

Revelation Extra: The Church at Thyatira

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[0 : 0 0] church in Thyatira write the words of the Son of God who has eyes like a flame of fire, whose feet are like burnished bronze. I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. But I have this against you. You tolerate the 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. I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and 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. And all the churches will know that I am He who searches the mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works. 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.

The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earth and pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have given, 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. Would you please pray for me? And let's pray together and ask God to speak to us. Lord, we do ask that for those who have an ear to hear what the Spirit has to say to us this morning. It is good to have this appointment with the great physician. How your Word does surgery on our heart and in our soul. That is a gift of grace.

And so I just pray that you would speak with clarity and that we would listen to what you have to say to us this morning as we look to your Word in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. You may be seated. Amen. You may be seated. They were just a group of shepherds walking through the sand dunes of Solit, France. And as they were walking along, they noticed something sticking out of the ground. It looked like a large rock or some type of stone, and they were intrigued by this. And they went over, they started to dig around it, and they dug for several hours, and they began to realize that there was something significant buried underneath, so much so that they went and got help. They brought them back, and for the next two days they continued to dig until they could begin to discover that this was some kind of a tower, almost like a bell tower of sorts. And so now they realize this was beyond their expertise, and so they had someone come in like an excavation team that could do this professionally, and over the next several days and weeks they finished that dig, and they finally discovered what was buried underneath all that sand. It was a church. In fact, if you find yourself in Solac,

[3 : 2 0] France today, you can actually go and visit. Here's a picture of it. You can visit the church that was buried underneath the sand for over a hundred years. Now, you hear something like that, and you might think, well, that's unique, that's strange. Things like that don't happen very often, and listen, you'd be wrong. In fact, I would submit to you that that's happening all the time, and that that's happening right here in our nation. But I'm not talking about churches that are being buried physically. I'm talking about churches that are being buried spiritually. They are buried underneath the sands of biblical irrelevance. The building still stands, services are still being held, but there is no gospel light. They are, for all practical purposes in the eyes of God, buried.

Ed Stetzer, who's a well-known missiologist, a professor of missions and evangelism at Wheaton College, wrote an article just a couple of months ago in the Washington Post. The title of the article got my attention. The title was, quote, if it doesn't stem its decline, mainline Protestantism has 23 Easter's left. Here's what Stetzer writes, quote, the news of mainline Protestantism's decline is hardly new. The trend lines are showing a trajectory towards zero in both those who attend

regularly and those who identify with mainline denominations 23 years from now. And while it is not the whole story, there is an argument for at least part of what has happened. Breein, listen to this. Over the past few decades, the mainline Protestants have abandoned central doctrines deemed offensive to the culture. Things like Jesus died for sins. Jesus literally rose again. The Bible is God's Word. The need for personal conversion and many others. Some of the mainline Protestant leaders have rejected or minimized these beliefs, hear this, as an invitation for people to join a more culturally relevant and socially acceptable church. A recent study in the Journal of Scientific Study of Religion done in Canada reported that 93% of clergy and 83% of church attenders in growing churches believed that Jesus literally rose from the dead. Compared against 56% of clergy and 67% of church attenders in declining churches that did not believe in a literal resurrection. If you don't hear anything else I say this morning, I want you to hear this. So everybody listen, everybody look this way.

Nothing will bury a church quicker than abandoning the gospel. Nothing will bury, at least in the eyes of God, will bury a church quicker than abandoning the gospel. And that's not new because it's exactly what's happening in the church at Thyatira. Look at verse 18.

And to the angel of the church at Thyatira write, the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like a flame of fire, whose feet are like burnished bronze. Now, we've seen each week that these introductions to each of the letters is tied specifically to the context that that church is in. Ephesus had lost her light, so Jesus reveals himself as what? The one who holds the lampstones. Last week, Pergamum lived in a context where the government had the power of the sword. Jesus reveals himself as what? The one who has the two-edged sword. And so, if you're following the series, you're starting to pick up on the very fact that we need to be asking when we read the introduction, what does this mean and how does it relate to this church? First, what does it mean? This imagery of eyes, of fire, feet like burnished bronze. Well, the imagery of fire and metal is not uncommon in Scripture, is it? I mean, you see it frequently, and it's the idea of purification. In fact, you see this in the book of Revelation. Just go back one chapter. Revelation chapter 1 verse 15 says, His feet were like burnished bronze refined in a furnace. Revelation chapter 3, so one chapter over. Revelation 3 verse 18, I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire. You're familiar with 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 7, so that the tested genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire. This imagery of fire and metal, it's all about purification, purging, cleansing, and this is all throughout the Bible.

