

Sword ■■ and Stone ■ : Repent. Remain. Receive. t■ | Revelation 2:12-17 ■

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[0 : 00] Welcome to Ontario Community Church, where we are encouraging, equipping, and engaging lives! I'm Pastor Patrick Daly and each week I balance the grace and love of Jesus Christ! Today you'll be hearing week 6 of our sermon series through the book of Revelation.

We are looking at Revelation 2, verses 12-17, which is Christ's letter to the church in Pergamum. Now, here's something powerful to note before you listen. Pergamum was known as a city where Satan's throne was, yet Jesus commends this church for holding fast to his name, even when Antipas, his faithful witness, was martyred among them. But Jesus also confronts this church. Some in the church were following the teaching of Balaam and the Nicolaitans, Christians, participating in idol feasts and sexual immorality. This wasn't just a matter of eating food. It was an act of worship to other gods. And Christ calls for them, the ones that were compromised, to repent or to face judgment from the sword of his mouth. What a reminder for us today.

We live in a world that is full of compromise and temptation. We also have to consider how we use our bodies, for they reveal our true worship and loyalty. In this sermon, you'll hear how we gave everyone at the church a white stone as a reminder of God's promises. This is a connection to an earlier sermon through the parables of Christ about counting the cost and casting your pebble to go all in for Christ. This time we are receiving the white stone in return. And this is a beautiful imagery of salvation and transformation in Christ. Let us refuse compromise. Let us hold fast to Christ's name and let us remain faithful to him alone. And let us honor God with our bodies and our worship.

Let us now listen to today's message. Sword and stone, repent, receive, remain. Well, good morning. This morning we are continuing our sermon series through the book of Revelation.

It's been very interesting seeing these, how Christ is speaking to these different churches. These seven churches in Revelation are lessons that we can think of, we can learn of today as they were applicable back then. We learned about how Christ is holding the seven stars in his hand and then he walks among the lampstands, symbolizing the completeness of the church. We had in beginning the church in Ephesus, the one that lost its first love and how important it is for us to keep Christ at the center, for us to love God and for us to love people at the same time. How important that is for us.

[3 : 05] We also went into the church in Smyrna, this suffering church where it was talking about the synagogue of Satan and that there was going to be even more trials and tribulations. What a terrible thing to happen.

But to know that God is there is very powerful. And today we are going into Revelation chapter 2 verses 12 through 12 through 17. And I want us to turn there. I want us to open the text. And as we're doing that, here is a church where you're seeing much more warlike language. You see a church that is divided as it were, that there are people that are compromising and yet there are also people that are remaining.

It sounds a lot like churches today. Not this church, right? How important it is for us to remain in Christ and for us, we worship the living God. It's important for us to also know, and we'll go further into this.

We worship God, we open the word, and we all partake in communion. How important and how sacred is that time together when we eat of the bread and drink of the cup? It's important for us to know that this is a way for us to honor and glorify the Lord. It is an act of worship. And we will see in here that at times, there are people who will partake in meals to other gods. We'll also see in here about sexual promiscuity, this sense of an act of worship towards another god as well.

And this happening as infiltration to this church in Pergamum. So it's very interesting for us to see. So are we all there, church? All right. The church in Pergamum. Let's read it together, starting in verse 12.

[5 : 18] And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write, the words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword. Ooh, so it goes right to judgment, right?

This two-edged sword. Verse 13. 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 one thing, a few things against you. You have some, right? Remember, there's some compromisers, 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, sacrifice to idols. There it is, right?

And practice sexual immorality. So also you have some who hold the teachings of the Nicolaitans. Do you remember this? We saw this earlier. 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 I will give him a what? We should have one, right? A white stone with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it. That's why, you know, as a good representation, you received a white stone. Now there's no name on it, but it's a good idea as a representation, right? When we're thinking about us receiving the Lord and us remaining faithful in Christ, this representation of a white stone that we receive. It's just beautiful language in there. And no, I'm not going to make up some fake names and give them to you. You know, one person will be named Richard, another will be Sally and Sue and Joe. No, it's, it says in the text, right, that no one knows except the one who receives it. And it's just beautiful language in there.

