou severest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess. Beware of any woman who calls herself a prophetess.

I think a woman is sometimes more likely, in certain sects and cults, to set herself up as a prophetess. Listen, dear ones, we've got to accept it. The woman is the weaker vessel.

And Satan can sometimes get at a woman more easily than a man. But in practice, it sometimes seems the other way. Our women put us men to shame.

But here it is, that so often has been a prophetess, which has led God's people astray. And that in which the doctrine of Balaam consisted, and that in which the teaching of that woman Jezebel, are similar. By the way, Jezebel is a symbolic word.

Yes, you know, so quick, that woman Jezebel. If you know your Old Testament, you know what Jezebel was. Well, that's the sort of woman this woman was.

Well, let's look first of all at the doctrine of Balaam. If you turn to Numbers 31, 16, you will have it there, described in a short few words. Numbers 31, 16, verse 15.

This chapter is dealing with the defeat of the children of Midian. Avenge for chapter one, the children of Israel of the Midianites. And afterwards thou shall be gathered unto thy people.

It was almost Moses' last act. And they slew them, and their kings. And in verse eight, it says, Balaam also.

They slew with the sword. And then in verse 15, Moses says, well now, have ye saved all the women alive? Behold, these cause 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 children of Israel.

The counsel of Balaam. Well, that, what his counsel was, is referred to in the very passage in Revelation, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to things, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. I trust we're familiar with the story of Balak and Balaam.

Balak, the king of the Midianites, saw this great host of the Israelites coming into his territory. Actually, they didn't want to pick a quarrel with him, but he feared they might. And they were so numerous.

And he sent for a prophet. One of these strange prophetic figures, even existing in heathenism, who somehow had touch with Jehovah. And he called that this Balaam would come and curse them, hoping that that would do something to break their power.

You know the well-known story, and eventually, after demurring, Balaam went, but only on condition that he spoke what God gave him to speak. And so he was bidden to view the people from a high mountain and see their numbers, and now give them a big, big curse, will you? I'm sure there'll be some magic in it, said Balak. But you know, Balaam could only bless them as the Spirit of God came upon him.

Beautiful prophecies, positive, good for this nation. They go on into the future. Oh, he said, you mustn't say that sort of thing.

Come, have another look. You better get a better sight of them from this mountain. But once again, Balaam could only prophesy good, infinite good.

It's beautiful stuff, if had it we have time to read. Poetic and prophetic. And therefore, Balak's plan was thwarted.

God was with that people, unworthy that they were. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel. So there was plenty of it, but God said, there are justified people.

The Lord is, God is with him, this is what Balaam said, and the shelter of a king is among them. And so Balak's plan was thwarted. And after that, the next chapter, chapters number 25 says, and Israel abode in shitting, and the people began to eat, to commit whoredom or fornication with the daughters of Moab, and they called the people unto the sacrifices of their God, and the people did eat and bow down their gods.

And it would seem that the counsel of Balaam was this. I'm sorry, Balak, I can't do it. I'm under orders from above.

When I open my mouth, I can't say what you want to say, want me to say, can't even say what I want to say. I find myself speaking from God. But I've got an idea.

As long as those people are in right relationship with God, they're invincible. Just send the girls amongst them, and they'll soon fall for them. And they'll start committing fornication with the daughters of the Midianites.

And then that will lead on to the fact that they will start sacrificing to the gods of these girls. And they've alienated themselves from God, and only so will you be able to do something about them. That then is the doctrine of Balaam.

And this church had some that held the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication. And the same thing is said about the teaching of this woman Jezebel, this prophetess. She taught the Christians to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed to idols.

And those were two terrible things. If you turn to Acts 15 29, you will find that these two things were two of the four things mentioned which the apostles in Jerusalem felt they must ask the Gentiles, the Gentile Christians to observe. Acts 15 29.

Verse 28, they send back Paul, Judas and Silas with the message you remember the big discussion they had as to how far the Gentile Christians had to observe the Lord of Moses. Verse 28, for it seemed, here's their message, it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things, that ye abstain from food offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication. The two middle ones, from blood and from things strangled, were inserted out of deference to the susceptibilities of the Hebrew Christians, because the Hebrews were forbidden to eat blood.

It be poured out before the Lord, for the blood was that which made atonement for the soul. And of course a thing strangled hadn't had its blood shed, and therefore if you ate something that had been strangled, you ate it with the blood still in it. It wasn't all that important.

The first and fourth were important, not to eat things sacrificed to idols, and not to commit fornication. And I think really Paul conveniently forgot the middle two when he went round. I don't read that he said much about, be careful you don't eat blood.

