

Revelation Extra: The Church at Pergamum

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[0 : 00] Revelation chapter 2, beginning at verse 12. It says, To the angel of the church in Pergamum, write, The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword.

I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. Yet you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

But I have a few things against you. You have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel so that they may eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality.

So also you have some who hold the teachings of the Nicolaitans. Therefore, repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers, I will give some of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.

[1 : 29] This is the Word of the Lord. Church, let us please ask now in prayer that God would speak to us. Let's pray. Father, I am amazed every week when we look at one of these letters, how applicable it is to right now.

How we as a church, both this local church and the church around the world, are still struggling with the same issues.

Oh, that you would come and speak a word to us this evening. We need to hear what the Spirit has to say to us through this letter.

Father, give us ears to hear. Give us eyes to see. And spur us on. Drive us forward to pursue you in a deeper, more intimate way that we might not compromise our faith in Christ.

We ask it in His name. And God's people said, Amen. Please be seated. If when I hear the voices, I struggle, and sign to Thee to set me free, bind me with yet more bonds.

[3 : 02] Those are the famous words of Odysseus in Homer's Odyssey. You may remember the scene.

Odysseus is sailing home, and he knows that on his way home, he has to pass by the island of the sirens. The sirens in Greek mythology were these beautiful women that would sit there on the rocks, and they would call out to the mariners as they would pass by.

And the beauty of their song was so alluring. It was so captivating that it would draw them in. They would become mad with desire that they wouldn't be able to resist.

And they would turn their ships towards the island. And they would make sail directly to them, ignoring all the rocks, unable to see all the obstacles, until finally they would run aground.

Listen to the excerpt from Odyssey. It writes, Even more beautiful than the sirens' faces were their lovely voices. In the flowery meadows of their island they sat singing their sweet songs, and the sailors whose ships were passing could not forbear to go on shore.

[4 : 29] And there they were slain by the wicked mermaids. All around them in the meadows where the sirens sat were the bones of the men they had slain.

But these foolish sailors did not see. They only saw the bright colored flowers, and the mermaids' lovely faces, and long golden hair, and the songs whose melody mingled with the sound of the waves stole their hearts away.

It's what became known as the siren's call. And if you remember, Odysseus knows this, and so he has to wisely prepare in advance.

And do you remember what he did? Do any of you remember the story? He puts wax in the ears of his men so that they won't be able to hear the song. And he has his men tie him to the mast of the

ship.

And he gives them direct orders. Do not listen to anything that I say. You keep rowing forward. You keep persevering until I come to my senses.

[5 : 59] Odysseus knew the power of seduction and so do we.

In fact, there is a siren. There may be multiple ones. A siren's call in your life. And don't misunderstand. I'm not just talking about sexual seduction here.

For some of you, your siren's call is chocolate. Or some kind of food. You've said it. I know I really shouldn't, but there's something that you can't resist about it.

Or for some of you, your siren's call is, it's a new toy or a car. I know I can't afford it, but for full transparency, this one's mine.

Me wanty. Craigslist is my siren's call for boats, right? Or maybe for some of you, your siren's call is finding something on sale.

[7 : 03] It's for some of you, you've got to get a good deal and so you walk by that store and the for sale sign beckons you, come. And you know you don't need 12 pairs of shoes, but it's a sale.

It's a good deal. Or for some of you, your siren's call is pornography. It's I'll pull off the interstate on this business trip and no one will know.

For some of you, the siren's call is going back to that relationship again and again and you know it's not healthy. You know you should not be in it and yet you cannot resist.

My point, faith family, I hope it's clear. You have siren calls around you every day. And if we are not careful, we will lose all sense of wisdom, all sense of discernment, all sense of responsibility, all sense of promises made, all sense of right and wrong.

It is the song of seduction. And faith family, it's not just true in your personal life.

[8 : 23] It is also true theologically and doctrinally. It's the siren's call, if you will, of false teaching.

Come on! Just a little compromise here. Just a little compromise there. You do know that all that matters is the heart, right?

I've heard that so many times it makes me sick. All that matters is if they're sincere. You do realize, dear friend, that you can be sincerely wrong.

Oh, but we shouldn't judge others. We need to be more tolerant. Don't be so serious about the Bible. Faith family, you've got to hear my heart. I'm pleading with you tonight.

