

"Compromise and Tolerance"

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Preacher: Matt Coburn

[0 : 00] Well, good morning. It's good to be back with you. I am thankful for your prayers as I recovered from illness last week, and I'm particularly thankful for Tyler.

Many of you may not have noticed, but he stepped in a week early and preached ahead in the book of Revelation, which meant he had his manuscript, he had his sermon prepared more than a week early.

So praise the Lord for our elders who are serving well, and I also just want to extend the thanks to the staff who covered, and a number of you volunteers who covered last week when I was out of the office.

So I just want to appreciate you as we begin. And we are, as you know, in preaching through the book of Revelation, and we are going through the first part, which are a series of letters.

They are letters of encouragement to the churches to keep going, to stay strong, to endure hardship, to keep the faith. But maybe you're feeling, and I felt this a little bit last week too, that these letters are encouraging letters, but they're also weighty letters.

[1 : 14] They have this pattern of, I know these things that are good about you, but... And most of them have a pretty large after that but statement that says, after that, there's something significant.

It's a warning. I was on YouTube this week looking at videos about how to use circular saws, and they're fascinating. This one guy said, I've been using a circular saw for 25 years.

And he had a glove on his hand, and he said, this is what you should not do, because I cut off three of my fingers. And then he went on, and he talked about, here's how you use a circular saw.

This is what you must do to protect yourself from doing harm. And this is what Jesus is doing for the churches. Jesus is saying, I love you, keep going.

And I want to warn you. I want to make you know that if you keep doing these kinds of practices, it will result in damage, harm, destruction to your spiritual soul.

[2 : 16] So this is what the letters are all about, particularly. And as we've seen, there are seven letters to seven churches. There are actual churches in actual places.

But we think the sevenfold pattern makes them applicable to all of us. We always want to ask ourselves the question, what does this passage have to say to us, to our church, to this place today?

And so that's what we're going to do. We're going to look at two letters today. So I've got a slightly larger task than some of the others. We're going to look at the letters to Pergamum and Thyatira.

And there's reasons, because there's thematic resonance between the two. So we're going to do that together. If you want to turn in your Bible to page 986, and I would encourage you, unless you're using electronic device, pull out your Bible and read along with us.

Partly because we're doing two letters, we're going to be jumping back and forth with verses. And it will be helpful for you to be able to follow along as I refer to a verse along the way.

[3 : 22] So Revelation chapter 2, starting in verse 12, and then we'll read to the end of the chapter. This is God's word.

And 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 to 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 might eat food, sacrifice 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.

[4 : 26] He who has 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 white stone with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.

And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, The words of the Son of God who has eyes like a flame of fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze.

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, 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.

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 until they repent of her works.

And I will strike her children dead, and all the children will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you as your works deserve.

[5 : 52] 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 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 earthen pots are broken into pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father.

And I will give him the morning star. He who has ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Let's pray together and ask for God's help.

Lord, we thank you for this word. Lord, we thank you this morning for the privilege it is to gather. And Lord, to sit under your word.

And Lord, I pray that by your Spirit you would teach us. Lord, through your word, that we might know you more. Lord, I pray that our hearts would be soft.

[7 : 03] Lord, that you would be, Lord, convicting us of sin, of error, of ways in which we may not be following you as we ought to.

Lord, let us heed your warnings. And Lord, let us hear your encouragement. Lord, to hold fast until the end. God, I pray for your help that you would help me to speak clearly as I ought.

And that we together would sit under your word. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. There's a lot here. I'm not going to promise to explain every image. If you have a question, you can come up and ask me after the service. I'm going to try to give us the big picture of what these two letters have in common as we look at it.

And here are a couple of things that we're going to see running through these passages. This is our outline if you're an outline person. We're going to first look at the context that in this context of Pergamum and Thyatira, there is a pressure to conform to the ways of the world.

[8 : 10] The second thing that we will see is that there is a problem. The problem is that within the church there has been a toleration of compromise with the culture. So the context, a problem.

The third thing is there is a warning. A warning that the consequences for this path of compromise are real. And the fourth thing is a way forward.

That is that there is a hope in a conquering Christ that can enable us to persevere. So this is our outline. A context, a problem, a warning, and the way forward. So let's look through them together.