[8 : 34] It's all throughout the Old and New Testament. How many of you know your Ten Commandments? Few of you. All right, that's good. All right. How many of you at least know the first one, right? You shall have no other gods before me. In other words, I want my people to be pure.

I don't want my people contaminated with other gods. I want your loyalty to me. I want your worship to me to be pure. No other gods. And then you pick up on this again in the New Testament. How many of you know your Beatitudes? Just say yes, all right? You know your Beatitudes. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. In other words, it's the same idea that you see in the Ten Commandments.

Your heart must be pure before God. That is, your heart is singularly devoted to Jesus. You do not want anything else. You want Him alone. And then again, this imagery continues throughout the Bible.

We'd spend all afternoon going through all of it, but the church is to be spotless, without blemish. Jesus washes her with water. We're to be holy as God is holy, and on and on and on, you see? That is what this imagery means. It's the imagery of purification. Now, the next question is, if that's what it means, how does it relate to Thyatira? Well, they would have understood this language, number one, socially, and number two, spiritually. Let's unpack that. First, socially, if anybody would have understood the language of fire and metal and purification, it's this city.

[10 : 10] Because, you see, of all the seven cities mentioned in these two chapters, Thyatira is the smallest. She doesn't have prestige like everybody else. So, for instance, Ephesus, we've likened to New York with all of its culture and commerce. Smyrna, we've likened to Southern California with all of its beauty and affluence. Pergamum, we've likened to Washington, D.C. with all the political power.

So, Thyatira would be likened to... Anybody have a guess? You are in the other service. Pittsburgh, that's right. It's exactly right. Pittsburgh. Or it was just a lucky guess, all right? And that's not a slam

to anybody from Pittsburgh. You'll understand why that Thyatira was a very modern expression of today's Pittsburgh, because it was industrial. It's blue collar. It's skilled labor. People there drive pickup trucks, listen to country music. Their favorite comedian is Larry the Cable Guy. People from Thyatira look like this. They have their name on their shirt. They've got dirt on their hands. They're calloused. They're hardworking, skilled, labored individuals. They're bakers and potters and linen workers. In fact, some of you will remember in the book of Acts, Lydia, who's a linen worker, was from Thyatira. And so, of all the products, though, that this city made, guess what? Now you'll understand the reference to Pittsburgh. Guess what they are most known for? Their metals. And guess what specific metal they're known for? I'll give you one guess. Bronze. Steel. That was a good guess. Bronze. Bronze, which is how Jesus reveals himself here. And so, if anybody would have understood this imagery of fire and bronze, it's the church in Thyatira. But they would have known that this meant more than just their social setting. It was also a spiritual reference as well. Here's what I mean. Follow me. Follow me. This is big, okay? So, if you have a skilled labor job in Thyatira, you are a part of what's known as a guild.

[12 : 23] The best expression modern is a union. You're a part of this guild. And every guild had a god. And every god had a festival. And every festival had certain rituals that you had to do at that festival. Certain sex acts that had to be performed. Certain food that had to be eaten. Certain rituals that you had to partake in. Well, now you're beginning to see that there's a rub if you're a Christian. How am I going to be employed in this guild and participate in the festival? And the problem in Thyatira is this. You can't be employed in a guild if you don't participate in the festival. Let me ask you something. Has your faith ever conflicted with your work? Or the other way around, has your work ever been a conflict with your faith? And some of you have expressed examples like this. Like, if you're going to be a teacher here, you're going to have to teach this material. If you're going to work at this financial firm, you're going to have to fudge the numbers. If you're going to be respected in this medical community, keep your opinions about abortion private. If you're going to be accepted in this arts community, just don't let it be known you're a Christian. You can have employment in Thyatira, just don't put Christian on the application. So what are you going to do? You've got to work. Do you go along or do you not? So what's the point of the introduction?