There has been a song that the serpent has been singing ever since the garden, and the lyrics go something like this.

[9 : 18] did God really say? Just one bite. And many a church and many a Christian have rerouted their faith towards the island of false teaching only to end up in a pile of dead bones.

And what they thought they were calling tolerance, God was calling disobedience.

It is the power of seduction. And it's exactly what happened in Pergamum.

Verse 12. To the angel of the church in Pergamum write the words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword.

Now, this first statement, as we see these in every letter, is an introductory statement. It relates specifically to the context that these readers are in.

[10 : 40] It is why every week I'm trying my best to put this in its right historical context so that we will understand it the way they would have understood it when they read it. This statement is specifically something that the church at Pergamum needs to hear.

And so, here's what we need to ask ourselves tonight. It's this. Number one, what does that phrase mean? I am the one with the two-edged sword. What does it mean? And then secondly, what did it mean to them?

How would they have understood it? Why was that needed to be said in light of their context? So, the first is what did it mean? And I'm going to give you quite a bit of Scripture.

I don't tend to read this much Scripture back to back, but you need it to understand the statement.

This isn't the first time this phrase has been used even in Revelation chapter 2.

That is, it's already been used in chapter 1. Notice, for instance, Revelation chapter 1 and verse 14. It says, the hairs of his head are white like wool, like snow.

[11 : 42] The eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like a burnished bronze refined furnace. His voice was like a roar of many waters. His right hand, he held seven stars, which, by the way, gets referred to in chapter 2, verse 1.

And then notice this next phrase. From his mouth, so it has to do with word, something he's saying, from his mouth came a, say it with me, sharp, two-edged sword.

Aha! So this isn't new by the time we come to Revelation chapter 2. It is also mentioned later on in the book of Revelation.

For instance, Revelation chapter 19 and verse 13. Again, describing Jesus. He's clothed in a robe dipped in blood. The name by which he's called is the Word of God.

The armies of heaven arrayed in fine linen, white and pure. We're following him on white horses.

Now watch this. From his mouth, so the idea of word, again, comes a sharp, what?

[12:49] Which strikes down the nations and will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of his wrath. So clearly we're talking about judgment.

Are you with me so far? Now let me quote the verse that if you know much about Scripture, when you heard two-edged sword, your mind probably went there, right?

The verse in Hebrews. Hebrews chapter 4, verse 12. Watch what it says. The Word of God. So here we have the idea of word again, like coming from the mouth.

This Word of God is living and active, sharper than any what? Two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, joints and marrow, discerning.

Now here's one area I would break with the ESV and I think some other translations get it better.

The word for discerning there is actually the word judging. And some of your other translations will use that word.

[13:48] So discerning or judging the thoughts and the attentions of the heart. One more. And this one's going to seem a little odd in light of the other ones, but you'll understand once we anchor it in the context.

Romans 13 verse 4. This is talking about the government. Okay, so go back and read verses 1 through 3. But look at verse 4. He is God's servant, that is human authorities, for your good, if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain.

Okay, alright, there's enough Scripture. So there's enough background for us to be able to know what this statement means. Right here, family, right here. This statement means the one with the sword is the one who has the power to exercise judgment.

The sword is coming from his mouth. It is a word of judgment. This is the one that has the authority.

This is the one that has the power to give verdict, to bring judgment.

That's what the phrase means. And so the next question would be, why does Jesus introduce himself that way? Why use that phrase?

[15:10] To Pergamum. And here's the answer. It's very simple. Pergamum was the center of government power. In other words, a couple of weeks ago when we talked about Ephesus, I told you, think of Ephesus like New York City, full of commerce and multiple cultures.

And think of Smyrna like Southern California, beauty and affluence and wealth. So think of Pergamum like Washington, D.C.

a city with political power who in her day had, listen, the power of the sword. Pergamum had the power of the sword.

She had the power to execute capital punishment. So what is Jesus saying? This is big. This is big.

What's he saying? He's saying this. Church, do not ever forget that I am the final judge.

judge. Never lose sight that the verdict of your life is not given to you by the culture.

[16:22] It is given to you by Christ who reigns on the throne. And I tell you, dear friends, if you actually start believing that, it will change the way you live.

Amen? Y'all awake out there? I'm awake for you. Alright? Alright? Jesus is telling the church of Pergamum, you're looking to the wrong person for a verdict in your life.