First, the context. The pressure to conform in these worlds. So I need to tell you a little bit about these cities. Pergamum was actually the most prominent city in Asia Minor in the first century.

It was a leading city. And here in the text in verse 13, Jesus says, it is where the throne of Satan is. Or at the end of verse 13, it says, this is where Satan dwells.

[9 : 13] Now, we don't know exactly. Satan doesn't dwell in one of these places particularly because Satan is a spirit and he acts in lots of different places in the world. This is not his actual home.

But it seems that maybe there's a reference to a particular kind of spiritual darkness or spiritual influence. When you look at the history, if you've ever been to Berlin and you've gone to the Pergamum Museum, the Pergamum Museum has the altar of Pergamum, which is this massive, it's actually a staircase with a huge frieze around the top.

And it's this amazing piece of architecture. But it was meant as a place of worship to Zeus. And if you look through the details of it, you can see there's lots of dark imagery, spiritual imagery of idolatry involved in it.

Not only was this true that Pergamum was a polytheistic city in Rome that had much worship, but it was also one of the leading places where the cult of the emperor began to arise in the first century. It was actually the first place in Asia where they built a temple to Augustus when he was a living emperor. And so the cult of the emperor, that is, worshiping the emperor Caesar, the leader of the Roman Empire, not simply as a political leader, but as a deified god, began during this time.

[10:37] And so in this context, imagine being a Christian, where you say there is one God, and there's one Savior Jesus.

Imagine what it would be like. In this context, there's an immense amount of pressure to be like the people around you. And it seemed like there were people who were teaching in this church that there was nothing wrong with being a part of the imperial cult.

One of the commentators writes this. They say that there was nothing wrong with participating in the imperial cult since most Romans did it out of civic duty rather than actual worship. And so maybe they were eating sacrificed meats, but at temple feasts honoring Caesar as God and Savior. But they weren't thinking this was a problem. So this is the context of Pergamum. And then you shift down the road to Thyatira. Thyatira was not a big city.

It was actually a small city. But it was dominated by artisan guilds. So if you remember in Acts, Lydia, who was a purveyor of purple cloth, was from Thyatira.

[11:53] So this helps you. And it was famous for its dyes, for its bronzes, for lots of other goods. But each guild had a patron god. And each guild had rituals, rites, gatherings, where they would have a professional conference.

But along with it, they would have religious worship to this patron god. Right? Imagine some of you, lots of you, go to professional conferences. And imagine when you gather in the morning, they would have a 20-minute series where they say, and now we all lift our glass to Aphrodite before you go on with whatever your work is.

This was the context in which they lived. And this would be normal and expected and required. So here's the context. This is what, this is, the churches in these cities were not dead.

They had some good life in them. But they were holding up under some persecution. But they were in danger because of this external pressure. And the danger was even more amplified by the problem.

So the first one is the context, the social pressure. The second thing is the problem. The problem of compromise with the culture that was embodied by their tolerance of teachers within the churches that were teaching things that were not of God and the gospel.

[13:24] Right? And so this is what we see. Verse 20 uses the word tolerance. Right? But this I have against you. You tolerate these things. And again, we live in a world where tolerance is lifted up as a great value.

And listen, if that means we treat one another with dignity and honor because we're made in the image of God, amen, that's the kind of tolerance we ought to have. And biblical Christians ought to support it completely.

But tolerance doesn't mean we allow anything to happen. It doesn't matter. You do you and I do me and we're all good. But that's not the way God. And here, Christ is condemning them for saying you tolerate something that is not good.

Right? And it's embodied in these teachers. The first one is the teaching of Balaam. Now, I don't have time to go back and read Numbers 22 through 25. Balaam was a prophet. The king of Moab, Balak, came and asked him to curse Israel.

God wouldn't let him do that. Over and over again, there's a funny story about a donkey and all that. It's in the angel of the Lord. You can look it up later in chapter 24. But what ended up happening was this man seemed to then be involved with what happens in chapter 25, where the Moabite women then entice some of the Israelite men into sexual relationships that God had forbidden them to have.

[14:52] And so, what we see clearly, we don't know all of what Jesus is referring to here. We don't know all of what the teaching of Balaam is. We haven't found the book of the teaching of Balaam in the first century.