[14 : 08] The point of the introduction, I hope, is clear now. Jesus is reminding His church of her purity. Translation, Christian construction worker, Christian university professor, Christian wedding planner, Christian administrator, Christian auto mechanic.

Who do you serve? I have eyes of fire. I have feet of metal. I am a purifying king, a purifying Savior. Are you going to be pure? Because the number one threat, listen, the number one threat to your purity is idolatry. The number one threat to your purity is idolatry. And it's what Jesus is about to address next. But first, some encouragement.

Verse 20. Verse 19. I know your works, your love, and faith, and service, and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. In other words, Jesus says, some of you in this church are being loyal.

[15 : 20] Some of you are being pure. Some of you are holding fast. Your love for one another is seen in your service. Your strong faith is being seen in your patient endurance, even in suffering. And here's what I love about you. You're getting better with age. Age. Your latter works are better than your former works. You're like the David Hasselhoff of Christians. Right? It doesn't matter how old. If you don't know who David Hasselhoff is, consider yourself blessed. All right? But it doesn't matter how old you get. You just keep getting better. You keep looking stronger. Berean, can I ask you, how are you aging? What do you see when you look in the spiritual mirror? I'm not talking about physical aging. I'm talking about spiritual aging. Some of you have been Christians for 15 years. Can you tell it? Can it be said of you that your latter days are better than your former days?

[16 : 26] Will it be said of you, you were more faithful at 80 than you were at 20? Jesus says, this is what I love about you. There are some of you that are remaining pure and loyal and steadfast in your faith.

Great, great illustration of this. Someone on our staff pointed me in the direction this week to Chinese teapots and how they season Chinese teapots.

Are you familiar with this? Full disclosure, I know nothing about teapots, all right, or hot tea because I tend to drink manly drinks, all right, but that's just me, okay?

That's just me, not into the hot tea. Did that come out wrong? What I meant to say is it's perfectly fine for you to drink hot tea as long as you're a woman. Anyways, did that come out wrong again? I know what I was trying to say and I'm pretty sure I said it, but anyways, I don't know that much about how I'm in trouble. I don't know that much about teapots, but someone on our staff mentioned this and I thought that's worth like investigating and I was fascinated by it.

[17 : 34] It's how they season Chinese teapots. Here's what they do. They immerse the teapot into the tea and what happens is the pores of the teapot start to adapt to the flavor of that tea and this is a direct quote from the article that I read.

This is so good. What a great illustration. As this is done repeatedly over time, the aged teapot starts to optimize the flavor to the fullest extent.

I thought, what a powerful illustration. Imagine what we would taste like if we immersed ourself in Jesus repeatedly over time.

Oh, your latter days are far greater than your former. But even though some of you are remaining loyal, others of you have fallen for idols.

Verse 20. I have this against you, that you tolerate the 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.

[18 : 51] In other words, there are some here that have fallen in the church to idolatry. There is a woman in the congregation. By the way, I don't think her name is Jezebel. Do you remember last week when we said that the Nicolaitans were nothing more than a modern expression of what happened in the days of Balaam?

Right? Do you remember that? Well, whoever this woman is, she's simply doing what Jezebel did back in the days of Israel. Do you remember what happened back in 1 Kings? Right?

Jezebel, a woman from a foreign land, marries King Ahab. King Ahab is like a modern version of Homer Simpson. Right? He is a dope if I've ever seen one.

He has no backbone whatsoever. And Jezebel, Jezebel influences him and persuades him to lead the nation of Israel into the worship of, do you remember? Baal.

Or Baal. And what Jezebel keeps saying is, listen, it's okay to say yes to Yahweh, just say yes to Baal also. In other words, why don't we have a little mixing?

[19 : 54] Why just have one when you could have several? And whoever this woman is in Thyatira, she's doing the same thing. She is a woman of great personality, a great teacher, a fresh word from the Lord, probably has her own show on TBN, but what she's saying is, how about instead of being Jesus only, let's be Jesus plus.

