

# The Message to the Church in Pergamos

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Let us join together in the worship of God. We'll sing to his praise from Psalm 27.

Psalm 27, and we're going to sing from the beginning. Psalm 27, and we're going to sing from the beginning.

Though war against me rise, I will be confident in this. One thing I of the Lord desired and will seek to obtain, that all days of my life I may within God's house remain.

That I the beauty of the Lord behold me and admire, and that I in his holy place me reverently inquire. For he in his pavilion shall me hide in evil days, in secret of his tent me hide, and on a rock me raise.

These verses of Psalm 27 from the beginning. The Lord's my light and saving health, who shall make me dismayed. The Lord's my light and saving health, who shall make me dismayed.

[ 2 : 0 3 ] My light and saving health, who shall make me dismayed. My light and saving health, who shall make me dismayed. The Lord's my light and saving health, who shall make me dismayed. The Lord's my light and saving health, who shall make me dismayed.

The Lord's my light and saving health, who shall make me dismayed. When the Lord's my light and saving health, who shall make me dismayed.

AND SEEN Here we Però My heart yet fear rests Though all against me rise I will be confident in this One thing I know the Lord is high

I will seek you all too Thou God is on my life I will be with the sun streaming That I love you, dear Lord The Lord behold me And God I In this holy place May breath well be and quiet

For he and his love Then you shall be high Give me the days And see there in all this Tently I And on the Lord Here is Let us join together in prayer O Lord our God We Bless your name for the Many ways in which your people Can derive comfort From the written word That speaks of who you are And what you mean to your people

[ 5 : 5 0 ] And that they can identify By such expressions As corresponding to The kind of relationship that they Enjoy with yourself The things that speak to To Their souls As If we would think of If we would think of An echo The things that Correspond to What they are By By reason of them being your people The desire to behold your beauty In your own holy place Desire to To experience The Certainty and the surety That belongs to being covered By your Hand Hidden From sight

In Evil days We give thanks for the confidence That they have that This is the kind of God That is their God Even The The occasions When the Mainstays of their life Dessert Them Perhaps When Friends Depart And The Strongest ties That we have In the world When parents Take their leave office By reason of death Yet You are there To Undergird With your everlasting arms So help us to To draw near With such an understanding Thankful that you are the God of mercy God of all grace Pray your blessing To be our portion this day Thankful that we can seek it Thankful that we can

Identify As something that That Fills our heart With genuine gladness When we know that you have Revealed your face To us We fear at times That we come and we go From your house When we engage in acts of worship And that we come and go From these places Even appointed hours Knowing that we have done our duty And yet That is all that we feel That we have derived from it Not to say that these things Are not of worth Are not of worth But Our desire is to To know The Lord In a better way To come to A deeper Understanding of Of what you are to us And To Have a More perfect knowledge Of who

Our Lord and Saviour is And What he means to his people We confess our many sins That keep us from From Discovering these truths Help us to acknowledge our sin Help us to Come with a ready understanding Of our sinfulness That Is Far from On the surface That there is a deep seated Malleus That Heart of man Is desperately wicked Who can know it Is a confession That ought often To be on our lips We pray that you would Cleanse us From these sins By directing us to Christ That our confession May be true That our spirit of Penitence May be genuine That our desire To flee from sin To To embrace Christ Jesus Freely offered to us In the Gospel May be earnest So we remember

Before you All that are near and dear To us at this time We pray that you would Bless our loved ones Young and old We commit them to your care Thankful for The realities of Of interpersonal relationships Blood ties that are dear And we give thanks that you have Given to us Those who would love us Love us and those that we can love in return We give thanks for the ties that bind us One to the other We give thanks for Friendships We give thanks for Loving neighbours And we give thanks for ways in which That love is expressed And we pray that you would Keep us In a genuine Way Of expressing such love That it might not be Something that is Disdained or despised

[ 10 : 58 ] And we live in a day and a generation And much is said of love Much is said about Community And much is said about Of things that are Considered to be Of value And so they should But too often They are barely scratching the surface Of what What these genuine feelings Ought to be Lord help us to understand that If we are to find out what love is Then we must come to your word And we find that spoken of In the love of God for the world Even a fallen world As it is demonstrated in the Christ who came To die on the cross And we give thanks for the way in which the cross Depicts Someone who was despised and rejected of men And yet you chose him And you lifted him up before us

