

Thyatira: The Church of Overt Compromise

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 02 July 2023

Preacher: Jared Blankenship

[0 : 00] Well, I want to begin with a question this morning, and it's a simple question. What is it that can kill a church? What can kill a church?

What is it that can set a church's destiny toward failure? We often think of church ministries in that kind of context, using that kind of terminology as either a success or as a failure.

Of course, we want to achieve success, and of course, there are many who do not do that. They fail. But what is it that actually does that? What actually brings a church to the point of death?

What can kill it? And people have come up with all kinds of answers for that, and depending on what your passion and context is may affect how you would answer that question.

A marketing strategist might conclude that what will quickly kill a church is poor messaging, or maybe in our context, a weak presence on social media or on the web, that those are the things that will quickly kill a church.

[1 : 09] If you don't get those things right, nobody's going to come. Nobody's going to take you serious, and there's no way you can succeed. Church growth experts might take a different direction. They may say, well, that's probably important, but it's not just that.

Maybe it's an insistence on a lack of contextualization that you are not enough like the community that you're in in order for you to succeed as an organization.

Or perhaps your programming is not as elaborate as maybe it should be to actually be attractive to people, or maybe you're not providing engaging experiences that are helpful and encouraging, and those things will surely lead a church to fail.

Of course, historically, those outside of the church for many times throughout history have said, well, the best way to kill a church is to actually literally kill it. And that's what the people in these churches that were studying in Revelation 2 and 3 were facing.

The fight against them was actually a fight for their very lives. And so we could answer that in a lot of different ways. But here's how we want to frame the question for us this morning. What does Jesus say will kill a church?

[2 : 23] What does Jesus conclude makes a church destined for failure? And as we come to the messages to these seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3, we find really, generally, Jesus is giving two answers to that question.

The first thing that Jesus says will kill a church is spiritual complacency. Spiritual complacency. And the early stage of this complacency is embodied in the first sermon to the church at Ephesus.

A church that, while remaining steadfast in its doctrine and morality, had abandoned first love. That's the early stage of this complacency.

And then we find that abandoning first love results in a church like Laodicea, which is the final church that we'll study in chapter 3. Laodicea was self-deceived.

They thought themselves to be prosperous. They thought everything was grain. But Jesus presents himself as on the outside of the church looking in. And so we see spiritual complacency is the first thing that will surely kill a church.

[3 : 34] If you don't get the first love right, you're going to end up with Jesus on the outside, and you're not even going to know it. But then Jesus says, spiritual compromise is the next thing that will kill a church.

Spiritual compromise. At the center of these seven sermons is a grouping of three churches, and all of them are at different levels of compromise.

Pergamum, that we studied last week in verses 12 through 17, adopted a subtle form of compromise, where the congregation as a whole was generally faithful.

They were doing what was right. The problem in Pergamum is that they were tolerating some of their members who had subscribed to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. They were involving themselves in idolatry, and with that idolatry came sexual immorality. But the church in Pergamum wasn't doing anything about it. They weren't disciplining the members. They weren't confronting the members. They were just deciding, okay, we're going to be faithful. They've got their thing.

[4 : 40] We're just going to agree to disagree on this. It's a subtle form of compromise. Well, then the final stage of this compromise is in the church at Sardis, which we'll study next Sunday, Lord willing.

We find that in the first six verses of chapter three. It represents the final juncture of compromise, where Jesus declares that that church is dead.

Meaning that almost all of the members in Sardis, in the Sardis church, were unbelievers. But at the center of this grouping is this church in Thyatira, which was not yet guilty of a deadly compromise, but it had moved beyond the subtle compromise to an overt compromise, a blatant compromise. So that in contrast to Pergamum, the church in Thyatira had moved from tolerating errant members to legitimizing false teachers.

So they've taken the step down the road toward further compromise. As a whole, the congregation was accomplishing some noteworthy work in the name of Christ, as we read here.

[5 : 53] But it had become doctrinally and morally factious. Some of the people remained faithful to the Lord, while many were being seduced into problematic doctrines.

But even the faithful remnant in the church was not fulfilling its responsibility to discipline and exclude the false teacher and her disciples.

Things are starting to spiral out of control in Thyatira, and Jesus comes in as that great eschatological king prepared to unleash his judgment on this church and on all of those in the church who remained in a state of unrepentance.

Now for Lakeside, Lakeside Bible Church, to succeed in the biblical sense of that word, we're going to have to learn what truly matters and what truly doesn't matter.