And if you don't think that's still happening today, your head is in the sand. How about we take Christianity, it's a practice known as syncretism.

Let's take Christianity and some of postmodernism. It sounds like this. We'll believe in Jesus. We'll affirm Jesus. We'll support Jesus.

After all, he's a way. Did you hear what I just said? After all, he is a way. There could be other ways, but we'll just be the Jesus way, but we won't say anything about any other possible ways.

Of course, the problem with that is Jesus' own words that he is the way. He's not a way, he's the way. But what syncretism is, it's saying, why don't we take a little bit of postmodernism and a little bit of Jesus, put it in our spiritual blender and mix it all up?

[21 : 14] Or what about Jesus and evolution or Jesus and moralism or Jesus and Judaism or Jesus and a little bit of Islam?

And what we'll be able to do is keep our popularity, keep our financial security, and keep our social acceptability. We will eat our idol cake and Jesus too.

After all, why have a master when you can have a merger? This is exactly what the woman who is acting a Jezebel is doing in the church at Thyatira, and it's exactly what's happening in churches even today.

Now, some of you might be here and you would say, I'm kind of new to the Christianity thing, I don't understand all these words like idolatry. Pastor, I'll be honest with you, when I go home this

afternoon, there's not a statue of Baal in my living room.

And I understand that. But here is as simple as I can explain idolatry. Right? Let's put it on the screen. Idolatry is simply mixing your worship of God with anything else.

[22 : 30] Look at me. He will have no other gods before Him. And that's actually for your good because the only thing you need is Him alone.

And that's why language, listen, that's why language like adultery is used in this passage. I mean, this is intense. But hey, at Berean, we don't skip hard passages.

Amen? Let's just look at the text. And it's dealing with things like sexual immorality, adultery. Why? I think that, there's no doubt that there were certain acts happening at these festivals and that sexual immorality was probably a real thing that's happening here with Jezebel.

I'm not denying that. But listen, what I am saying is that's not the real issue. The real issue is not immorality. The real issue is idolatry because immorality is nothing more than the outworking of idolatry.

You do greedy acts because you worship the God of money. Do you see? The issue is the idol of the heart.

[23 : 42] The feet just happen to follow. That is why language like adultery is used here and not just here. Listen to James chapter 4, verse 4.

You adulterous people, do you not know, follow the language, that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Friendship with the world is spiritual adultery. Why? Because it's the pure of heart. It's the no other gods before him. He's the one of flaming eyes and bronzed feet.

He wants his people to be pure. He does not want your worship to go to anyone else but him alone. Why? Because he's the only one worthy of that. The issue is the idol of our heart.

That's what we have to understand. Now, if you are like me at this point, you're saying, okay, disclosure here, okay, honest moment for your pastor, like, I'm Jezebel.

[24 : 51] And my guess is so are you. Anybody with me willing to say, that my heart is prone to wonder, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love?

Am I alone? Please talk to me, right? I am alone, right? No, we are Jezebel.

our heart. Our heart does not love the Lord our God with all its might and strength every day. And so, if we stopped right here, I would feel really hopeless.

I would feel like there's no place for me. I would feel like, but God, sometimes I do worship other gods. Sometimes my heart does run affectionately after other things above you.

and I don't want it to be that way, but sometimes that happens. Is there any hope for me? Look at the next phrase, verse 21. I gave her, that is Jezebel, time to repent.

[25 : 54] Can I tell you the good news of the gospel? Please look right here. Jesus receives Jezebels. That's awesome news. That is for those of you that your heart has run after other things, if you would simply today say, here's my heart, Lord, take and seal it, seal it for thy throne above, he will receive you.

There is hope for Jezebels if they will repent and return to the one true and living God.

that's awesome news. The problem is Jezebel, maybe like some of you, refused to repent.

Look what happens. She refuses to repent of her sexual immorality, verse 22. Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed. So here comes the judgment because she had the opportunity to repent, but she did not.

She will face sickness. Those who commit adultery with her, that is those that go along with her teaching will be brought into suffering unless they repent of their works as well. Verse 23, I will strike her children dead.

[27 : 04] Here's what this means in the context because again, that's a tough phrase, but it's actually easy in the understanding of the text. That is, not her biological children, she will be stripped of all her followers.