That their eye might see him But only the eye of faith can see him As one that is to be To be loved and desired So we remember Preaching of the word today We pray for those you have sent out with it We pray for the proclamation of the truth That it may be honest and earnest That it may be from your word And nothing but the word We remember the preachers of the word The world over Different parts of the world And we pray that you would keep them Free from harm Where there is enmity That you would deflect the arrows of the enemy And turn them against themselves We pray blessing upon seeds We pray that fruit would be seen That souls would be one for Christ We pray Lord We pray Lord that you would Use whatever means that is at our disposal Not just the public proclamation of truth

But through the airwaves As we are at this time Restricted in a way that we can present the gospel That we are not allowed to gather with the same fluidity or freedom That we once enjoyed Give thanks for the fact that there are still opportunities given to us For those who are able to gather We pray that you would bless their gathering And keep their gatherings free from any hindrance We pray for those who are using the medium of radio or television or whatever To present the truth We say even in this week That there are those who have attempted to usurp these means And that there are always those who despise the fact that they are in use So Lord keep them And keep us as we endeavour to speak of Christ to lost souls Watch over your people

Keep our feet free from falling Our eyes free from tears Remember the bereaved The grieving The sorrowful We pray for those who are affected by this By this disease that is ravaging the land We pray Lord that you would Bring forth the minds of those who are gifted So they would find a remedy We are being kept in the realm of hope By the prospect of a remedy being found by the year's end These things are in your hands more than theirs So we pray that you would mercifully undertake for us That we would see See these things come to fruition And that good we come And that those who are governing us would learn what it is to experience humility To understand that whatever gift they are given That it is but a gift And as such the one who gave it ought to be acknowledged

And as you are the giver of every good and perfect gift We are the Father of mercy and the God of all grace May we acknowledge you Hear us and go before us Blessing all that is done in your name To the ends of the earth We ask all with forgiveness of sin in Christ Amen We are going to read from the scriptures of the New Testament And we are once again returning to the book of the Revelation And we can read from the first chapter First of all some verses from chapter 1 Reading from verse 12 to the end of the chapter And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me And being turned I saw seven golden candlesticks And in the midst of the seven candlesticks

[ 16 : 08 ] One likened to the Son of Man Clothed with a garment Down to the foot And girt about the paps with a golden girdle His head and his hairs were white like wool As white as snow And his eyes were as a flame of fire And his feet like unto fine brass As if they burned in a furnace And his voice is the sound of many waters And he had in his right hand seven stars And out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword And his countenance was as the sun Shinereth in strength And when I saw him I fell at his feet as dead And he laid his right hand upon me Sing unto me Fear not I am the first and the last I am he that liveth and was dead And behold I am alive for evermore Amen And have the keys of hell and of death Write the things which thou hast seen And the things which are

And the things which shall be hereafter The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest Sawest in my right hand And the seven golden candlesticks The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches And the seven candlesticks which thou sawest Are the seven churches And we'll take up the reading Chapter 2 at verse 12 Verse 12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write These things saith he which hath a sharp sword with two edges I 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 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 the Nicolaitans 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 so on May the Lord add his blessing To a reading of his word And to his name the praise

I'm going to turn now to this last portion of the scripture that we read The book of the Revelation chapter 2 At verse 12 The Apostle John The Apostle John is as you know Given a vision of the glory Of the ascended Saviour That he did not experience when he was in the world Even though he describes himself as the beloved disciple And enjoyed much intimate fellowship with Jesus Yet when he saw him in the vision of Revelation He prostrates himself at his feet as one dead His head and his hairs were white like wool As white as snow And his eyes were as a flame of fire And his feet like into fine brass As if they burned in a furnace And his voice as the sound of many waters

And so on John had never seen the Lord Jesus like that When he was with him in the world He enjoyed many privileges He enjoyed many experiences that would remain with him But there were none like this In the chapters before us he writes to the seven churches in Asia Speaking on behalf of the Lord Jesus We looked at the first two Ephesus and Smyrna And it's almost coincidence I'm sure it is coincidence But the very place that we were talking about last week And we knew to have suffered The trauma and damage of wars And the destruction through natural disasters That very region is again today Suffering the same calamity arising out of earthquake

