
The Worldly Church (Beware of the Enemy Within)

Witnessing the Church of Jesus

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Sermon: Witnessing the Church of Jesus: The Worldly Church (Beware of the Enemy Within)

Current Series Messages:

- Theme Scripture: Matthew 16: ***18And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.***
- Subject: **The Church of Love** (Remembering, Returning, Restoring)
- Subject: **The Church of Persecution** (Suffering for Righteousness, Kingdom, Christ)

Lesson Text

Revelation 2:12-17 (KJV) ***12And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; 13I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: 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. 14But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. 15So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. 16Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. 17He 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.***

Introduction

So far we've moved from a Church in which the gates of hell shall not prevail in Matthew 16:18, to a Church with has issues. Christ addresses these issues to 7 churches in Revelations.

1. The Church at Ephesus (The Church that had left its First Love)
2. The Church at Smyrna (The Church that was willing to Suffer for Christ's Sake)
3. The Church at Pergamos (The Worldly Church)
4. The Church at Thyatira (The Church that's lost its Authority)
5. The Church at Sardis (The Dead Church)
6. The Church at Philadelphia (The Revived Church)
7. The Church at Laodicea (The Worthless Church)

Today we want to look at the third Church at Pergamos, which had become a worldly church.

The church in Pergamos was a church that had made alliances with the World.

Pergamos actually means marriage. So the church has went from fighting the enemy in Ephesus to sleeping with the Enemy in Pergamos.

The church has become elevated to a seat of power, but there's a cost for it!

Christ commends the church for holding fast his name – essential deity of Jesus Christ as Lord
But He condemns them for allowing and tolerating the doctrine and teaching of Balaam and the Nicolaitanes (which the church at Ephesus has rightly hated).

In Smyrna, Satan tried to destroy the church by persecution from without; but in this Church he's now trying to destroy her from within.

When Constantine ascended to the throne of Rome, he had a vision of using the cross to conquer the world and made Christianity the official religion.

His idea was to form an alliance between church and creating a marriage of Christ and the World. To hasten this union, he did the following:

- Offered Money – 20 pieces of gold was promise to every convert
- Adopted Pagan Rites and Festivals as part of Christian Worship – St. Nick or Santa Clause at Christmas or Easter Bunnies during Resurrection

This explains how the enemy of the Church goes from hated to tolerated, from despised to accepted, from opposite battle fields to sleeping in the same bed; he buys the church off with money, gifts, acceptance, help, and a semblance of peace.

When the enemy can't defeat us from without through suffering, he will offer us things to destroy us from within!

1 Peter 5:8 (KJV)⁸Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

What Peter is teaching us here is that we are to be aware of the enemy no matter which way he tries to destroy us.

Series and Sermon: Witnessing the Church of Jesus: The Worldly Church (Beware of the Enemy Within)

“We must beware of Enemies Bearing Gifts, Offering Help, and Bringing Peace!”

I. Beware of Enemies Bearing Gifts

Revelation 2: ¹³**I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, *even where Satan's seat is:***

The seat of Satan is his headquarters is, which is not in hell; it's the world we live in. It's where his power resides and what he uses to try and defeat the church.

Ephesians 2:²Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

When the enemy can't defeat the church outwardly through suffering, he'll offer the things of the world to infiltrate you and defeat it inwardly.

1 John 2:16 (AV)¹⁶For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

In the study of Mythology, the statement “Beware of Strangers/Greeks Bearing Gifts” comes

from the Story of the Trojan War.

- The Greeks couldn't defeat them, so they offered a gift of a large wooden horse.
- The horse had 30 armed Greeks inside, who attacked and defeated the unsuspecting Trojans from the inside.

Luke 4:⁵And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

The Church at Pergamos, as have many churches of today have accepted this things of the world and become big business; they've taken the bait of Satan, the lure of money and things.

1 Timothy 6:10 (AV)¹⁰ For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Mark 4:19 (AV)¹⁹ **And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.**

Don't Lose Your Fight

The Gifts may appear to be free, but it will cost us in the end: It costs us our holiness, our righteousness, our fidelity, our Church, and ultimately our purpose to fight.

1 Timothy 6:11–12 (AV)¹¹ But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. ¹²Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

Revelation 12:11 (KJV)¹¹And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

II. Beware of Enemies Offering Help

Revelation 2: ¹⁴**But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. ¹⁵So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.**

The second way the enemy tries to worm his way into the church is in the offering of help.