I am the judge. I'm the one that holds the two-edged sword. I am the one who is the final and the ultimate judge.

Now, quick side note here, probably won't have time for this tomorrow, but you'll get it. Do you see why these introductions matter? Do you see? So like, for instance, in Ephesus, when they're saying, you have lost your light because of your lack of love, what does Jesus say?

I'm the one that holds the seven stars and the seven lampstands. He's reminding them of their purpose to shine forth light. Or in Smyrna, we talked about the fact that they feel like they're losing.

[17:32] Why? Because of the persecution they're facing. So how does Jesus introduce Himself as the first and the last? The one who is the resurrection.

In other words, you have victory in Me. So why introduce Himself to Pergamum as the judge? Are you ready? Here's why. Come here. There are consequences for compromises.

There are consequences to compromises. Verse 13. I know where you dwell.

Now we enter the evaluation section here. I know where Satan's throne is, yet you hold fast My name, and you did not deny My faith even the days of Antipas, My faithful witness, who was killed among you where Satan dwells.

[18:40] But I have a few things against you. You have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel so that they may eat food, sacrifice to idols, and practice sexual immorality.

Jesus says now it's time for your evaluation. Here's what I know about you. I'm the one that knows you better than you know you, and I want to encourage you in one area. There's our hug.

And I'm going to criticize you in another. There's the punch. The first. By the way, you're looking at this almost every week. You do realize every church has strong points, and every church has weaknesses.

People will come up to me so often, and they're new to Berean, and they're saying, Pastor, I love Berean. I love being here. This is what I've been looking for. I've been looking for this and this, and I'm getting it here.

And here's what I want to encourage you with. Just give us time. Just give us time. Right? And I'm saying that because that's true of any church.

[19:44] Right? What you're going to find is there are things we do really well, and there are things that we don't do so well and we need to improve in. And so, that's why these letters help us to say, here's how we keep on balance.

So here's an affirmation or a positive thing to the church in Pergamum, and then we'll look at the negatives. The first is, what he applauds them for, what he celebrates them, is their dedication. Their faithful dedication. You see, these Christians were living in one of the most difficult cities to be a Christian.

I know just a little bit of this because I have friends planting churches in Washington, D.C. And they will tell me that it is a very hard place to plant a church.

It's very, very difficult. And yet, in this political arena, in this difficult city, these Christians, some of them are being very dedicated and faithful to what God has called them to.

[20:48] And you say, how do you know that this is so difficult? Why do you know it's such a dark context? Well, let me put it this way. Have you ever driven into a state or a small town and noticed a sign that, like, celebrates something?

Like, if you drive into Kentucky, it's the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln. You're like, oh, that's pretty cool. Or you drive into some small town and there's a sign celebrating all of the state football champions that they've had or whatever it may be.

You've seen these, right? Well, when you drive into Pergamum, the sign says, Pergamum, the place where Satan lives. Now, how would you like that to be said of your city?

You know, like, Burnsville, where Satan's at? Like, that is not the sign we would want out there. And yet, that's what is said, isn't it, in the text of Pergamum?

And, of course, this isn't to be taken literal. It's not as though, like, Satan owns property in Pergamum. My best guess, there's a lot of different views on this, my best guess is that this is a reference to the temple of Zeus that was in the heart of the city of Pergamum and smoke would fill the air 24 hours a day because of all the sacrifices that were taking place.

[22:10] And not just the temple of Zeus, there were lots of temples. This is just a rendering of Pergamum and there were temples all around the city.

And so, it was a difficult place to do ministry because it was full of cults and full of worship of Caesar. And yet, in the midst of all of that, these Christians had remained faithful even, listen, even to death.

Antipas, for instance, is called out as even to the point of death he remained faithful to God. And let me just encourage this quickly before we move on.

What I want to say to you is this, and I really want us to feel this tonight, is that there is no place too dark that the light of the gospel cannot break through.

There is no place on planet earth too dark that the gospel of Jesus Christ cannot break through.

[23 : 21] Some of you are here tonight and you would say, ha, not my family, not where I work, not the people I work with, not the twin cities.

listen, Berean, Jesus knows where we dwell and he celebrates us and praises us and cheers us on when we are faithful to the light of the gospel even in the darkest of places.