[7 : 24] And so in this, we, we start off by seeing, right? Christ is identifying himself, but this time he's not saying, you know, the words of the first and the last, right? The one who died and came again, or I'm the one that holds the seven stars. He's using this language of the one who has power and the ability to judge. Now in scripture, we find there's many times the use of sword. And this time in revelation, you find that a sword being used here is a large sword, especially when it's talking about proceeding from the mouth, right? Something that is a powerful weapon. And let's not be confused other times in the gospel accounts and other times in scriptures where sword is being used, being represented as a small blade. Here we're talking about a ginormous or a very large sword, right? Representing judgment, also representing protection in here. And so Christ is identifying them. He is the one who has this sharp two-edged sword, right? It is the judicial word, the ability to judge, the ability to protect, or even to wage war in this. And so Jesus is identifying himself. And it's interesting in here, right? The words of him who has the sharp two-edged swords, he goes on saying, I know where you dwell, right? He goes on by saying, I know where you live, right? Essentially, right? And it goes on further saying where Satan's throne is. Oh, you read that. What do we do with that, right? That this church was close to the dwelling place, the throne, as it were, of where Satan is. So this throne is talking about a position of power.

And in this, we'll go into this in just a second. And what that is, is that we think Satan's throne is talking about spiritual warfare, this idea of the battle between good and evil, that this presence, some scholars say it could have represents the presence of the emperor and emperor worship. Others say that this Satan's throne was a representation of the pagan temples, right? That existed back then. But others say it was even the presence. Some argue it's the emperor Nero.

There's a lot of debate on what exactly that is. But in any case, we're talking about a structure, as it were, something that was more permanent and close proximity to this church. And so, right, it's talking about that. And that is some deep language right there, right? But yet in that, despite the existence of Satan's throne, right, this presence of evil that's happening, they are remaining in Christ. That's something that's beautiful, right? That Christ is honoring their loyalty under pressure and the presence of Satan, as it were. They hold fast. They hang on.

They remain true to his name. And it says in the text here, you hold fast my name and you did not deny my faith, right? That's wonderful. That is a wonderful commendation that's happening here.

You did not deny my faith, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness who was killed among you where Satan lives. Now, what's interesting about this is, you know, when you find a name in there, you got to see where it's connected in here. And unfortunately, with all the efforts and all the commentaries I could find, I found very little on who this guy is. There's not much on him, but there's enough to see that the Lord wanted that name to be written in the book of Revelation and for us to read.

[11 : 20] What do we know about him? Well, all we do know is that he was a faithful witness, much like how, if you go back to the beginning where John is talking about that he is one who is a faithful witness. If you go into verse five, right, John's talking to the seven churches from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness. So this is a person who is also very dedicated to the Lord. The same kind of language to describe John is the same language used to describe this guy, Antipas. And so he was killed.

He was killed among them. And whenever there's a martyr or some sort of attempt that happens, that can really affect our morale. That can be discouraging, that can scare us as it were. But yet, despite that, they remain true to Christ, right? And so that's something that is remarkable, right?

The congregation remained. They remained. They showed their faithfulness even with the death of Antipas. Well, those are the good things. We go on in there. What do we see, church? I have not one. I have a few things against you. Uh-oh, right? You have the good and the bad, and here you have a little bit of the ugly, right? Some who hold to 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. What in the world is he talking about? We read this and we're like, I don't fully understand this. And I want us to turn, actually, to numbers. That should be the next slide. And this will actually help us in our understanding of what exactly is going on here. Turn to numbers. It's going to be on page 155 of your ESV Pew Bible. And you'll see here, um, oh, excuse me, 157.

You'll see the pattern here, and you'll see why it's so, this type of worship that had happened was not only exists in the Old Testament, but shows up in the New Testament and shows up here in Revelation. When you see a pattern like that, that's something we've got to pay attention to, that it's something that is just a reoccurring theme, as it were. So Numbers chapter 25, verses one through three. Are we all there, church? So it's just three verses, okay? I want you to see this.