He was so grateful to have such latitude given to him with the approval of the Jerusalem church, that he gladly said, all right we'll take all four, but I don't think he made much of two and three, but one and two were important. First then, not to eat sacrificed to idols. 1 Corinthians 8. 1 Corinthians 8. And here Paul talks about eating things sacrificed to idols.

1 Corinthians 8 verse 4, as concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and there is none other but God. Verse 7, how be it there is not in every man that knowledge, for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol, and their conscience being weak is defiled. He said actually, what's happened to that joint of meat before it got on my plate is neither here nor there.

Actually the only meat you could buy, it seemed in these heathen cities, was that which had first been offered in sacrifice to the idols, and then sold in the shops. I said for myself, I never ask any questions. Has this been sacrificed to idols? And in any case, what's an idol? That's just straightforward meat, and if I regard it as such, I can eat it without any offence.

I know an idol's nothing, but there is not in every man that knowledge. Some new converts would feel all the old associations coming back, and they felt they would be identifying themselves with their old idolatry if they partook of that meat, and they could be encouraged so to do by other Christians who didn't have any scruples, and they would do it against their scruples, and their conscience being weak would be defiled, and it might be the beginning of a serious going back. And therefore, among the saints in those days, they did not normally eat things sacrificed to idols.

Some wouldn't do it because they had a weak conscience. Some wouldn't do it out of respect for the other's conscience, and out of caring for him. Paul said, I'm not going to touch a thing whereby my brother is offended or made weak or stumbled.

But here were some who were teaching all this question of separation from the world. Nonsense. We can go in and not be all that bothered about paganism.

This was the doctrine of these people who held the doctrine of Balaam, with very much a sort of thing that the Nicolaitans held, and it was also said of this prophetess Jezebel, and the demarcation of separation from the world was blurred. And it had become a doctrine. They openly taught it, all this narrow-minded stuff.

But then the other thing that Balaam taught them to do was to seduce the men of Israel by the young girls of Midian. And these men began to forget their own wives and commit fornication. Fornication itself was wrong.

Well, we know perhaps if it's fornication then they weren't married. Right? Make a difference, won't you, between adultery and fornication. The pity is the Revised Standard Version doesn't make that clear.

It talks about adultery and then immorality. But immorality is a comparative word. What one man considers immoral, another won't.

But the good old original has it clear and straight. And fornication is the word from which we get pornography. It's something very clear-cut.

And the purpose that Balaam had in mind in suggesting they entice these men to commit fornication was not merely to do an immoral act, but that then they would be seduced to offer sacrifices to the heathen gods, and that would cause the wrath of God to come upon that nation. And if you please, this had become a doctrine in the Church. It was taught.

There were those who were corrupting the Church. And the extraordinary thing is, have you realized that this was one of the big widespread errors of the early Church? If you have your eyes open, you'll be amazed. Please turn the cassette over now.

Do not fast-wind it in either direction. If you have your eyes open, you'll be amazed. And the apostles were combating it with all their might.

It was a big threat to those days. Jude 4, verse 4 and 12, you've got it? We aren't able at the time to read through the whole thing. Jude 4, For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

And then there follows verses right down to almost to the end of the chapter, in which vocabulary exhausts itself, again in expressing God's intolerance, hatred, and certain judgment of those that do such things. And the extraordinary thing, they were crept into the Church, and they were sitting in your feasts of love, your love feasts, your communion services, and they got their following. 2 Peter, 2, he's battling with the same thing.

Verse 10, But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness. And remember, when you get that word uncleanness, in the New Testament, it always means sexual uncleanness. That's why Romans 6 is really dealing very much with sex, and not only with a superior sanctification possible to those who go to conventions, as you yielded your members, servants to uncleanness.

It means only one thing. Well, those who walk in the lust of uncleanness and despise government, and he echoes very much what Jude says. They must have been close to one another.

And this is a thing that's coming to the Church. Paul was combating it too. 2 Timothy, 3 verse 6. Verse 5, listen to this.

He talks about those who in the last days will have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof, for of this sort are they which creep into houses and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. He talks about those that sit with them, who have their eyes laden with adultery, and that cannot cease from sin, right in the Church. And here, the risen Lord says there are some that teach it.

It's become a doctrine. I haven't had enough time to research into historical books and reference books as to what particular form of doctrine it was. It was obviously something that wasn't too crude at first, that took in the unwary, but that's what it led to.

I believe this early Church was, really, we have to admit it, a Pentecostal Church. Oh yes, the gifts of the Spirit were all in operation, full of enthusiasm, and therefore full of problems. Very often these problems were problems of life more than of death.