We can be grateful for marketing strategies. We can be grateful for programming that would be honoring to the Lord and helpful and encouraging to people. We can be grateful for all of those things.

[6 : 59] But at the end of the day, those are not the things that ultimately matter. At the end of the day, what matters is that we are faithful, faithful to the word, faithful to the Lord and to our Savior.

And this complacency and compromise that we see in five of the seven churches, if we don't get a hold of it in our own church, it's going to kill us.

It's going to kill us. Now, in all the sermons, there's a glorious promise that we get to at the end for all of those who conquer. But then what we find overwhelmingly true in this particular message is that the church that compromises sets itself up as an enemy of Jesus, destined for death.

Okay? So let's dig in. Let's first look at the church's identity in the Christ title here in verse 18. Would you read it with me? To the angel of the church in Thyatira write, the words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze.

So Thyatira is the city which, as we understand it, was not an incredibly significant city in terms of politics or religion, different from some of the churches that we've studied thus far.

[8 : 24] They participated, of course, as all of these cities did in the imperial cult of Rome. But the patron god of Thyatira was Apollos, who was known in Greek mythology to be the son of Zeus.

But the city of Thyatira was really identified. They found their identity economically. Textiles and metalwork were the primary resources produced by this city.

In fact, the most famous Thyatiran person in the scripture, you'll find in Acts chapter 16, it was a lady named Lydia. Do you remember? She was in Philippi at the time.

Paul goes on. She is worshiping with a group of Jewish women. And what is it that Luke tells us as an identifying marker of this woman, Lydia? That she is a seller of purple from Thyatira.

She was a seller of fine linen. That was what her identity was wrapped up in at that point in her life. Well, why was her identity wrapped up in that? Because the identity of her community and her culture in Thyatira was wrapped up in the economics of fruitful business.

[9 : 33] The city was known for its prevalence of trade guilds, which were common in all of the cities, but especially in Thyatira. These trade guilds were like business networks akin somewhat to

a modern labor union.

There were a vast array of guilds that a person could join. Brian could join the floor layers guild if he wanted to. And some of you tech engineers could enjoy the guild of whatever it is that you do that I don't understand.

And there's all kinds of vast arrays of this. Here's the thing with the trade guilds. Each one has a deity attached to its business. And a part of the guild feast and celebrations that were routine in order to belong to this club or this membership for your business to succeed involved pagan worship that led to pagan ritual and practices.

That's the dilemma that the people in Thyatira begin to face. At the heart of the sin that Jesus confronts in Thyatira is probably the dilemma that these Christians are facing with the trade guilds where they have to make a decision at some point in their life.

Am I going to commit to being successful in my business and providing a good living for my family which means that I've got to go and be a part of these feasts where I'm participating even reluctantly in pagan worship of idolatry that in those days immediately would lead into public displays of immorality.

[11:08] Am I going to do that in order to put food on the table? Or am I going to stay faithful to Christ refuse those things and face the threat not only of death in terms of persecution but I'm going to be an outcast.

I have no way to be successful now in the culture of business in which I live. That's their dilemma.

So it would be easy to come to a passage like this and think how could this church do that?

How could they be so guilty of such terrible sin? And then you find out what some of the men in that church probably were facing was the very fact of whether or not they were going to be able to put food on the table.

And is your worship worth that type of struggle in your life? That's what they were facing. Well let's think about the Christ titles here. Jesus in self-revelation this is not the titles that John is ascribing to Jesus but Jesus is telling through John this is who I am.

He says that he is the son of God that he has eyes like a flame of fire and his feet are like burnished bronze. Well what is that all about? Well it's partially a polemic against the culture of Thyatira.

[12:19] They worshipped Apollos and the Caesars who viewed themselves as sons of gods.

Jesus comes to them as the actual son of God.

The one with true authority over the people and the cities and the nations. But these titles are also an allusion to two Old Testament texts.

One is a messianic psalm Psalm 2 the other is a messianic prophecy from Daniel chapter 10. Now we emphasize messianic because that's the purpose of those passages and that's why Jesus is using them here.

Let me just read them to you. Psalm chapter 2 and verse 7 says this The Lord said to me you are my son today I have begotten you. That is not a reference to David.

That is a messianic psalm. It's a reference to the future king that will come the serpent slayer from Genesis chapter 3 that will come and will redeem his people.