But what we do know is what we see in verse 14. Right? Verse 14 says, So these are the two big things that are so clear that we know Jesus is saying, here's the problem.

You're allowing people in your midst who teach that these things are okay. And it's exactly the same thing that we see in Thyatira.

If we go ahead and we look at the next letter, where is it? Verse 20, I have this against you. You have this woman Jezebel. We don't know if this was an actual person or if this is a symbolic person. But it seems like there's someone teaching similarly the same thing. This person was teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.

[16:12] Now, Jezebel is a great image of this. If you remember Jezebel, 1 Kings 16 through 21. Again, I'm not going to read the whole thing. She was the foreign wife of King Ahab who did not do anything according to the Lord and the way he was supposed to.

He was one of the worst kings. He was the one who went after Elijah the prophet and tried to kill him. Jezebel was active in all of these things. And Jezebel actively led her husband and therefore the whole kingdom of Israel to sacrifice to idols and then become involved in cultic prostitution to the gods of Baal that she worshipped.

And so this image is brought forth and saying this is what's happening in your church. You're allowing people to come in and do this work of seducing, this power of pulling people into paths of destruction.

And the other people, just so you can see the spread of what happens in Revelation, the book of Revelation, do you know who else seduces the church? Satan does it in chapter 12. The false prophet will do it in chapter 13 and chapter 19.

And an image that we'll get to later, the harlot of Babylon in chapter 18. All of these are those who are seducing the church by saying, it's okay, there's something good here.

[17:33] Don't listen to God. Do these things. Now look, when we put it this bluntly, why would anyone follow these teachings, right?

I mean, who would want this? Who would do this? But let's stop and remember the pressure and the context that they lived, right? Sometimes it's really tempting to just go with the flow to avoid persecution.

We don't want our bosses to be mad at us because we're following faithfully the ways of Christ. We don't want our family to not invite us to Thanksgiving dinner because we believe in Jesus.

We all have in our desire, in our hearts, a desire to be like the world that is around us so that we don't stand out and to be liked by the world that we live in.

So that we don't face negative pressure. But we know, friends, that this is a reality for us. Right?

[18:41] That we might feel these similar temptations. And we need to fight against it. Right? Now, I do want to say this. As we think about Christ's call to step apart from the culture, we want to make sure that we're not being stupid about this.

I know, sorry for parents, I shouldn't use that word, right? Don't use that word, stupid. But here's the thing. If we're going to be, we should be, as Christians, people who seek peace and who love our neighbor.

We don't need to be unnecessarily weird or combative or confronting for unnecessary reasons. But we need to know that following Christ will always lead us against the grain of our culture.

And this is true in every culture. And different cultures are going to face different pressure points along the way. But as a follower of Christ, you will always find that the human culture you live in has places that you can't follow along with.

Now, particularly in these churches, the areas have been sexual immorality and idolatry.

[19:53] Let's think about these things and the pressures in our culture today. So we're going to talk about sex for a few minutes. Sorry if you need a spoiler or if you need a trigger warning here, you've just got it.

So we're going to talk about it. And why is this? Why do we talk about this? Because the Bible talks about it a lot. Why does the Bible talk about it a lot? Because God gave our sexuality something good, something with real power to glorify God and appoint us to Him in amazing ways.

But in sin, this thing that has great power has been turned to evil, has been turned to harm. It has the power to become addictive, abusive, and selfish in all sorts of ways.

And we live in a world where sexuality has been exalted to this primary position, right? And, you know, look, I don't know if it's that different from the first century.

You can ask Tom. He's the first century church expert about exactly how licentious the first century was. But this is a human problem. This isn't just a 21st century problem.

[20 : 59] But we know the particular ways that our culture makes assumptions that need to be challenged, right? The assumption that human flourishing depends on a healthy, flourishing, active sexual life.

If you don't have that, you're being repressed. You're being limited. You're being somehow prevented from the fullness of humanity by doing this.

Our culture says you have to do this in order to be happy. What does it look like in particular? If you're a teenager, hopefully you're not having to deal with this.

But we know it's an endemic in our culture that socially middle schoolers and high schoolers are texting one another saying, show me a picture of you naked.

Open up yourself to me sexually through visual images so that I can accept you. And if you don't do this, well, then you'll face consequences.