Would you feel that tonight and just have the idea that there is in heaven a way to go, keep going, keep marching, keep driving. When you are in difficult situations yet remain faithful to the gospel. Jesus says, this is what I love about you Pergamum. I love that even for some of you to the point of death, you have been dedicated but, but, there are two issues issues in your church you must address.

Here's the first one. Look at verse 14. But I have a few things against you. You have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality.

[24 : 55] So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. There are two criticisms, two negative statements that Jesus has to say about the church in Pergamum.

The first is this. They lacked, if you've zoned out already, I really need you to zone back in because this gets to the heart of the letter. Right? They were a church that lacked discernment.

You see, while some in the church were dedicated, others in the church had been deceived. Listen, listen, while some in the church were dedicated, some in the church had been deceived.

You say, what's all this Nicolaitan stuff? And what's all this Balak and Balaam? And I don't understand all this. What does Jesus mean? Why is he calling this out?

Well, do you remember what happened in the days of Balaam? By the way, the Nicolaitans were nothing more than a modern day expression of what happened in the days of Balaam?

[26 : 05] And you say, well, that still doesn't help me at all. What happened in the days of Balaam? Because that's the part of the Old Testament I tend to skip in my Bible reading, right? The book of Numbers. I don't understand all that.

So what happened? Here's what happened. The nation of Israel is headed towards the promised land. the king of Moab, a king by the name of Balak, knows their coming, and he's scared to death. Do you know why he's scared to death? Let's just say the reputation of God has gotten around town at what he does to nations that stand against his people.

The whole Egyptian thing is known, and Balak is scared to death. He's afraid that he's going to be destroyed too. And so he hires a prophet by the name of Balaam.

And he says, Balaam, I'm going to give you a nice sum of money if you will curse Israel so that they won't do anything to me. Balaam says, you're on, king, let's do it.

[27 : 11] But God confronts Balaam before he does it. In fact, if you know anything about the story, it's the fact that God spoke through a donkey.

That's right. That's the only part you remember, right? This donkey actually talks. And God confronts Balaam in Numbers chapter 22 and verse 31. Notice it. The Lord opened the eyes of Balaam and he saw the angel of the Lord standing by the way.

You're going to think this is neat. With a what drawn? That's interesting. in his hand and he bowed down and fell on his face.

You see, Balaam says, I can't curse Israel. God won't let me curse Israel. And so instead he blesses Israel and Balaam gets mad.

I told you to curse him. I can't curse him. I had to bless him. But I got another idea. how about a siren's call?

[28 : 21] How about when they're coming by, you send out your best women and you seduce them into Moab to the point that they'll worship the idols of Moab.

And here's the good news, king, you won't have to destroy them because God will judge them for you. And it's exactly what happens.

Numbers chapter 31 verse 16 behold behold these on Balaam's advice caused the people of Israel to act treacherously against the Lord and so the plague that is the judgment came among the congregation of the Lord.

Israel was seduced. seduced she was seduced in three ways. Notice them here on the screen.

She was seduced doctrinally that is to ignore what the law clearly said. She was seduced into immorality that is she did what she knew she wasn't supposed to do and she was seduced by idolatry that is loving things more than God.

[29 : 58] Come on. Just one bite. It's just a little idol worship never hurt anybody.

And faith family it's exactly what the Nicolaitans were doing. This is what they were saying to the Christians in the church at Pergamum. You don't need to die like Antipas.

You do want to provide for your family, right? You want to be around to see your grandchildren grow up. So why don't you just go to the temple and keep your fingers crossed?

Why don't you just participate but don't mean it? Why don't you just go with the flow because a little compromise never hurt anybody?

Oh, I hope you're awake and you are listening because if you think that's just a Balaam thing, if you think that's just a Nicolaitan thing, you are absolutely blind. That's happening today.

[31 : 06] Oh, you don't need to deny hell. Just say you don't know. I'm looking at you, Rob Bell.

Oh, why say anything about marriage?

After all, who are you to judge? And I have friends that are fill in the blank. Here's to you, Eugene Peterson and Jen Hatmaker. You say, I don't think you should call out names.

The Bible does specifically. It is happening all around us. It's called the sin of blending in.

just a little. I know the Bible clearly says that, but come on, you got to be more tolerant. And all it took was a bite to lose their discernment.