But where there is an excess of express demotion, there is often a letting go of the severe moral standards of God. I'm not going to suggest that moral laxity is only to be found in churches of that order. No church can hold its head high and say, we've got a blameless record.

But somehow I have a feeling that if, on balance, it does seem that the churches that perhaps might profess to be nearest the New Testament pattern have the very problems and dangers and failings of that early Church. Where in the world did this miss get? The early Church was the pattern Church. It was nothing of the sort.

It was okay for about a few weeks after Day of Pentecost, and then with the coming of Ananias and Sapphira, it was a again and again, the epistles of Paul and the other epistles were directed to correct abuses and problems and troubles in that early Church. If you want to know what the ideal Church is, you've got to stand back from the whole of Scripture and then see it. I think that's quite encouraging.

I remember years ago, Bill Butler and Nancy and my wife and myself went out and we linked up with Church in Kampala and then we went to the Bambara Convention. And there was a grave problem in the Revival Brethren just then. A great split had occurred over, in this case, legalism.

And they said, you know, we are so sad that you've come at this time. It almost looks to us as if Revival's finished. Oh, that you'd come at a time when things were different with us.

But you know, at that time I was going through Paul's epistles afresh and again. How did I find he was combating these very things? Legalism! And of course, legalism goes with the works of the flesh. And many other things.

I said, brethren, I think it's okay, let's not worry. We're in the days of apostles after all. This is how it was then.

This is no strange thing. Why? It's always been a battle for holiness and it's always been a battle for grace. We've always had to contend that the Church has with law and the flesh.

And the brethren were having just the common experience. And God has wonderfully helped, as you doubtless know. And the old tide of Revival's gone on.

There are some islands of resistance. But the waters are sweeping around them and going on, leaving them there. And bit by bit, some of those islands are being eroded.

Oh, this early Church, so encouraging. We can learn from them. And not try and put them on a pedestal and try and copy a few of their points, but stand back and get the whole picture that God wants us to have.

Now, for years, of course, as you have, I've read those passages. And I've scratched my head, my goodness, because we've only scratched on them. They're terrific passages, the things that went on.

And I said, well, I don't really think that we have that situation today. I mean, the liberal churches are so dead that they haven't got any doctrine at all, good or bad. And we evangelical churches are a pretty steady lot.

But I've changed my view. And I believe today, more than any other day, we need him who has eyes of a flame of fire to speak his mind to us about what's happening. Today is a permissive day, of course, as we know, in the realm of morals and especially sexual morality.

It's a hard thing for parents to bring their children up in a day like this. They need to be praying constantly that God will put a wall of fire round about them. And it isn't only our country, America and Germany.

Do you know, I heard of some Russian Christians who managed to emigrate to Western Germany, that they might have religious liberty, but they found their children bombarded from every direction with erotic suggestions from school onwards that those Russians went back to Russia, rather than bring them up in the West. We're all in it. Well, now, it's a permissive day.

Well, I said to myself, well, I guess it wasn't Paul's day. The Gentile world was a permissive age, permissive society. But the solemn thing is it's getting into the Church now.

I don't mind so much if the world shows itself up to be the world away from God, but what is solemn when this comes into the Church? And when it even comes and begins to exist amongst the evangelical section of Christendom, which it has. I believe there's been a among the saints with regard to eating things offered in sacrifice to idols. Such things we'll say as drink.

I tell you why I'm an abstainer. Not because I can argue there's something essentially wrong with the fruit of the grape or the fruit of the hop. And presumably, I might be able to partake with moderation, though I'm not sure about that.

I'm a thirsty type. And I might develop a thirst for the wrong thing. But because of my other brother, because if he saw some of us in some place of influence or leadership with no conscience about things, it's okay.

And whereas I might do it without great harm, another might be stumbled and badly stumbled. Only a few months ago, I got the story of a dear friend of mine, an Irishman, an evangelist. In his early days, he went round with me as singer in our campaigns, and then he became an evangelist in his own right, and God used him.

And then he went to America, where he had a great ministry. And when I was over there, once I had a long distance call from my old friend I hadn't seen for years. He said, Roy, is there any chance you're coming to see me? And I noticed his voice was all husky and unclear.

He said, I'm in terrible need, brother. He was drunk. And then on the phone came a dear, dear American pastor who took my dear brother up and nursed him back to God.

And that man's an alcoholic today. You understand what that means? If a man has become an alcoholic, even though God's restored him, and he's been dry for 10 years or more, the only therapy it is now generally agreed is for him to tell himself to the end of his days, I am an alcoholic. Just the same way the saint is a one to the end of his days, that is, I am a sinner, but a sinner whom grace is reaching.