The church had been infiltrated with the things of the world that had become a stumbling block to God's people. They were worshiping idols, fornicating, and tolerating that which God hated.

When you accept the enemy's gift, you lose your fight; but when you accept the enemy's help, you lose your name.

The reality of life is that it's hard, it's tough, and it's difficult. You get sick, you get tired; you get sick and tired of being sick and tired.

Daniel 7:25 (KJV)²⁵And he shall speak *great* words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, ...

So here comes the enemy offering to help you with the rent, with grocery money, with the kids, with relationships and friendships, with access, with power.

You can't do it by yourself, let me in so I can help! But with the enemy's help comes his association.

Genesis 14:21-23 (KJV)²¹And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. ²²And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, ²³That I will not *take* from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that *is* thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich:

Don't Lose Your Name

Some help will destroy your name:

Some churches and pastors have become Hollywood, enamored by celebrity.

Some help you just can't accept, some doors that are opened to you, you just can't walk through; because if the enemy helps you; then you lose your name.

But more important than losing your name, is you lose the power of the name of Jesus.

Abraham said I will not take even a shoe lace from you so that you can't say that you made me rich. But when all you have is Jesus, then the world will have to declare his glory.

1 Corinthians 1:28–29 (AV)²⁸ And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: ²⁹ That no flesh should glory in his presence.

Psalms 50:10-12 (KJV)¹⁰For every beast of the forest *is* mine, *and* the cattle upon a thousand hills. ... ¹²If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world *is* mine, and the fulness thereof.

“Don't Lose Your Name!” “If God don't do it, then it just aint worth it”

Isaiah 40: ³¹But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; *and* they shall walk, and not faint.

III. Beware of Enemies Bringing Peace

Revelation 2: ¹⁶Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

Beware of the Enemy Within:

- The enemy's gifts can cause you to lose your fight
- The enemy's help can cause you to lose your name
- The enemy's peace can cause you to lose your mind

The last the thing the enemy offers is a fake peace. “Can't we all just go along to get along!”

Luke 6:26 (KJV)²⁶Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

The enemy's peace is a fake people that deals with our fears. And fear will cause you to lose it.

John 14:27 (AV)²⁷ **Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.**

2 Timothy 1:7 (AV)⁷ For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Don't Lose Your Mind

Isaiah 26:3 (KJV)³ Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose mind is stayed on thee*: because he trusteth in thee.

The peace that Jesus came to give was not a peace with the enemy, but a peace with God will defeating the enemy.

It's a peace of mind to know you're going to win the battle.

Matthew 10:³⁴ **Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.**

Matthew 11:12 (KJV)¹² **And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.**

“The Battle is not Yours, it's the Lord's”

Psalms 110:1 (KJV)¹ The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

The enemy started the war, but with God we are going to finish it

2 Corinthians 4:8-9 (KJV)⁸ *We are* troubled on every side, yet not distressed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

Isaiah 54:17 (KJV)¹⁷ No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue *that* shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This *is* the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness *is* of me, saith the LORD.

Midweek Study Lesson Plan (Sermon: The Worldly Church (Beware of the Enemy Within))

Lesson Text

Revelation 2:8-11, Matthew 5:10–12, Matthew 6:33, John 15:20–21

Sermon Outline

- I. Beware of Enemies Offering Gifts
- II. Beware of Enemies Offering Help
- III. Beware of Enemies Offering Peace

Questions

- I. Getting to Know “Me”**
 1. Are you protective of your name and the names of those you care about? How do you respond when someone calls you outside of your name?
 2. How are you known by others? What do they say about your character, your beliefs, etc.?
- II. Into the Bible**
 1. Manna is named as one of the three gifts that is given in Revelation 2:17 and was also given to the Israelites as bread in the wilderness. Where is manna first mentioned and what were the rules governing its use?
 2. “To him that overcometh” is repeated throughout Revelation chapters 2 & 3. John defines “he that overcomes” as a believer, (*1 John 5:5 KJV [5] Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*) With this in mind, what does it mean for a believer to be more than a conqueror.
 3. How did Jesus demonstrate peace in the midst of His enemies?
- III. Life Application**
 1. What types of things are offered to the people of God today that appear to be blessings but may really be offers from our adversary?
 2. What tools will you use to determine that an offer of a particular gift of help or of peace comes from the enemy? Provide an example.