If she does not repent, and if her followers do not repent, she will be stripped of her followers, and her followers will face the same judgment as her.

This is not referring to biological children. It is referring to the followers of a false teacher. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches the mind and heart and will give to each of you according to your works.

In other words, I'm going to put it on YouTube. And the Christian nightly news. I am going to make an example out of Jezebel for all the churches to learn they are to have no other gods before me. Now, what do we do? At this point, we would say, okay, wow, I want to be in that first category that's faithful to the end that the latter works are better than the former.

[28 : 13] So, what do we do? Look what Jesus says. Here's the application part of the letter. To the rest of you, you, in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who do not have, have not learned some of the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden, just hold fast to what you have until I come.

This is the short and sweet of it. It's this. Do you remember what I said earlier? Nothing will bury a church quicker than abandoning the gospel. So, guess what?

Hold fast to the gospel. You know what is true, you know what is right, hold fast to that until I come. So, I would offer three things for us by way of application that we might be a church that holds fast to the gospel.

The first is this, is that I would encourage us to be spiritually humble, to be spiritually humble. I take this from the fact that this is happening in a great church. This is happening in the church at Thyatira where there are people who are doing good things.

Listen, this is a word for us. Berean has been growing. Have you noticed? Just look outside, all right? We've been growing and what would be easy for us to say is because we've been quote successful, let's kind of move on to other things.

[29 : 27] But what we need to do is to say, listen, our past, it doesn't guarantee us anything in this moment or anything in the future. We are thankful for 50 plus years of faithful gospel ministry, but that doesn't guarantee we'll be faithful to the gospel now or faithful to the gospel 50 years from now.

It is but by the grace of God go we. Amen. We are not sitting here today preaching a passage like this saying we have it all figured out.

Wrong. We need to remain spiritually humble realizing that this can happen to us. Friday night, I was watching a documentary late on Friday evening about Philip Seymour Hoffman.

What an incredibly gifted actor. Do you know his story? Do you know what happened in his life? He actually struggled with drugs and alcohol tremendously, but he went, listen, he went 23 years sober. 23 years didn't touch a drop until what happened. Do you remember? One night, he fell off the wagon and he overdosed and died at age 46.

[30 : 44] Our past success means nothing. We need to be humble right now realizing it is only by God's grace that we walk in purity.

Amen. So be spiritually humble if you want to be faithful. Number two is beware of your idol.

Beware of your idol. A little bit of heart surgery here spiritually for us.

The problem of a wolf in sheep's clothing is it looks just like a sheep. Jezebel doesn't walk into your life and say, hi, I'm Jezebel.

I'm here to teach you about the things of Satan. That's not how it works. Nobody in Thyatira would have given her the time of day if she would have done that. No, what happens is the spirit of Jezebel comes in deceptively.

Which means, this is so important, please don't zone out on me. You have to do the hard work of trying to discern what your idol is.

[31 : 53] Where is it that you can be so easily deceived? And I know of no better person to help diagnose this than Tim Keller who has written, your homework assignment is read Counterfeit Gods.

It is a great book. And of course, the problem with counterfeit gods is they look like real ones. It's so subtle, it's so deceptive, and he gives four questions that I want to give you. I'd encourage you to jot these down.

Four questions for you to ask yourself to help figure out what's that thing in your life that's competing against Jesus. Number one, what do you think about the most?

Or put it this way, what do you think about when you don't have to think about anything? So if you're thinking about work, but then you get a break from work and you can just let your mind drift, what does it tend to drift to?

Money, relationships, your appearance? Number two, what do you spend your money on the most? Follow the money trail because that often points us in the direction of where our treasure really is.

[32 : 52] Number three, what gets you emotional? What's your biggest moment of happiness and your lowest moment of sadness? What brings you joy? And number four, what do you look for or what do you look to for salvation?

If this were to happen, everything would be right in your life. Now, I know this is seemingly silly, all right, but follow me. I'm trying to intentionally be practical just to show you how simple this can really be.

So if you were to say, I tend to find myself thinking a lot about the upcoming football season and I spend a lot of money on the Vikings and when they win, I'm really, really happy. When they lose, I'm really, really down.