[ 21 : 24 ] But today, tonight we're wanting to look at the church in Pergamos In Pergamos A number of things just on the surface of what we have here Which we can consider First of all there's a description Given to us of the Lord himself Secondly there's a description of where the church In Pergamos is found Thirdly there is what is said By way of commendation And fourthly by way of condemnation Fifthly the warning that is issued And finally the promise that is given The description that is given of the Lord Jesus Each one of these churches When they receive their lector There is an indication given to them Of who the source of the lector is

And in this case He is described as He that hath a sharp sword With two edges We have already come across the description In chapter 1 and verse 16 There we see There we see It said Out of his mouth went A sharp two-edged sword The fact that it is in his mouth Suggests to us that it is Speaking about the word Or the truth of Christ Frequently within the scripture We find such an image For example in the Old Testament The prophet Isaiah Isaiah Says of himself That God made his mouth Like a sharp sword His role as God's prophet Was to proclaim a message to the people That carried power and penetration Because of the one whose word it was The apostle Paul describes the word of God

As the sword of the spirit Christ who is the word Made flesh speaks the truth In a way that strikes home Speaking about the word of God And its import Thomas Guthrie Saw in it all that was needed For any situation An armory of heavenly weapons A laboratory of infallible medicines A mine of inexhaustible wealth A guidebook for every road For every road A chart for every sea For every sea A medicine for every malady And a balm for every wound God's word is all these things And Christ is all these things And more besides In the epistle to the Hebrews We have the same description The word of the Lord The word is a living And active word

It is sharper than any two-edged sword Piercing even to the dividing asunder Of soul and spirit And of the joints and marrow And is a discernor of the thoughts And intents of the heart He continues in that chapter All things are naked and opened And opened unto the eyes of him With whom we have to do Christ is the living word And it is he who makes the world do his work In terms of the scripture So it is he who is speaking here To this church Then we have a description of where the church is found Physically or geographically It was roughly 50 miles away from Smyrna to the north History tells us of its association with Rome Being at one point a provincial capital And the ruins tell of existence at some point

Of some kind of military fortification Unlike Smyrna it is not a seaport So trade was not really as important However it seems that it was a centre of learning And we are told that a large library was based there I think Robert Murray MacJanes makes reference to Thousands of books that are contained Or were contained there at one point Now Christ as you would expect Knows all about his church He knows where they are found Not just locally but also spiritually And he says of his church here You dwell where Satan's seat is Most commentators recognise this to speak of the prevalence Of idolatry In particular an idol who was the god of healing Whose emblem was a serpent

[ 26 : 37 ] That would lend itself to the description given But over and above the countless Greek and Roman gods That were worshipped Emperor worship was also prevalent As we saw before severe penalties Were inflicted upon those who refused to give him The preeminent place in the worship Now there were those in Pergamos Who gave Christ that exclusive place Even if it was costly They held fast to the name of Christ It is important to remember that even in a pluralistic society And an increasingly secular society While attempting to fall in with the rest Christ has his eye upon his own people And commends those who remain true to him He does in that respect commend their faith He commends Antipas who suffered a martyr's death

And even today in many parts of the world Where the church is fragile Some are called to meet such an end But they are faithful unto death Some of the commentators are at odds As far as the reality of the faith of the church in Pergamos Some suggest that the vast number of them were faithful Others say that their faithfulness as a church was very much in question But we know that some at least are not commended Because of what is true about them Someone has identified the church here as the compromising church Maybe that is not fair It is hard to judge, as I said, how many were guilty I have a few things, he says

Those who hold the doctrine of Balaam We know the story from the Book of Numbers And essentially it describes those who believe they can have a foot in both camps They desire the things of God certainly But so do they desire what the world has to offer Balaam knew enough to fear God But he knew not enough of the fear of God to be all for God The Nicolaitians who are named here It is suggested that the New Testament counterpart of Balaam They were licentious and guilty of many practices that the Lord condemned Casting stumbling blocks before the Lord's people Eating things sacrificed to idols, fornication and so on Sins that were the accompaniment of idolatry Don Faulkner describes this doctrine within the modern church

As being of the variety of the chameleon Faith in Christ does not require godliness and obedience, he says You can get on without that But the truth is this If you embrace error Regarding the passion of Christ or his work or his doctrine If we believe what he did not teach or refuse to believe what he did teach Then we have denied his name and his faith Many that believe that the church is responsible for keeping people from Christ What do I mean by that?