It is happening today and it breaks my heart. I want you to see this imagery.

[32 : 13] Have you ever heard the term of a contra flow? Have you ever heard that? It takes place usually during an evacuation.

You see, usually when you're driving on interstates, you have traffic going in different directions. Do you see? One's going one way and the other one's coming another way.

A contra flow is when because of an evacuation or an emergency for some reason, they have all the lanes going the same way.

Here's my fear. My fear is that many churches have gone from being a counter flow to a contra flow. And we're embracing everything the culture says you look at me because we're afraid as to what they might say about us. And the problem is we can no longer discern right from wrong.

[33 : 23] Whether it is doctrinally idolatry or immorality we have been seduced to the point we are numb. And Jesus says I love your faithful dedication but what I have against you is you have some in your congregation that don't have a lick of discernment.

They have fallen for the lie just like Israel fell for the lie way back in the days of Balaam. Church we are called to go against the stream of the culture and if we are going to be a church that's worth its salt pun intended we have got to be a church of conviction thus saith the Lord come what may now that's not the only thing Jesus has against them it's not just that they've lost their discernment there's actually another issue that he addresses in this and that is their lack of discipline let me show you in the text quickly verse 14 go back I have a few things against you you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel we've talked about that verse 15 so also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans the Nicolaitans are doing to you what Balaam did in the days of Israel verse 16 watch therefore repent if not I will come to you and war against them with the sword of my mouth do you know what that means hey faith family it's my responsibility to preach what the word of God says not what our ears want to hear amen do you want to know what that is saying the first problem is you have some that have no discernment they have fallen into false teaching and the rest of you have done nothing about it you haven't said a word you don't love them enough to rebuke them in love you sit there and do nothing and if you don't do something

I will if you're not going to be a church that disciplines one another so that you'll grow up in Jesus then I'll discipline you it's not just that some have believed the teaching of the Nicolaitans it's that the majority act like they don't care because it's none of my business Berean if you belong to this church what you believe about Jesus is my business and what I believe about Jesus is your business it's what it means to be a church I love you too much to let you walk into any old Christian bookstore and believe that whatever you find on the shelf is biblical I love you too much to watch any old preacher on

TV and assume that what he's saying is gospel and to say what has become the mantra of our day well it's not your place to judge is like telling your doctor who wants your best health who are you to tell me how to live faithful are the wounds of a friend says the book of Proverbs and the problem is some of you in this congregate in this congregate I'm not talking about Pergamum anymore I'm

talking about Breen some of you know there is error I'm not talking about did Adam and Eve have a belly button or something silly little side issue I'm talking about gospel issues I'm talking about clear teachings of

[38 : 00] God's word and you've seen those errors listen and you thought you were being unloving by saying nothing you thought you were being loving by saying nothing and Jesus says you're calling that tolerance I'm calling that disobedience I love you you are faithful even to the point of death but I got two problems with you you got some who are deceived and you got others who haven't said a word about it have any of you ever whether personally or with a friend or family member seen some health symptoms that should have been a sign but you ignored them and then when you went to the doctor it had gotten a whole lot worse there is someone dear to me I will not mention the name but someone who literally ignored health symptoms some obvious signs refused to go to the doctor and it ended up costing him his life faith family please hear me tonight and hear me in the spirit in which

I mean it false teaching is a disease that if it does not get addressed immediately it is a cancer to the body of Christ Christ and by the way if you find in your spirit a resistance to what I'm saying it may mean the culture has won you over more than you think because our culture is none of your business the body of Christ is it's all of our business because we want to be conformed into the image of Jesus not play patty cake what's the application verse 16 therefore repent if not I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth that is

I'll pronounce judgment on you if you don't judge it if you don't deal with it I'll deal with them you need to see Pergamum as the exact opposite of Ephesus if you remember that from a few weeks ago let me say it this way just as the Ephesians needed to repent of their lack of compassion Pergamum needed to repent of their lack of conviction and their friends is a beautiful balance Jesus notice this on the screen Jesus is intolerant of tolerance when you're tolerating false teaching amen Jesus is intolerant of tolerance when you're tolerating false teaching now let me just say quickly if you're here tonight and you think that what I've just said means that we are to be an arrogant church always looking for a theological fight all