[22 : 03] And if you do do this, then that picture is out in the ecosphere, right? We know that we live in a culture where there is an epidemic of pornography, where this is hitting kids as young as 8 and 9 and 10, and they're becoming enslaved to it.

And there is an assumption broadly out there that this is not a bad thing, but that this is a normal or at least a freedom, hey, you do what you do as long as it doesn't hurt anybody.

And we know there are tons of lies under that. I'm not going to get into all of that. But recognize this is the water that we drink every day, right?

For those of you who are of dating or marriageable age, the assumption out there is that you're going to live together and sleep together before you get married. This is normal.

And in the church, people are saying, well, what's wrong with that? Why would God not want us to do that? Isn't that like checking people out to figure out if this is a good spouse for me? It's not the way God designed it.

[23 : 10] And even in marriages, sex becomes an instrument of power. It becomes an instrument of abuse. Sometimes we think we get bored with it, and we think, well, let's watch some pornography together, because that will spice up our life.

Friends, this is not what God wants for us. None of this, none of this pictures the kind of self-giving, giving, loving action towards one another that allows us to, in our sexual lives, to honor God and to picture the kind of self-giving love that Christ gave as he gave himself up for his church.

So we need to see that we will swim against the grain of culture if we are going to not allow these teachings to soak into our brain and become the pattern of our lives.

Now, I spent a lot of time on that, and now we're coming to idolatry, which is actually way larger than that. So I'm going to talk about idolatry as a category rather than getting into all of the specifics.

Tim Keller wrote in *Counterfeit Gods*, an idol is anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give.

[24 : 40] So what might our idols be? It might be success. If I can just make it to the top, no matter what it costs, if I can make it to the top, then I will arrive, and then I will be happy, and then I will be saved.

My life will have meaning and purpose. It might be other things, power, or money, or children, or spouse, or a potential spouse. It might be a political leader or a social movement.

There are so many things in this world that can capture our hearts. And some of the most basic ones are simply ourselves.

We love to exalt ourselves. We love to always be right. We love to seek our own pleasure above anything else. Worshiping an idol is robbing God of the worship that he deserves as the one who is fully and only worthy of our worship.

And in the first century, there are all of these contexts where there are all of these pressures to pursue these idols. When you go to that professional conference, do you hear the undertone of worship the idol?

[25 : 54] Worship the idol of whatever your industry is, whatever your work is. When you live, when you go to the playground, and you're on the playground with other moms, do you hear the subtext of the idols?

Worship your children. Worship your family. Do what the world is doing to make these things happen. And I can multiply that over and over and over again. But recognize there's always a subtext of good things that God has given becoming ultimate things in our hearts so that we no longer follow God.

And it warps us, and it twists us, and it keeps us from pursuing and clinging to Christ. And it's, Keller says that if anything is so central and essential to our lives that should you lose it, your life would feel hardly worth living, this is when we know there's an idol.

I can't live without this. If I don't have this, I'm going to die. That's the clearest way for us to know our idols. But there are other ways.

Where do you spend your time and your heart energy? Where do you spend your money? Do an examination. See where the idols lurk in your life.

[27 : 06] And recognize that just like the church in the first century, we too are prone. And listen, it's not just out there. It's people in the church saying, God wants you to be happy.

God wants you to be self-fulfilled. So go and do all these things. There are places where even within the church, these idolatries are being raised up, and people are teaching it and saying, this is what God wants for you.

And we need to go back to the scriptures again and again. Because all of these things lead us away from Christ's purpose for us.

He has saved us so that we might follow him until the end, to hold fast and to hold firm. Because he says, if you don't, there are consequences.

So if you're following the outline, this is number three, the warning. The consequences are real.

Verse 17, there is a picture of Jesus coming with the sword. It's what we saw in chapter 12.

[28 : 11] He is the one who bears the sword. The sword is an image of judgment in the first century. It's what the Romans used for their symbol of the power to judge and the authority to bring condemnation.

Jesus says, I will come and bring the sword, and I will war against these and those who follow in their teaching. Verse 22 and following in Thyatira gives a similar picture.

It's far more complicated, and I'm not going to spend the time to really get into it because it's complicated. And so, but the picture of, I'm going to put her on the sickbed. I'm going to bring a great tribulation.