He's had a hard time. God at the moment is all is well, and he's having his ministry restored to him. But that's what he says.

And only a month or two ago, I was with him. I said, tell me, how in the world did it start? And when you're with me, I wasn't conscious of anything of that. Well, of course, before he was saved, he lived a gay life, lots of drink, lots of all sorts of things.

But I never thought he was an alcoholic. Well, he said, I wasn't. I didn't think it was.

It was all dormant. I'd got a new life. And I was taking a campaign in a certain place and staying with a wealthy, lovely Christian home.

And they always had sherry before they went to bed. Don't you have sherry? And he bottled a bit. And they caused their brother to stumble.

And he nearly lost his complete ministry and had to be bailed out by the love of the saints and the grace of God. That's the wrong of eating things sacrificed to idols. And I said, I'm never going to touch one little bit of that drop, that stuff, when I saw what had happened to my dear brother, how his family was nearly wrecked and all they went through.

And there are all sorts of other issues that you must learn to apply this principle to. Things are the things offered to idols. You say, well, that idol's nothing.

I can do that all right. But somebody else may not see it that way. And they, with conscious of the idol, may eat it as such and find themselves back.

And I, for one, am aware of the fact that we aren't, as I'm speaking very genuinely, where we were. And it could be some of us are playing with things we didn't used to. Or perhaps we haven't really had a conscience about them.

Not your conscience, the other fellow's conscience. That's love. That isn't a hard legalism.

And it may be Jesus might have to say, I have this against you. You've been slipping. You've been eating things sacrificed to idols, to the terrible detriment it might be to another.

And even if it doesn't actually happen, the principle's the same. And you know the world doesn't expect it. You think it's very hard to refuse to partake when you're with your business associates.

But they're just a bit surprised when they know you're a Christian. They're doing that sort of thing. Things sacrificed to idols.

I used to think, of course, sexual laxity was something in the world, and presumably in this early church, but not in ours. I've had to change my mind. Latterly.

Sexual permissiveness, so widely accepted in the world, has come into the liberal church. And you find trendy clergymen, thinking that sex before marriage, well, their situation's been quite okay. Homosexuality? Why? Their church groups link together on that.

Masturbation? Okay. Do you know, I never forget the shock I had when I turned on my radio once, and it was a time when that musical hair had just been put on. And as they were announcing it, they played one song.

I could hardly believe my ears. Blatantly extolling masturbation as a joyous, beautiful thing. Well, I said, don't get too worked up.

That's the old world. It was always like that. God's calling people out of it.

But Christendom has begun to write these things and accept them. But worse. Even evangelicals.

Bible-believing Christians. Watch it. Watch it, brethren.

There's not only a gay association amongst church peoples. Perhaps liberal. You can't expect too much from them.

They don't even believe the Bible, the liberal churches. But gay associations among evangelicals, who are supposed to be saved. And you can see it reflected in our magazines, which are known, accepted, and loved by Bible-believing Christians.

The trend is to go easy on the homosexual. We've got to love him. He's just a like we are.

We love him. He can find the Lord. But we can't, for one second, identify or tolerate or justify homosexuality as a practice.

I've been amazed reading the articles. Sex before marriage. Evangelical articles.

Masturbation. I'm not going to tell you the magazines. I'm just dealing with the thing.

I know. By the time you get to about the last paragraph, to your relief, they just about come out on the right side. But you're left in awful suspense for all the rest of it.

And the lasting impression isn't a very strong one. Nevertheless, I'm somewhat against it. There are those that have the doctrine of Balaam.

There are those that are taking the teaching of that prophetess, Jezebel. And you know, very seldom do we hear this mentioned from our pulpits, even in America. We teach all sorts of other doctrines, but we are part of the flock and we've got to teach them.

And we must extol God's precious stance of morality. There may be failure in the realm of wrong fantasies, even private indulgence. But the danger is, it's justified.

And I would say, dear brother, you may have some battles along this line. Who of us hasn't? We're all in this. Or whatever happens, call it sin.

I don't care whether you seem to get the victory or not. You call it sin. God can't do anything for a man who won't call it sin.

But if he will, wait thou on God, and you'll find help will come from the sanctuary. But not if we don't keep on calling it sin. If I have to call it sin a hundred times, call it sin.

And really and truly you'll find that you are in effect, as a sinner, a candidate for that grace that wills good for the sinner, and that gives help from the sanctuary he doesn't otherwise possess. Well, it's no doubt what Jesus thinks, which thing I hate. And here is where you get that extraordinary phrase, repent or else.