[13:19] Okay? Then we see in Daniel chapter 10 again speaking of this coming Messiah his body was like barrel his face like the appearance of lightning his eyes like flaming torches his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze.

So Jesus is using the Old Testament as his own self-revelation here to basically turn the minds of the people back to these passages and to say that's me I am the son of God I am the one who is who was proclaimed to come.

Now that his eyes are like flames of fire refers to his omniscience that he sees all that he knows all things. That his feet are like burnished bronze probably has somewhat to do with the city of Thyatira and their businesses and dealings with metal work but it also reflects his absolute purity especially in terms of judgment.

Absolute purity absolute righteousness as the righteous judge. So what is it that Jesus wants the Thyatirans to know? He wants the church to know that he is the eternal king who sees all and perfectly judges all.

He sees their hearts he knows their sin he knows their righteousness and he will judge them in righteousness at his coming.

[14:54] So whenever these Christians were tempted to participate in the pagan rituals of their culture they were to remember who the true son of God is.

When facing the threat of persecution from those who demanded their loyalty they were to think of Jesus as the one who will judge the entire world at his coming.

You see the only way we'll ever stay the course in this life is to keep our mind set on the person of Jesus. no other motivation is ever going to keep us from falling into the sins of idolatry and immorality as some of the people in this church were falling.

Why is it that Jesus constantly describes himself he's constantly with these churches turning their eyes to him because he is the motivation we have. He is the one who keeps us on course.

Well let's look at the commendation here in verse 19 I know your works your love and faith service patient endurance and that your latter works exceed the first.

[16:08] Now works throughout the Bible is used in both a broad and a narrow sense. Broadly works can refer to works of faith that is referring to the things that we believe.

Works could refer to things that we do as matters of obedience to the law. Works could refer to things that we do for others and good works and actionable things that we do in our lives.

Given the context of this particular passage though Jesus is using the term narrowly and he's referring primarily to outward acts of good and that's further supported by the way he describes their works.

He says I know your works namely your love your faith which could be translated faithfulness faithfulness to these works your love your faith your service your ministry and your patient endurance.

Now I want to suggest that what Jesus is really getting at in this commendation involves primarily mercy ministry acts of good works directed toward other people both inside the church and outside of the church so that despite the severe sin that Jesus is about to confront in the congregation he finds that there were some things that they were getting exactly right and it wasn't only that they were getting it right but they were growing in the fruitfulness of this kind of loving service.

[17:39] He says their latter works are even better than their first works. This is an amazing thought from Jesus isn't it? That what he sees as being true here is that this church is a church of love love for people that comes from a love for Jesus.

In this sense they are the anti-Ephesus the anti-type of Ephesus. Ephesus had great discernment but no love.

Thyatira has great love but no discernment. Both circumstances are a recipe for a disaster for any church that sets us on the path to death.

Now I want you to remember that there is no deceit or guile in Jesus whatsoever. He is perfectly honest and just in everything that he says and everything that he does which means that we cannot come to this commendation and pass it off as if it's a superficial commendation as if it's not really as important as what some other commendation might be because that would be to say that there's some type of deceit or guile in Jesus that cannot possibly belong to our perfect Lord.

Now those of us who are particularly concerned with doctrinal clarity and precision and I am one of them we tend to devalue the importance of acts of service and compassion toward others.

[19:17] We may even snarl a little bit at those churches that seem a little extra committed to community engagement volunteering caring for the oppressed and so on and we need to be careful that we don't diminish what Jesus values and if you find yourself rightly committed to doctrine but rarely engaging in service to others your doctrine isn't doing what God intends for doctrine to do.

It's not meant to give you a fat head and an empty heart. The doctrine and the things that we believe about God and what his desires are for us will motivate us to action and the overflow of what we see to be true of God and believe to be true of Christ will overflow into this kind of love that is exemplary in the church of Thyatira.

And isn't it amazing also that despite their sin Jesus still commends them on what's good and right and this just shows you how un-Christ like I can be because if I'm looking at a church like Thyatira out of spiritual pride there's nothing good I will ever find in the church not so with Jesus.

It's amazing this church he's threatening severe judgment on this church and yet before he gets to the judgment he acknowledges that there are some things that are good there.