There will be death to the children. It's not clear what all of these images are actually trying to portray, except that there is clearly going to be a consequence. Jesus will come, and he will put an end to this person and to this teaching in his church.

He will bring a judgment to the church. And maybe for some, it could be a discipline, like in Hebrews 12, where just as a father disciplines his son, so God disciplines us so that we might know his ways, so that we might avoid cutting our fingers off by following his examples.

[29 : 30] But for some, it will be a judgment that will be eternal. Because we know this in the book of Revelation.

We're going to get there as we keep going. The book of Revelation says there are only two sides in the end. There are those who are under Christ, the conquering king and the recreating savior of the world.

And there are those who are against Christ, who follow the dragon and the harlot of Babylon and Satan. And we'll see all the imagery, but who've set themselves up against God and against Christ and say, no, we will do this apart from him.

We will worship other gods. We will worship our own gods. We will worship ourselves, whatever it is. But we will not bow our knee. And this battle is a cosmic battle. But it's not like Star Wars, where the force is both good and bad, and it's all going to work out in the end.

In the end, good will win, and evil will be defeated and will be judged. And Jesus is saying, do not follow those who will lead you into destruction.

[30 : 40] Do not follow these patterns of immorality and idolatry that will lead you astray. He says, follow Christ now so that you can be with Christ forever.

And this is the end. This is then the fourth point, the way forward. Because this is the hope. In the middle of these churches that are facing this great pressure, just like we face a similar pressure today, Christ holds up a vision for us, a hope that is centered in the person of who Jesus is.

Right? There are calls to respond. We've seen these before. We see it in verse 16. Repent of these things. Verse 25. Hold fast to Christ. Don't be led astray by these things.

Christ says, you can do this because I am coming, and I am going to give you what your heart really longs for. The reason why these are seductive things is because they promise to give you something.

And I'm going to tell you, I will give you those things in a greater and fuller measure if you hold on to me. Christ comes as a picture of this glorious warrior.

[32 : 06] Right? He has a sword in his mouth. He has bronze feet. He has eyes that can see so that he will discern and judge rightly. Right? And he comes and he says, to those who overcome, I will give rewards.

Look with me in verse 17. To the one who conquers, I will give him, give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone with a new name written on that stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.

Now, friends, these are images. Right? This is where we go back and forth. When he says sexual immorality and idolatry, we know what that is. That's not an image. That's just a thing. Here we have images.

Hidden manna. Remember what the manna was? What God provided for Israel in desperate times in the desert. When humanly they looked out and they said, there is no way that we can provide for ourselves.

They even said, there's no way God can provide for us in the middle of this desert so that we might have food. And God miraculously provided manna so that they would live.

[33 : 10] And Jesus comes to us and says, I will give you manna that you have not yet tasted. I will give you all the richness of the spiritual resources you need to hold fast and to not give in so that you can live.

Reminds me of what the promise in Romans 8 says. When it talks about God who did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all.

And if he who did this, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Now, it doesn't mean God's going to give you a Lamborghini or a promotion or a spouse or health.

What it does mean is that he will give you the spiritual resources to walk and to persevere with Christ till the end. Not only going to give you a white, or a manna, this hidden manna, he's also going to give you a white stone.

Now, again, we're not going to actually get a white stone in heaven, right? This is a picture. There's fascinating, the commentaries have like, here are six options of what this might refer to in the first century.

[34 : 27] And, you know, some of them are better, some of them are worse. The interesting one that I think is that when there were games, the victors would be given a white stone that would give them entrance into a celebratory banquet.

Which is a really nice picture of Christ saying, I give you the white stone as you conquer over these powers, as you persevere to the end.

You are a victorious one and I will give you this entrance into the banquet feast of the Lamb, which we'll see at the end of Revelation 22. This picture, this image of eternal, satisfying, abundant fellowship with God, right?

So, it may be that. But the most important thing about this stone is probably that it has a new name on this. And it's amazing, isn't it? When you look through the scriptures, God loves to give people new names.

Abram becomes Abraham, right? I'm forgetting him. Here we go. Simon becomes Peter, right? Saul becomes Paul. Why does he do this?