While Israel lived in Shittim, the people began to whore with the daughters of Moab. These invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. So that's a very important note for us to see. They are eating of this food, and they are partaking in worshipping another god. So in this context, they would eat of the food, and they would worship other gods. What we see in Revelation is they would eat of these meals, and they would partake in sexual immorality, which was their dedication, their devotion, or their worship to other gods. Fascinating that we see this here in Numbers and in Revelation, and it even goes into first, I want to say it's first Corinthians, that the Apostle Paul mentions that as well.

[15 : 08] So sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. So Israel yoked himself to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. So you see that back then.

We turn back to Revelation, as we're seeing, and that helps us with our understanding that the participation, the partaking of these meals, right, put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel so that they might eat food. So do you see? There's something that's happening here with the meals and the sexual immorality that had happened. And they're tied together in here. And so when we're reading this, it's like, okay, what's happening is that two things happening, these feasts and the sexual immorality that's happening. Now, when you read this, you may think, well, isn't it just food?

Right? Oftentimes we read this, they're like, okay, they're eating food that's sacrificed to an idol. What is the big deal here? When I mentioned the idea, the notion that we partake in communion, it is an act of worship to Christ, right? That we are remembering Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

In that context, it's very similar, not to say they would take part in communion, but they would take part in a meal as an act of worship to another God. And that's what they're speaking out against, is that you don't do that, right? When we come together and we partake in communion, it is that which is sacred and that which is holy. We don't partake in other meals as an act of worship to another God that leads into sexual immorality. Now, in speaking of that, it's important for us to think where is our heart and what is it devoted to? And we also have to think of our bodies, our bodies being a temple. Our bodies are to honor and glorify the Lord, not to be promiscuous in sexual relations. And that's something that when we read that kind of language, or we think of this kind of language, it's kind of hard for us to think nowadays. But in any sense, it is something that we should take note because we see this as a pattern that has existed within Scripture.

So in other words, the meals led to the sexual immorality, which was worship to another God. And that is the sin that was happening to the point where Christ is saying that I'm going to, well, wage war against you, right? If you go on in verse 15, some of you hold to the teachings of the Nicolaitans, which is similar, right? When we're talking about idol worship. In verse 16, therefore repent, if not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth.

[18:00] So that sin, as it were, was so, is so bad that Christ is going to come to the church and war against these people. And that's kind of, again, it's hard for us to kind of understand and wrap our minds around it. But it's important nonetheless, because it's in the word. So when we talk again about our bodies, our bodies belong to the Lord. Our bodies are sacred. And the point is, we're not going to use our bodies to worship another God. That's the point in here. Okay. I have to be very careful when I'm mentioning bodies and sacrifices and food and all these things, but it's in who are you worshiping?

Are you using your body or these meals to worship the Lord or to worship another God? And so in this, we see that Christ then is saying, look, you've got to repent. Verse 17, 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. I will give him a white stone with a new name written on it.

And so again, when you see this, he who has an ear, let him hear, right? It's to hear, to understand, to understand what Christ is saying here, right? Commending the church for the good that they do, and also correcting the church for the wrong that they do. Now, it's also important to note that it's not everyone in this church that's worshiping idols, so to speak. There are those that are holding fast and they are remaining. And that's what Christ has given the thumbs up on. Keep doing what you're doing. He's specifically talking about warring against the ones that are not going to change their mind.

It's very heavy language, I admit. If they refuse, he will wage war against them with the sword of his mouth. Now, when it's talking about the one who conquers, it's talking about the hidden manna. And we find this throughout scripture. We're not going to turn to there, but we find that God supplies for his people. God provides what the people need. We find that in the Old Testament, right? The hidden manna that would feed the people. We also think of in the New Testament where Christ is the new manna, the hidden manna, the bread of life, right? Right before when Christ is saying, I am the bread of life, he talks about how he is the manna. And it's like this wonderful connection when we're talking about this. We see in Revelation this receiving the hidden manna, giving the white stone. And we have to think that when we come to the Lord, we remain in him. We've got to place ourselves in the security, in the arms of Christ. And we remain with whatever is happening in our own lives or whatever is happening in our own culture. This kind of language that we see in

Revelation can certainly be very difficult for us. But nevertheless, there may be a situation where you might have the throne of Satan or you might have Satan dwelling there. When we're talking about the spiritual war that is happening between good and evil, let us be reminded in knowing Christ, Christ will be victorious. He is victorious. And we are on the winning side and we remain in him.