No one is ever so just as Jesus is. He justly condemns and he justly commends something we'd all do well to acknowledge and also mimic his example because the church down the road or the

person across the aisle from you today they may have some serious issues that must be confronted but that's no excuse for ignoring what's truly good and right in their lives and can't you be thankful that this is the way that Jesus treats you the way he treats us let's look at the complaint verse 20 I have this against you Jesus says that you tolerate that woman Jezebel who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols there's two categories of complaint correction and consequence one is focused on this

[22 : 08] Jezebel figure and the other is focused on the church as a whole typically the faithful that remain in the church the complaint against Jezebel has to do with what she is doing and teaching the complaint against the church is about their tolerance of Jezebel's influence so that even though the official position of the congregation was not in alignment with this influencer they allowed her to continue teaching and seducing the people in the church that's the synopsis of the two complaints here now let's get into the details of it just like the sermon in Pergamum Jesus uses an Old Testament allusion to express his complaint the woman influencing the church in Thyatira was not named Jezebel she was acting like the infamous Jezebel of first and second kings and you can read all about her if you like when you get home today

Jezebel was a Phoenician princess who married Ahab who at the time was the king of Israel after it had split from Judah so Ahab is the king of the northern kingdom the northern ten tribes and he marries this Phoenician princess named Jezebel who taught the northern kingdom to worship the Baals and all that came along with that kind of worship she fought against God's prophets you'll remember the famous story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal Jezebel is intertwined in all that's happening there she seduced the people into all kinds of sin she did not belong to the people of God but she infiltrated and led people of God into idolatry such was the case with the woman in Thyatira she might have been a part of that Nicolaitan sex which is probably what I would say she probably identified with which we've talked about in Ephesus and in Pergamum either way she has infiltrated the people of God and she is now leading them astray and I want you to notice what she calls herself look back at the verse you tolerate that woman

Jezebel who calls herself a what a prophetess she's claiming that her teaching not only contains divine revelation but possesses divine authority this is significant to this the problem of false teaching always boils down to the issue of biblical authority always the Thyatiran influencer claimed to speak for God and that this new revelation or gnosis or knowledge that was coming from her negated and replaced any previous revelation so that at any point that Jezebel's teaching was in conflict with other scriptures her position as a prophetess would say that my teaching absorbs that it replaces it it negates it this is always the problem with false teaching it boils down to this and it's not just an ancient problem at the heart of

Mormonism is the belief that God gave Joseph Smith a new revelation that is superior to any former revelation in the Bible so they do not deny the Bible but they say what revelation was given to Joseph Smith is greater than and at whatever point it conflicts with the scriptures we lean to Joseph Smith because of the new revelation okay it's a battle of biblical authority and inerrancy the Roman Catholic Church they do the same thing with the priority of tradition and the magisterium that has the final word over the scriptures this type of error is prominent in the charismatic movement where you will routinely hear things like I know what the Bible says but God told me to fill in the blank if anyone is telling you or claiming to speak for God without expounding the scriptures they are a false teacher that must be excluded not tolerated that's the issue with this

Jezebel she's coming in she's saying I'm a prophetess and you need to listen to me because I'm speaking for God now what she was teaching most likely had to do with this dilemma with the trade guilds claiming some type of special knowledge she led the believers to embrace the idolatry and the immorality of their culture while trying to maintain a Christian identity this is why we call it compromise because it's not a complete turning away from Christianity it is a type of syncretism where they want to be named as Christians they want to carry the identity of Christianity but they want to embrace the culture around them all at the same time and this Jezebel figure is coming in and she's offering them a solution to their dilemma why would you not go to the feast God wants your family to be taken care of God wants you to be happy go to the feast those gods aren't real anyways go do the things no big deal you're a

[27 : 48] Christian you're a Christian of course we understand that trying to marry Christianity with the world never works there's a clear line of demarcation between following Jesus and conforming

to the world around us the Bible makes that absolutely clear and to try to merge the two ultimately will lead us to forsake the gospel altogether and we may embrace the world's philosophies with Christian terminology but we will not be Christian and this is a serious kind of compromise that will kill a church and how do we see this playing out we see this in the way that some churches are embracing the sexual revolution of our culture where they want to try to hang on to their

Christianity while endorsing the word would be affirming things that the Bible clearly stands against it doesn't work and if you try to do that even with the best of intentions if you begin to try to do that it means that you're going to stop calling sinners to repentance and if you stop calling sinners to repentance then you'll tell them that they really have no need for a savior and if you're telling them that they have no need for a savior you've lost the gospel you can have all the works that Thyatira had you can have all the spiritual emotion and fervor that you've always have but if you lose the gospel you're dead and that's what was happening in Thyatira and that's what will happen to us if we fall into this kind of compromise now notice that Jesus fully claims these people whom Jezebel was leading astray as his own isn't that interesting look back at the verse with me verse 20 she's teaching and seducing what my servants my servants his people is this even possible is it possible for someone who belongs to

