

LETTER 4 **THYATIRA**



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE THYATIRA: **THE WAYWARD CHURCH**

Revelation 2:18-29

WORSHIP

A large section of today's scripture focuses on immorality and idolatry within the church. These are both physical and spiritual influences that can lead believers astray.

Read **1 Thessalonians 4:3-8** and meditate on these biblical correctives to fight against such temptations.

FELLOWSHIP

How are your letter-writing challenges going? Share about one of the letters you've written so far.

Last week, Pastor Mike talked about the need for not only individual repentance but also for repentance on a corporate level as a church. Share some of your thoughts and feelings on the time we spent doing that at the end of last weekend's service.

DISCUSSION

Read Revelation 2:18-29.

The description of the glorified Jesus at the beginning of the letter to the church at Thyatira harkens back to not only Revelation, chapter one (vv. 14-15), but also to the Old Testament where the glory of God Himself is personified in the book of Ezekiel (1:7,27; 8:2). "Son of God" is a primary title for Jesus Christ in His deity (Mark 1:1) and is also likely stated in defiance of the locally worshipped Greco-Roman god, Apollo, who was called by the same name.

The Thyatiran church is similar to the Ephesian church (2:2) in the way it is praised but Thyatira is told that it is doing more than at first (2:19). Thyatira's problem is the infiltration of heretical teachings into the church, named "Satan's so-called deep secrets" (v.24). These doctrines are linked to sexual immorality and things sacrificed to idols and are leading believers astray (v.20). The grace, mercy and patience of the Lord can be seen in this passage as He gives the false teacher, "Jezebel", time to repent (v.21). But she doesn't, and Jesus metes out judgment not only to her but to those she has influenced (vv.22-23). Yet, a remnant remains, "the rest of you in Thyatira...who do not hold to her teaching" (v.24), who are promised rewards for their perseverance (vv.26-28).

1. What is your view of Jesus as God? Measure that view against how He is described in 2:18. How would you react if you saw Him that way?

2. The theme of repentance mentioned for the churches at Ephesus and Pergamum is continued with the church at Thyatira.

Here, it is described as a process, with an implied time limit: "I have given her time to repent of her immorality" (2:21a). What does this say about how we are to practice repentance in our lives?

Repentance is also described as an act of the will: "but she is unwilling" (2:21b). What makes us willing to repent? What makes us resist doing it?

3. Both Jesus and Paul talk about how judgment will be given "according to our deeds" (Matthew 16:27; Romans 2:6). We see this also in Thyatira where five distinct groups – Jezebel, those "who commit adultery with her", her "children", all the churches, and "the rest...in Thyatira" – are affected by Christ's judgment in different ways (2:22-24). Those in sin (Jezebel, those committing adultery, and her children) receive one kind of judgment. Those not in this kind of sin (all the churches and "the rest") are affected in a different way.

Knowing these distinctions, what does this make you think now when you hear, "judged...according to our deeds"?

4. The theme of perseverance is also emphasized in Jesus' letters to the seven churches. Talking to Thyatira, Jesus uses phrases like, "perseverance," "hold on to", "until I come", "the one who is victorious", "does my will to the end."

As a Christian, what areas are hardest for you to persevere in?

How could other believers help you to persevere better? Or, you help them?

5. The reward for the faithful remnant who persevere in Thyatira is authority over the nations and the morning star. Jesus quotes Psalm 2:8-9 and promises the same kind of authority to those who overcome as He Himself has been given authority by the Father.

How does "authority" here apply to the life of the believer?

Is this something only for the future (heaven) or does it apply to our lives now also?

6. What is an application you can take away from this week's study that you will practice in your walk as a Jesus follower?

LETTER WRITING CHALLENGE

Write an encouraging letter to a missionary. Visit christchurchil.org/global for more information.

PRAYER

Close in prayer, remembering the needs of the group, the church, and the world. Consider praying this prayer together:

Heavenly Father, send your Holy Spirit into our hearts, to direct and rule us according to your will, to comfort us in all our afflictions, to defend us from all error, and to lead us into all truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessed Savior, at this hour you hung upon the cross, stretching out your loving arms: Grant that all the peoples of the earth may look to you and be saved; for your tender mercies' sake. Amen.

From The Book of Common Prayer: "An Order of Service for Noonday." <https://www.bcponline.org>.