[21 : 31] We don't sacrifice ourselves to other gods though. We remain rooted. And the reward that we receive is something that is remarkable in that. And so we have the new name, right? The nourishment, the acceptance, and the identity. We have to think of how when we come to Christ, we are a new creation and we are called to grow in the Lord. In this kind of context, we are seeing how that pressure from culture, pressure from evil, pressure from the world as it were. And for some of us, we may think of those kind of battles we might have faced. You yourself may have gone through a battle between good and evil. Hopefully, none of you have been by Satan's throne. I hope that's none of the case. But if you have, stay strong in the Lord. Remain in him. And so we go now to the, you see in here that Christ commands to repent, remain, and receive, right? So let's go to that next one, that next slide in here. So Christ judges and protects by his sword, right? The two-edged sword is showing the strength and the power of Christ, right? And we also think what's so interesting is Christ is the word and the two-edged sword is also been represented by the word. So it's like this nice little parallel. It's a little hard to understand when you really try to wrap your mind around it. But in this, it's showing nonetheless that Christ has the power and the authority. In this context, when you see the mentioning of the sword, it's talking about judgment.

And there is a, in your, in your notes, in your Bible study, you'll see that there is a difference between the sword that Christ uses in Revelation and the sword that's used elsewhere. Remember, it's the size of the sword, but also what the sword is being used for. And in this sense, it's judgment.

And so Christ knows our hearts and he knows where we live, right? I don't want Christ ever saying, I know where you live. I mean, I know he does, but just hearing those kinds of words is like, uh, all right. Uh, what did I do? Right? We think about these kinds of things. Um, but we have to consider our hearts, right? Is it devoted to the Lord or not? And we have to consider where is our, where is our home, right? Where is our hearts? Is it devoted to Christ? Is our home? Is it secure in Christ? That's something that can be very convicting for us, but that's something we have to consider for all of us. And also ask yourself the question then, um, do I feel, have I felt pressure from culture? Have I felt pressure from the enemy and how will I remain in Christ despite that kind of pressure? For some of us, we may be having a lot of pressure these days, right? For some of us, maybe not so, but in those moments where you receive pressure, remain in the Lord. The second thing then is your table and your body reveal your what church, your loyalty, right? And so we think again, it's not just about, uh, it's just food. It's much more than that. It is what you are partaking or who you are worshiping. That is the thing we have to consider. And when we consider the throne and the dwelling place of Satan, right? Eating the sacrifice is again, it is the participation in worship to another God. We have got to be mindful of this. And again, the food would lead into sexual immorality like we see in revelation or the food would lead into bowing to another God, just as we found in numbers. And so it is showing loyalty and dedication to another God. May it not be so for us.

May we partake in communion. We should have had communion this Sunday. I feel like this would be a perfect message for it, right? Um, when we partake in communion, we are coming together. We are remembering Jesus Christ for the sacrifice he did. He made, right? We are coming together. It's an act of worship, right? And when we think of our bodies, once again, may it live in such a way that honors and glorifies the Lord. There's so much scripture that talks about this sense of holiness, the sense of purity, the sense of dedication. When we see verses that talk about our body being a temple, that's very convicting, right? May our bodies honor the Lord.

And we have to think, well, what table am I choosing, right? What meals am I partaking in? And how will I honor God with my body? How will I do so? The third thing here is to repent, remain, and receive. And what we see in here is that Christ, um, he's coming to the church and he's telling these compromisers, you've got to change your mind. You've got to repent of your sin, of your compromise. Now for we can think for all of us, right? We have to repent. We have to change our mind for who Christ is so that we can come to believe in him, believing in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. But then of course, it says in here to remain now remaining, despite the pressure, you remain dedicated to the Lord. I can't imagine that time period where people are worshiping idols as it were. But I can also think of the time in which we live in.