Christ to fall into idolatry and sexual immorality like these people did here we have to say yes because Jesus said yes and what we'll find is that it's not the act of sin that says we're not a Christian it's the refusal to repent that says we're not a Christian that's the distinction we're going to get to that again in just a moment but let's think about this for just a moment what will cause us to fall into something like this spiritual pride has to be part of the answer right we think that maybe we're above compromising truth and righteousness in this way but then Galatians 5 makes it clear that there is this spiritual war raging inside of us it's a war between the spirit of God and the spirit of our flesh and the spirit of

God does his sanctifying work through the word of God so at the moment that we begin to abandon the word of God we effectively silence the spirit of God in order that we might follow after the spirit of our own flesh!

And before we know it we are a Christian that lives nothing like a Christian and we need to be mindful of it let's look at the correction and consequence so again Jesus is providing two different dynamics of corrections the first one is to Jezebel the second one is to the rest of the people in the church and we are going to deal with them separately but we need to at least acknowledge up front that is repentance like I said a moment ago to commit a sin does not mean a person is unsaved to refuse to repent does okay to commit a sin does not make you an unbeliever to refuse to repent of that sin does mean you're an unbeliever because those who belong to Jesus repent of sin when confronted by the word and the refusal to repent identify someone as unregenerate

[32 : 31] Jezebel and her followers are commanded to repent of their idolatry and immorality the church was commanded to repent of its tolerance of not disciplining the group when they had refused to repent so let's look at them separately Jezebel and her children first look at verse 21 I gave her time to repent Jesus says but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality behold unto a sick bed those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation unless they repent of her works and I will strike her children dead now we know that sickness is not always a punishment for sin that's clear in the scripture what's also clear in the scripture is that sometimes it is a punishment for sin such is the case for this Jezebel the mention of children here is not to be understood as actual biological children but as those who had embraced her teaching in the church so what

Jesus is addressing or who Jesus is addressing is this Jezebel figure and those who had subscribed to her false teaching and were living in her same immorality and because they refused to repent Jesus was going to afflict her and her followers he's going to throw her onto a sick bed and then at the end they will all be struck dead now this judgment seems harsh doesn't it but it's actually full of mercy we find mercy all over it because the truth is that God owes us nothing he owes us nothing the moment that we rebel against him we deserve the full punishment of his wrath as our creator that's what we deserve immediately the fact that he lets us take a breath beyond that is a sign of God's mercy that he gives us any time at all to repent of our sin is an amazing mercy but make no mistake judgment will come and some of you right now may be enjoying a season of mercy

God is giving you time to turn from your sin he's giving you time to trust in Christ as Lord and Savior but his mercy might have made you comfortable things are somewhat good life hasn't been all that hard you feel no real urgency to respond to his word you are continuing in sin and rebellion but I'm telling you you better repent before it's too late because this call to salvation has an expiration it has an expiration turn from sin before the judgment comes that's the message here that God is merciful he even gives this Jezebel figure lots of time to repent but she refuses and even in his refusal he gives her another opportunity through the message itself to repent and some of you are coming to church

Sunday after Sunday after Sunday and you're hearing the gospel message you're being confronted by your sin the spirit is doing his work in your life and you still won't! repent! and believe you're enjoying God's mercy but you're wasting God's mercy now why would Jesus use a plague to afflict this Jezebel instead of just dealing with her and her followers swiftly this is what seems so unfair in justing God doesn't it but the answer is just another statement of mercy look at verse 23 and all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart and I will give to each of you according to your works now Jim Hamilton has this great little book it's not a little book actually it's a big book on biblical theology where he insists that the central theme of the Bible is that God is glorified in salvation through judgment that

God is glorified in salvation through judgment God threatens this judgment on Jezebel so that his judgment would lead others to salvation do you see that God is glorified when people turn to Jesus after hearing and seeing his righteous judgment on others and the Christians in Thyatira and the churches throughout Asia were to see God's wrath against Jezebel as a purging by which Jesus meant to bring his own people to repentance and such is the case for us as well the one who searches mind and heart will judge each of us according to our works those who have turned from sin to trust the work of Christ will receive salvation those who continue in sin will receive God's wrath and it is God's mercy that you hear this warning again this morning so don't waste it turn and believe and all of the mercy that is in