What do I mean by that? They mean that the organisation, the church Which, strictly speaking, is the body of Christ So how can the body of Christ keep people from Christ?

[ 30 : 42 ] In the sense that they've taught and they feel that there are too many boundaries and denominations Too many attempts at uniformity, which at all costs should be avoided to allow people to be comfortable in being part of a Christian relationship The theory itself is self-defeating Because at the heart of Christianity, of true Christianity, there are many things that cannot but distinguish those who are followers of Christ as being followers of Christ We quote Fortner again, Christ is the way we must follow Christ is the truth we must believe Christ is the life we must live Christ is the religion that we must embrace Apart from this, there is no true religion

Any doctrine divorced from Christ is heresy Any precept divorced from Christ is legalism Any religious experience divorced from Christ is fanaticism Now what we have here As far as people who are recognised here as belonging to the church in Pergamos That they were deceived They were tolerant of things that they should not have tolerated But a warning is issued God is not obliged to give a second chance or any chance at all But he does And in this instance what we read is Repent therefore or else I will come to you Quickly And will fight against them with the sword of my mouth Again, he is returning to this And it seems a strange thing for him to say

But clearly it involves the word of the Lord Therefore the word will be used to condemn them Christ Jesus is entrusted with the role of judge The role or the measure by which he judges is his own word Perhaps there is a reference to the old story Old Testament story of Balaam Who was confronted by the angel of the Lord With a drawn sword in his hand Barring the way of the prophet Perhaps it is coincidental But there is no way of salvation to the sinner Whatever the sin may be Without the experience of repentance Whoever searching it may be Philip H. Hughes writes The Lord will smite the perverses of the world With the very world they have perverted If we have come to Christ Then we have done so Forsaking our sins We cannot take them with us

In our generation And in the current climate There is undoubtedly a need for our repentance And that must begin with God's people The apostle Peter, you remember, writes For the time he says has come That judgment must begin at the house of God And if it first begins at this What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God That is a solemn thought But it is not judgment in the sense of The same judgment that befalls the one who is Who is totally opposed to God But judgment nevertheless There is a promise however given Truly a most mysterious promise It is to those who overcome Those who survive being in the midst of the Inmity and temptations of a godless society If you read the description here

Thou I know thy works and where thou dwellest Even where Satan's seat is Dwelling in such a location Is a danger But the promise is to them Those who overcome Those who survive being in the midst of it Manna was once the food of the wilderness Manna was once the food of the wilderness Provided by God Until they reached the promised land It represented the mystical feeding of the people of God Upon the provision he himself made for them in Christ Hidden in the sense that he is in heaven While we are in the world Remember God appointed certain things to be placed inside the ark of the covenant Including a portion of Manna Reminding us of that provision Awaiting us in glory

[ 35 : 55 ] Spiritual food to the sinner in the world Which will also be spiritual food to the saint in glory The white stone is less easily understood Robert McChain, for example, speaks of the victor spoils at the Greek games A stone would be given to the winner And a name would be written upon it Which no one knew but the recipient I don't know that I fully understand or fully appreciate the true significance of the truth that is contained there It's not that there isn't something there that is to be believed and understood But I have yet to be satisfied in my own mind as to what that truth is I have come across many suggestions but none of them have really satisfied my own understanding

But I do believe that what is promised here and what is stated here Is stated so that Every person who reads this will understand That what was promised to the saints here in this church Was promised to the one who overcomes That they will They will Be recipients of a blessing appointed to them By the saviour of sinners Not one of them will be without it And not one of them will regret Being recipients of it May God bless to us these very few thoughts Let us pray O Lord our God as we Come before you as a worshipping people We give thanks That we can reflect upon The various people that bear your name here in this world And wherever their lot is cast

That there are That there are things that are true of them That mark them out as your people There are blessings that are appointed to them And that they are enriched through these blessings That there are other things that they may regret That they have succumbed to But that you are able through your grace To restore them to a proper relationship with yourself So help us to believe the truth Concerning the provision made in Christ Jesus Watch over as each one Cleanse from sin And that we may grace, mercy and peace From God the Father, the Son The Holy Spirit be with you All nerve and dogs Amen