[27 : 13] We may not see necessarily this exact situation, but we can certainly think of pressures that happen in our own culture, things that happen in our own life that how loyal are we and how dedicated are we to the Lord? May you remain in Christ. Now, for some of us, we can think of, um, times when, you know, I think the classic example is, um, teenagers, right? When you think of peer pressure, right? Are you going to smoke the cigarette, right? Are you going to do drugs or whatever it is?

But peer pressure doesn't stop there, unfortunately, right? We still have people that are trying to pressure us, whether it's on social media, right? People that you follow on YouTube or Rumble or TikTok, right? Or even people that we meet. We've got to remain rooted in Christ. That's so important for us, right? And so in remaining, we receive manna, God providing, and the white stone, that new identity.

Let us think of how wonderful it is to receive that white stone. I won't know what your name is, but certainly you will. In this, we're going to go to our application then. How should we respond?

Well, a lot of that's embedded within the text, and that's wonderful when we see that, right? Repent. Change your mind. Metanoia. To change your mind about who Christ is, and receive the gift of salvation. I always want to make it important that in majority, if not all messages, I want to explain how important it is for us to receive salvation. Sometimes you hear people say, well, it isn't the church or this church or that church filled with people who are already believers. Well, you can't assume that. I don't know who is saved and who isn't.

For some of us, and that can be a very convicting thing, how important it is for us to come to the Lord and receive that salvation. For some people, and it can be convicting if you've lived your life and never made that decision, but I want to see to it that every Sunday, I talk about the importance of believing in Christ and making that decision to receive salvation. We cannot assume everyone is saved. We have to always proclaim the gospel and the ability for us to respond to it.

[29 : 51] Even if you've heard it every week and you're like, you know what? I'm a Christian already. Amen. Amen. But let's still give the opportunity for those of us who may not have, always having that opportunity in there. And then in believing in Christ, that repentance to come to know the Lord is not the only type of repentance that we have. We continue to have our minds and our hearts changed in the Lord and let it be done so that we continue to grow in the Lord. In salvation, let us receive that new identity and let us be sustained by Christ. The second thing then is to choose Christ's table.

Honor God with your body. And that's so important for us, right? And we can think of how, you know, once a month here, we partake in communion. The next time you have communion, let this message be a reminder to you of how we are remembering Christ. And it is an act of worship to do this in remembrance of Christ. And how wonderful that is, that we worship the living God. And also the importance of honoring God with our body. That our lives should be a mirror, a reflection. It should radiate the love of Christ, the truth of Christ. We've got to see that that happens. And so it's also to remain in Christ as well.

To stay away from partaking in these other kind of meals. We have to stay away from those. It may not happen in our lives, but it might. We can't assume. We have got to remain in him. Even if it looks like just food, you've got to set that boundary, right? That's so important for us. And to also present your body to the Lord, pursue purity and integrity in how you can honor the Lord. And what that looks like, may God lead and guide you into what specifically that looks like to honor God with your body.

And finally, we have hold fast, remain, and have confidence in Christ. Remain in him. May your words and your actions, may it flow from your faith in Christ.

It's important for us that as we walk and we are continually being transformed, that we bear fruit. You shall know them by their fruit. May you bear fruit. May your dedication be to the Lord. May your allegiance be to him. To walk in holiness. And we think finally of that white stone as a reminder of God's promises. I don't have one up here. That's all right. We think of the white stone as a representation of God's promises and how God provides for his people. If you have a white stone, why don't you hold it up real quick? And I want you to think it's just a silly little activity, right? Think of this white stone as a representation of God keeping his promises.

[33 : 33] You remain in him. God will always provide and he will deliver on his promises. And so as you hold this stone, may you be reminded of the love that God has for you and the opportunity for you to come to faith in Jesus, to be restored, to come out of the darkness into light, to come out of the chaos.

Further in Revelation, we will talk about how the chaos of the ocean is a representation of a broken world and how Christ brings forth peaceful and still waters. In the same way, we think of how our own lives goes from that chaos into something that is much more calm, full of peace, joy, and understanding.