[38 : 09] God will conquer all of the sin that is in you don't waste the warning then we see the consequence and the correction for the rest of the church verse 24 but to the rest of you in Thyatira who do not hold this teaching who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan to you I say I do not lay on you any other burden only hold fast to what you have until I come Hamilton says by refusing to repent Jezebel declared that she did not belong to the people of God once she made this plain the church in Thyatira had a responsibility to tell her the truth that she was not right with God they had a responsibility to protect the flock they had a responsibility to exclude her from the church instead they were tolerating her and as a result of the church's failure to act she was leading into sin so

Jesus in his correction he tells Jezebel and her followers repent or die and then he tells the rest of the church repent of your toleration or die very happy about the church's obedience in other areas Jesus had no further burden for them but to properly discipline those who would not turn from their sin he says only hold fast what you have until I come well what is it that they had to hold fast to the gospel they had the gospel they had not abandoned the gospel holding fast to the gospel means living it out as Christ commanded and part of living it out is drawing a clear line between those who repent and those who do not the repentance that is necessary for the faithful remnant in Thyatira was to exclude this Jezebel and her children and to do anything less was an overt compromise that would inevitably lead to the death of the church and so we come to it as a church ourselves and we say whenever and if ever a Jezebel is exposed in our church our only course of action according to the scripture is to lovingly discipline that person in hopes that they will turn from their sin to trust Christ and be restored but if they do not turn they must be excluded because the result if they're not excluded is that the servants of Jesus in our church will be led astray well let's look at the call and conquer as we finish verse 26 the one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end to him

I will give authority over the nations he will rule them with a rod of iron as when earth and pots are broken in pieces even as I myself have received authority from my father and I will give him the morning star he who has an ear let him hear what the spirit says to the churches as always Jesus closes the sermon with a promise to those who conquer now notice how conquering in all of these sermons is synonymous with perseverance perseverance he's just said it in the in the previous verse look with me at verse 25 only hold fast what you have until I come perseverance the one who

conquers who keeps my works until the end to him I will give authority over the nation's perseverance just like repentance proves a person to be regenerate so does perseverance those who continue in the faith despite the spiritual war that rages against us prove that they have truly conquered through

Jesus the conqueror and look at the wonderful promise that's given us it's mysterious here for us but it's helpful it's another allusion to psalm 2 here's what the passage in psalm 2 says so again in the promise Jesus is proclaiming to the church I am the son of God I am the Messiah and what I said in psalm 2 I say to you now those who conquer will reign with me so that in the messianic kingdom Jesus promises that his people will reign with him and exactly how this takes shape is a mystery don't ask me after the service how I think this is going to work and which nation you're going to get to rule over because

[43 : 43] I have no idea I don't know how that's going to work but consider what it would have meant to these early Christians rule of Rome the promise is not that we will be able to exercise vengeance on those who have wronged us that's not the promise the promise is that we will enjoy the kingdom of Christ with his perfectly righteous rule where all who belong to him are blessed and all who rebel against him are perfectly righteously judged so put it in practical terms for just a moment do you ever see the brokenness and injustice of the world around you and long for something greater of course if you don't you've got some serious problems you're blind there is brokenness everywhere we long for the restoration of

God's kingdom we long for the perfection of Christ rule and that something greater is coming when Christ returns and all who conquer through faith in him will enjoy it for all eternity to the one who conquers you will reign with me in perfect righteousness and then he says that the one who conquers will be given the morning star what's that all about Jesus is the morning star he is the son that gives light and life to his people and the greatest reward for the believer in eternity is Jesus himself to be with our savior to be with our lord forever is the prize that cannot be measured as we talked about last week in the in the appeal to Pergamum Jesus is that treasure in the field he is that pearl of great price nothing in this life is worth holding on to in order to forsake him and the one who knows

Christ knows that the best thing about eternity is not streets of gold or pearly gates or disease free life even though we're going to enjoy all of those things the most wonderful thing about eternity is to be in the presence of Christ he says I will give you myself Jesus says and to experience his perfect love and rule and power will be unlike anything else we can ever begin to imagine now and that is what is promised to the one who conquers through Christ he who has an ear let him hear what the spirit says to the churches