I can say to you is this either one it's your first night here or two you have not been listening to me for the last three and a half years because if you check me out on this if you've heard me say anything at all I've said this how you stand up for the truth is just as important as that you stand up for the truth right you've heard me say that I'm not arguing for arrogance I'm not arguing for being a church hello it's the first letter the Ephesians I told you you can be doctrinally pure and not have love so go back and listen to that message so in the spirit with which I shepherd and pastor weekly this is what I'm saying we must be a church with an uncompromised commitment to the gospel right which means when we see things that are contrary to the gospel we must confront that's the repentance he's talking about in verse 16 repent of your tolerance that is address the false teaching that's among you

Ephesians 4 5 or 4 15 rather speak the truth in love why so that we will grow up in every way into him who is the head into Christ well he ends with a word of comfort you're like I could use a word of comfort right about now right look at verse 17 he does this in every letter he gives it to him straight he tells him like it is and then in verse 17 he gives him a great promise that is usually referring to the future look at it he who has an ear let him hear what the spirit says to the churches to the one who conquers I'll give him some hidden manna I will give him a white stone with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it now you read that and you're like that's another 30 minutes let me summarize quickly what that verse means it is pointing to a future reality which is common in these letters let's just first deal with manna

[43 : 42] I'll be quick if you'll listen deal deal alright manna God fed Israel with manna they took manna part of it and put it in the ark of the covenant as a sign that God will one day feed his people again Jesus comes on the scene and says what I am the bread that comes down from heaven I'm the bread of life and then he tells his disciples what I will not eat of this with you again until the kingdom he is pointing to a feast a celebration a meal that we have already and not yet we we enjoy him now but for all of eternity we will feast at his table praise God number two stones this one simple stones in the ancient near east were a ticket into a feast a celebration black stone couldn't get in white stone was your entrance into the celebration and so you are you have entrance into this celebration that

God has for you and then lastly the name that is you are able to come in you have all this because you have a new name Jesus has given you that name do you want to know what that name is the Bible says no one knows so I can't tell you all right but whatever that name is we have it in Jesus who is our ultimate name so here's what I think the text is saying that was pretty quick look at this on the screen oh Lord teach us teach us teach us why eat the forbidden fruit of compromise when you've been given the bread of life preach preacher church in the twin cities area why would you eat of the forbidden fruit of compromise when you've been given manna the bread of life when you've been given

Jesus do you remember what Jesus said when the serpent comes to him in the wilderness and offers him the food of compromise it was come on Jesus turning these rocks into bread no big deal do it and Jesus says what man shall not live by bread alone but by the word that comes forth from the father's mouth he's my bread Satan I'm not eating your bread of compromise because I have another bread it's not the bread of the culture it's the bread of God you see compromise is nothing more than filling your stomach with the wrong food so here's the summary of the letter you ready and I love holding these to the end just so you'll say this sermon could have been a whole lot shorter here's the summary you ready are you listening to me have you heard me tonight the word of

God is this I am the ultimate judge not the world I'm the ultimate judge not Pergamum not your employer I'm the ultimate judge and while I love your dedication you lack discernment and discipline so turn from your tolerance turn from eating the forbidden fruit of compromise and enjoy me eat at my table be faithful to the end I leave you tonight with this thought have you ever heard the name of Lou Bowen Lou is a Chinese artist he's become famous for his ability to immerse himself in any environment that he's in in fact it's what gained him the nickname the invisible man for instance here is

Lou standing like he's literally standing there by an escalator do you see him there in the middle right or what about this one he's standing in front of a shelf at a grocery store if you can't see him look at the shoes at the bottom and work your way up all right I mean he is such a gift at being able to do this well one of his most famous series if you will was a series called hiding in the is he would just go along to public areas and he would make himself invisible and you say well how in the world does he do that here is how he does it look at this he starts out by standing out and then he slowly starts painting himself into the color of his environment until he eventually blends right in you let that be a word to us faith family we have not been called to hide in the city we have not been called to blend in but to stand out and that means that no matter how loud the siren's call of compromise may be no matter how alluring the song of tolerance may sound we must firmly be tied to the mast of [49 : 54] God's word it was after all our savior who heard the siren's call to come down off the cross come on down save yourself and he remained faithful to the end so let our seriously berean let our commitment to one another be this if when I hear the voices I struggle and sign to thee to set me free bind me with more bonds and