How wonderful is it for us to know Christ? And I apologize if you get a little bit of that white powder or whatever from the stone in there. But may you keep that white stone just as a reminder if, and as Mark was mentioning earlier, this is the second time I've given a stone. If you remember the first one, it was responding and the importance for us to cast our stone, right? When we were talking about that parable, to consider the cost or to count the cost, meaning the language says to cast your pebble to the Lord, meaning you're going to go all in. And what a beautiful imagery we can think of that as we go all in into the Lord, we will receive the white stone in return. Just beautiful language in that. And so in all of this, in let us close today, knowing that Christ is the one who calls us out of darkness into light, that he calls us to repent, to change our mind, to come to him. May we learn from these passages that it is Christ who holds the large sword, the two-edged sword, that he is the judge, but he's also the protector, that Christ is the redeemer and also the sustainer, and that Christ knows you, and he knows the situation in which you have gone through, you're going through, and what you will go through. That Christ knows your battle. He knows your situations and your circumstances. I can't help but think in the time in which we live in, a time where there is division, where there's hatred, where there's the battle between good and evil. But when we turn to Christ, we come to the way, the truth, and the life, the light that shines in the darkness, the one that sustains, or just as that song says, he's got the whole world in his hands. Such a childish song, but such beautiful truth nonetheless.

May you come to the Lord. May you grow in him, and may you be moved to share in the good news of the gospel. Let us remain in the truth of the word. Let us stay away from idolatry or any sort of distractions that hold us back. May we identify the stumbling blocks, and may we never be a stumbling block as well. In Christ, we are conquerors, for it is God that gives us salvation. He gives us new life. He gives us the hidden manna, and he gives us the white stone with a new name. May we respond with our lives, and may we use what God has given to us, our minds, our hearts, and our bodies, today and remaining in Christ. And we all say together, amen. Let's pray together, actually. Father, we thank you for this message. We thank you for this word, this message to Pergamum, this very difficult passage that's talking about idol worship and sexual promiscuity and eating feasts and whatnot. Father, we just pray that the simplicity of this message speaks to our hearts and our minds, that we remain devoted to you, that we hold fast, that we make that decision for your son, Jesus Christ, the way, the truth, and the life, and we remain rooted in you. May we not be distracted by the things of this world, but may we focus and fixate. And should we stumble, should we fall, should we sin, may we repent, turn back to you, and remain in you. For you, God, are the source of life. We are grateful for your word that is living and active, and we are thankful for your son, who is the righteous judge, the one who gives life, the one who saved us from our sins. We're so grateful that we have this chance, this opportunity for us to go through revelation, and how blessed we are to be able to come together. May we all believe in you and be saved. May we remain firm in the faith, and may we receive that white stone. It is in the name of Jesus Christ that we pray, and we all say together, amen, church.

Amen. Thank you for tuning in to Ontario Community Church. If this message encouraged you, I encourage for you to share it with a friend or a family member who may be facing compromise or struggling with where their loyalty lies. Remind them that Christ knows their battle, Christ knows their circumstance, and he calls for us to come to him, to remain in him, and to worship the living God alone. Let us honor God with our bodies and with the meals that we partake in. In today's sermon, we gave everyone that white stone as that reminder of God's promises, a reminder of our new identity in Christ. Just as we cast our pebble and go all in for Christ, we receive the white stone in return. It is beautiful imagery of salvation and transformation. You're welcome to visit OntarioCommunityChurch.org for more information about our church, how to connect with us, and how you can get involved. Just visit our website.

[40 : 17] Next time, we will continue in our sermon series through the book of Revelation with the church in Thyatira, found in Revelation chapter 2, verses 18 to 29. We will be looking at Christ's message to a church tolerating Jezebel's false teaching and what it means to remain, to hold fast until he comes again. Grace and peace to you in our Lord Jesus Christ. May you hold fast to his name. May you refuse compromise. May you choose his table and honor God with your body. May you receive the hidden manna and the white stone with your new name. Christ knows you and your circumstances. May you turn to him. May you come to know Jesus Christ, the way, the truth, and the life. God bless you.