

“When Compromise is Not Good”

Revelation 2:12-17

Sunday, June 6, 2021

Introduction: Vance Havner, now in heaven, was a popular evangelist, Bible Conference speaker, and author. He was a “wordsmith.” In 1969, I heard him preach a sermon about the church. He said, and I still remember after all these years, “The church needs a time out to tune up.”

For me, and probably for many of you, COVID-19 was a time out that showed me some things that need to be “tuned up” up in my life. COVID-19 was also a time out for our church, and it gave some time to see some things that need to be tuned up.

As we study the letters to the seven churches in Revelation, we see conditions that existed in the churches then that apply to our church today.

Brief Background:

- These seven churches were in Asia Minor, modern day Turkey.
- Asia Minor was composed of seven districts. Each district had a main city which served as a central point for the dissemination of information. Each of the seven churches was in one of those districts.
- Each letter was written to a church, but the letters are to all the churches. In each letter, you read, “Hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (2:7; 2:11; 2:17; 2:29; 3:6; 3:13; 3:22).

Pergamos:

- Built on a 1,000-foot hill about 20 miles inland from the Aegean Sea.
- A wealthy city, a medical center, an incredible library with 200,000 volumes each copied by and written on parchment (writing material developed from animal skins.) The first city to build a temple to Caesar (29 B.C.) for emperor-worship.
- A temple to each of the four greatest Greek gods was in Pergamos.

Text: Revelation 2: 12-17

- “angel” means “messenger” and does throughout the book except here (7 churches). Angels are never leaders in the church. Most likely these were the 7 pastors in these 7 churches.
- “I know where you dwell.” There are two Greek words for “dwell.” One, which is almost always used, means to dwell as a sojourner or pilgrim. The other word translated “dwell” which is the word used here means to dwell as permanent resident with no escape.

Application: God is saying to the Christians in Pergamos and to Christians today: I know where you dwell that you cannot escape.

Illustration: There are many Christians today who...

1. Live in homes where it is not easy to be a Christian. God knows where you dwell.
2. Work around people who blaspheme God all day long. God knows where you dwell.
3. Live with afflictions and are tempted to give up. God knows where you dwell.

Threefold Commendation (2:13):

1. "I know your works." (It was a working church)
 2. "Hold fast to My Name (true to His Name)
 3. "Not denied My faith" (loyal to the faith)
- "Martyr" means witness. Antipas was probably the pastor of the church. Tradition says he burned to death inside a brass bull.
 - Yet, God told this church to "repent" (2:16). Why?

The Condemnation (2:14-15):

1. There were some who held the doctrine of Balaam and others the doctrine of the Nicolaitans.
- Balaam instructed Balak, the king of Moab, to corrupt God's people through immorality--- COMPROMISE.
 - The Nicolaitans much like the teachings of Balaam—immorality and self-indulgence. Again COMPROMISE.

The problem with the church at Pergamos was compromise. Fast forward to Christianity today. The problem is compromise.

- Compromise can be a good thing in marriage.
- Compromise can be a good thing in politics.
- But with God, compromise is not good.

Outline:

1. Many Christians compromise God's Day.

- The third commandment: Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8).
- The Bible says that the apostle Paul went to the synagogue every Sabbath (Acts 18:8).
- The Bible says, "As His custom was, Jesus went into the synagogue on the Sabbath Day" (Luke 4:16).
- The Bible says, "Let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together...but exhort one another..." (Hebrews 10:25).

Illustration: Reading some religious studies this week, one that shocked me was the definition of "Practicing Christians." Practicing Christians was defined as those who attend church at least once a month.

Illustration: A Barna COVID-19 study from March 2020 to March 2021 reveals that 32% of Practicing Christians have not attended a church or streamed an online service.

Illustration: Headcounts are now telling us that before COVID-19 less than 20% of Americans attend church regularly (Actually 17.7%).

Illustration: Children's sports and activities take place on Sundays like any other day of the week. In fact, even more so.

Application: Many Christians do not give God His Day; they do not give God one hour of His day. You may be saying, "You are a pastor and trying to make people feel bad about not going to church." I am a pastor. That is true. But what I am saying is what God says.

T.S. Many Christians not only compromise God's Day, but they also compromise God's way.

2. Many Christians compromise God's way.

- The term "Christian" meaning follower of Christ was first used in Antioch (Acts 11:26).
- Previously, early followers of Jesus were called "the people of the way" (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14,22).
- They were called this because they lived God's way.

Illustration: People today pretty much live their way and what makes this so bad is that many say they are Christians.

Illustration: In the last verse in the book of Judges, the final words are: “Everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25). Their problem was Compromise.

Application: Do not let the last words in the chapter of your life be “he did what was right in his own eyes.” Come to the last chapter of your life doing what was right in God’s eyes.

Conclusion: Do not compromise God’s Day and do not compromise God’s way. You say, “But I have done that.” Do what Jesus told the Christians at Pergamos to do—REPENT! Ask God’s forgiveness and put in under the blood and start new.

I close giving you four things that will help you live God’s way.

1. Each morning pray Psalm 119:18 before you open your Bible.
2. Each day apply Psalm 119:105 as you go through the day.
3. Study the Bible.
4. Get a life verse, memorize it, and appropriate it throughout your day.

Invitation: You cannot live God’s way without God. Some of you may be trying that. There are ways to know.

1. You have no desire to read the Bible.
2. You read the Bible and get nothing from it to help you.
3. You do not enjoy spending time with God in prayer.
4. You do not enjoy going to church.
5. You have no passion to share Christ.