[35 : 27] Because the new names are a part of his transforming work to give us a new eternal identity in his kingdom. Saying, you belong to me and you are a part of my kingdom.

Now, we don't know what the name is. And it says nobody will know it except the person who receives it. So, maybe we don't need to know what the names are. Except to say, God knows you individually and will say, I see you, I know you.

And in your perseverance, I will give you a name that will last forever in my kingdom. And you will be my children. Right?

A part of this new identity. This is what Paul refers to. For those of you who have been coming to Sunday school, this is what Paul is trying to tell us at the beginning of Ephesians 1. Where he says that God has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons and daughters through Jesus Christ.

[36 : 33] According to the purpose of his will. To the praise of his glorious grace with which he has blessed us in the beloved. God has brought us into his family. And just like when we have children, we get to give them a name.

Christ brings us into his family and he gives us a name that says you are, most importantly, you are a child of God. You are part of my family forever.

I am your heavenly father. And you have, men and women, you have all the prerogatives of the sons of God. What a great joy this is.

So he gives you this manna to sustain you and to encourage you. He gives you the white stone, which is his new identity. And then verse 26, the promise to Thyatira, he will give you the authority to rule over the world.

When you're a persecuted minority, you feel like the world is against you. I remember the days when I lived in China and was just so struck by the overwhelming mass of people who didn't care or know about God.

[37 : 40] And how he lived in a culture where the holidays didn't revolve around Easter and Christmas. Where the patterns of life were just different. And, you know, and I found great joy in there.

I loved living there. It was a wonderful experience. But I felt like I was this little, odd person in a world that didn't fit.

And I thought, how is this, you know, if there's great pressure, how are we ever going to win? And Christ comes to us and he says, I am the victorious king and I will bring you with me.

Look at me in verse 26 as we close. To the one who conquers and who keeps my word 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 into pieces.

Even as I myself have received authority from my father. He's quoting from Psalm 2, which is one of the great messianic psalms. Where God is saying, you are my son.

[38 : 45] Today I have begotten you. Ask of me and I will make the nations your heritage and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

And the writer of Revelation, John, picks this up again in chapter 19 of this very book and says, this is what Jesus comes when he comes for his final victory.

The nations that look so fearsome. The guilds that put pressure on you. Your neighbors that say you must worship the emperor. The massive altar in Pergamum.

These things that seem to be the greatest powers. Jesus reminds his people, I am greater than all of those. I am the one. And you will reign with me.

Jesus told us this in Matthew 19. Paul told us this in 1 Corinthians 6. We will be, as his people, brought into this position of ruling with him.

[39 : 47] Conquering with him. That the kingdom of God will be this, not abusive power, but this glorious reigning over a world. Because Christ has risen from the dead and defeated the enemies.

And he will come again in one day, make full what he has accomplished already in the cross and in the resurrection. And this is the good news of the gospel.

My friends. Or of the gospel. This is the good news of what Jesus has done for us and who he is.

He is a risen and ascended savior. And so when we face the pressure this week to follow the world in sexual immorality.

When we see our hearts being drawn away by the idols of the world around us. We look to Christ resurrected.

We remember he is the one we most want to be with at the end. He is the one who will allow us to say no to those who would teach otherwise.

[40 : 57] He is the one who offers us a better life. A more fulfilling joy. An eternity with him.

And a kingdom that will not fade. Let's pray together. Jesus, we do worship you.

And we love you. Lord, and as we have thought about the pressures of this world. Lord, there's so much that we face every day.

Oh, Lord. Make our hearts soft and make our consciences tender. Lord, so that we might see and know where we may be tempted.

Where our hearts might be seduced. Away from faithful following of you. Lord, help us in the moments when we are afraid.

[41 : 58] When following you may be costly. Help us, Lord, to look to you and to know what a great cost you gave for us. So that we might be yours.

Lord, help us to follow. Lord, empowered not by our own willpower or strength or wisdom or guile. But, Lord, in our weakness.

May it be your power. The truth of the gospel that carries us. Protects us and sustains us. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Want to be with you?

I will tell you. Let's pray this thing. We pray this thing. Have a good spirit. Mah- queda where we might be peace to life. Grazie sobre forgiveness. Mal- platform, healing and healing through all

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