In fact it comes several times, and the or else is what? I will come quickly. 2 verse 5, 2 verse 16, 3 verse 3, 3 verse 19, I will come quickly. Which means that this one in the midst of the candlesticks can discipline his church.

And sometimes in quite astounding ways, judge sin, expose it, so that all the churches will know that I am the one that searches the heart. Sometimes an awful scandal takes place. God's allowed it to come.

He's come quickly. Repent, repenting of it. The leaders went watchful.

They didn't take their stand. We individuals didn't take our stand. We might even be playing with it ourselves.

And God must have a holy people. And he sometimes has to discipline us if we don't repent of it. Nevertheless, I have this against thee.

May I say this about playing with these things? And you know we can play with them in the realm of fantasy, and that's as bad as doing the deed. So this is something for all of us, these bad sexual fantasies. When I do that, I've come to see there's a passage in Paul where it says, I'm playing with the very thing for which thing's sake cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

This is Bible. I'm playing with the very things for which the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience, and from which wrath I've been saved by the blood of Jesus Christ. And yet I can go back and play with it.

That's the Bible. That's healthy. That helps me.

That really pulls me up short when I'm on the point of indulging, or have indulged, in a terrible sexual fantasy. I'm playing with that for which the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience, and from which wrath I've been saved. Yet I'm playing with it.

That's how Paul seemed to put it. Oh, repent. Or else he may have to discipline us in some way, our church or us personally.

Now I've got about five more minutes to keep promise. Those notices have given me another five minutes. And I want to say something really helpful, if I can, not now directly on the passage in question, on this great thing that, believe it, is everybody's problem.

Women may think they're not so prone. It's more subtle with them, but it's just the same. First of all, always call it sin.

The reason why we're getting this sort of teaching, making excuses, because people don't know the way of victory. And if it's only calling it sin, you're going to make people miserable. Therefore, call it something else.

But calling it sin is that by which it ushers us in to the realm of grace. And when you do, and you go to your dear Jesus, who isn't holding a stick against you, for he's taken the stick of it all upon his own back, you're given the promise, sin shall not have dominion over you, for you're not under the law, but under grace. As I said, I think, the other night, the dominion that's said is not only that I'm repeating a thing, but that having done it, it judges me, it condemns me, and goes on.

The passage of time needn't make any difference, it goes on. But grace says, sin need not have dominion over you, accusing you, condemning you, because that sin lost its power to condemn your substitute when he died and rose again. He's dead to it.

And if my sins lost their power, could then my substitute, dear Jesus on the cross, and he did, he said, it's finished, I can't be condemned for any more, for all the sins I accept your responsibility for. The blood's paid it all. Then sin has lost its power to condemn me.

And you needn't go around anymore, feeling like a dog, condemning yourself, being accused by Satan, with that demon from hell on your shoulder, always saying hypocrite, hypocrite. You can lose it on Calvary's hill. It tumbled and tumbled until, it rolled out of sight, I was happy that night.

I lost it on Calvary's hill. And I want to tell you, if you go like that to Jesus, and dare to embrace the prophet grace, you'll be so released, and so made happy, because you're free from that self-condemnation you've known for so long, that there'll be a new motivation for holiness in your heart, love, for the one who's done it. He that's forgiven much, loves much, a new mighty motivation, the man who's happy in Jesus, of course, not because he hasn't sinned, but because he's been set free from all its painful consequences, is motivated by love, and more likely to walk into victory than anybody else.

And there is victory, victory over that which Satan intended to be laying upon us, his accusations. And when you're accused, what's the point of trying to stop, go on with it? But oh, when you've been set free, a new day dawns. And the other thing, the last thing I have to say is this.

You have to go to the cross at an ever earlier moment. Take this question of sexual fantasies. You've had problems with them, perhaps many of us have.

And here it begins to, the sun begins to loom, I say, oh Lord, may I not do it? Don't say that. Say I've done it already. The first flicker! Oh now, now, Lord said, don't say that! I haven't found this work in my life.

I said, oh, I've done it already. I go to Jesus as a full-blown sinner again. To be set free! And that goes for all sorts of sins.

Take jealousy. And a brother of mine gets praised and appreciated, and I'm not praised and appreciated so much. Terrible people we are, aren't we? We are a lot.

And I said, oh Lord, may I not be jealous of so and so? And the Lord says, it's too late to pray that. You're jealous already. Confess it! And I go to Jesus for the cleansing power, and I'm free again.

And so I say that last word of encouragement. You needn't be under the dominion of sin for any longer than it takes you to get to the cross. But you do it at an ever earlier stage.

And I'm free again! And Jesus is proved to be a Saviour indeed.

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