And the thing that would make life make sense is a Super Bowl championship. I figured if I got an amen at all, it'd be right there, all right?

Now, we do kind of laugh at that, but I'm actually being serious because if you don't think sports is an idol, your head really is in the sand. They build temples to those idols.

[33 : 59] They're called stadiums and thousands of people go every week to worship. I'm not saying there's anything wrong with following a sports team. Of course, I'm not saying that, but what I'm saying is that even something like that, if you're not careful, is a competition in your heart to loyalty to Jesus.

If your answer to these questions is not Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, you found your idol. You found your Jezebel.

And it looks so simple, so deceptive, like it's just family, it's just a sports team, and they in and of themselves are not wrong at all unless they are your heart's deepest affection.

I will have no other gods before me. Spiritual humility, this could happen to me. Discerning my idol, where does my heart tend to go instead of Jesus?

And then three is be content with the gospel. Be content with the gospel. Here's all I want to say, and I mean this with every ounce in my body is this, rather than looking for a word from God, could we just be content with the word of God?

[35 : 26] I mean, what concerns me with a lot of Christians that I talk to is they're like, I've got to have something new. Come on, give me something fresh. Talk about something other than the gospel this week, all right?

Can we get past this whole Jesus and Him crucified thing? Here's my answer, No! Because I can spend the rest of my life there and never fully exhaust it.

Those Christians who always need something new are one well-written book away from heresy. Be content.

Hold fast to what you have until I come. You have the gospel. You know what is true. Hold fast to that. Be content in that.

Other churches may go faster. They may be cooler. They may be bigger. Whatever. I'm telling you at Berean, here is all we know. Christ and Him crucified. Christ and Him crucified and an empty tomb.

[36 : 30] That's all we know. And we're going to put that on repeat until I can't talk anymore. Hold fast to what you have because it can happen to you.

And they, nothing, going to bury a church in the eyes of God faster than abandoning the gospel. Here's how the letter ends. Good news. The one who conquers, verse 26, who keeps my works until the end, to him I give authority over the nations.

He will rule them with a rod of iron. As earth and pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself received authority from my Father, I will give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

I don't have time to unpack all that. I'll just tell you short and sweet what it means. And by the way, are you seeing how every one of these letters ends with a looking to the future? And that's so, that's a sermon in and of itself that Christians don't live in the now, we live in the then.

This is what's coming and that impacts my now. Every letter keeps pointing to what's coming when Jesus returns. And here's what Jesus says in this.

[37 : 32] There is coming, this is awesome, this is good news, Christian, are you ready? There's going to be a great reversal. You look around you right now and you see who has authority.

You look around and you see who's passing judgment. There is coming a day when that will be turned on its head. And Jesus will reign and we will reign with Him.

You say, what does that mean for me in light of what this letter is about? Here it is. Put it on the screen. It means this. There is nothing you will lose in this life that will not be given to you a hundredfold in the kingdom.

But pastor, I lost my job. I lost the relationship. I stood my ground. I remain loyal to what you called me to. And there were consequences.

Yes, there are consequences. But I'm giving to you a kingdom. There is coming a day when you will be given reward above reward above reward and there will be nothing in this life you will have lost for the sake of Christ that you will not be given back a thousand times over in eternity.

[38 : 47] So see the one with flaming eyes and bronze feet who is calling us to purity, not to be contaminated by the world, but to remain faithful until he comes.

And when he comes, it will all be turned on its head and everything wrong will be made right. I end with this.

Do you remember the speech in 1856? Some of you were there. Maybe not. 1856.

Springfield, Illinois. Abraham Lincoln. The words that still echo throughout the history of our nation when he said, quote, a house divided against itself cannot stand.

I believe this government cannot endure half slave and half free. I do not anticipate the union to be dissolved. I do not expect the house to fall, but I do expect that it will cease to be divided.

[39 : 57] It will become all one thing or all the other. And he's right. He's right not just for a government because a nation divided will fall.

He's right in many other areas of life. A marriage divided will dissolve. A team divided will lose. And hear me this morning, a church church that is divided in heart will be buried.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Thank you.