

REVELATION: Hear & Take Heed

Week #5

“The Great Compromise”

There is a movement today in Evangelical churches to be more “accepting”. Certainly, our doors are open to the hurting and needy. However, our goal as the church (body of Christ) is to administer the gospel as the single solution to the problems of the world. Christ may have met physical needs in some occasions, however, He always pointed out the spiritual need and solution with greater importance.

In America, today, we have over 1,900 registered denominations that are being classified as “christian”. Yet, the Greek word for “church” is “ekklesia”, meaning those that are called out and gathered as the body of Christ. Martin Luther in a sermon said this of the true church:

“Now the church is not the wood or stone, but rather the company, fellowship, and encouragement of believing people... We (the church) minister to a people who are in a great need of hearing truth... We dare not soft pedal this glorious truth!”

Matthew 28:19-20 give the original marching orders of the church, and they are repeated in 1 Peter 2:9 to remind us of the task still today. We are here to proclaim the Gospel (GOOD NEWS) of Jesus Christ. We do this by demonstrating reconciliation in the gathering of the believers and spurring one another on toward Godliness (Hebrews 10:19-25 & 1 Peter 1:15-16). So, the gathering of the church, as it happened on the first day of the week, is to be done with great reverence for the mission God has given us.

The church in Pergamum in Revelation 2:12-17 is known as a church of compromise. The Lord notes their heart to keep going even in the face of persecution and death. Certainly, there had been a lot of persecution there at the hand of Domitian. Antipas, being a direct example. However, they welcomed people in their midst that had no desire to repent. Yet, others that seemed like part of the church that were leading it away slowly.

The Nicolaitans, like Balaam, were purposing to detract the Church from holy lifestyles devoted to the Gospel call. It is important to note that never does Scripture assume the Nicolaitans to be actual saved. They were never known by saving repentance or changed lifestyles. Matter of fact, they took hold of the term “grace” as a means to keep doing exactly what they had always done, but with the intention of feeling good about it.

Today, many in the church are interested in looking as much like the world as possible yet claiming to be God’s. Then, those that are actually Christians begin to think they can join them, because they watch others permitted inside without a rebuke, correction, or a Gospel call of repentance. Before long, you have a church compromising on the pillar of truth (1 Tim. 3:15). The worship of health (Asklepios) is a deviation from the Lord. Additionally, the worship of government (Emperor Worship) is a deviation from the Lord. We stand on Christ alone, and specifically Christ crucified (1 Corinthians 1:23-30), that Him and Him alone be glorified.

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Going Further

This last Sunday's message was a reminder of the Church's purpose. Not according to man's interpretation or preference, but according to the Lord's command and direction.

Read Hebrews 10:19-25...

In today's time, with the freedom to worship openly, we often take that ability for granted. Yet God's Word tells us why we are to meet, and with the type of heart/motivation that should guide our gathering together. Sometimes we view our going as for "other people", but not necessarily for our spiritually challenge or benefit... What are some of the reasons that this passage lists for us to gather together? Do these things reflect your heart towards getting together with the church body, or does anything need to change?

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 & 23-25, Matthew 5:13-16, & John 17:15-21...

With all of the enticements around us, it is a constant battle to protect the church from letting the world in. Yet, the church is to be in the world... And the world is NOT to be in the church. Martin Luther called the gathering of the church an infirmary to a hurting and spiritually deprived world. Yet he asked, 'how will the world know the healing and restoring act of God through the power of His Word if the church decides to walk like the depraved of the world?' We can do this by practical worship of things that the world pursues... Health, wealth, entertainment and other pleasures. Is your life casting the light of Christ brightly, or is there a specific area God is calling to sanctify in your life to better portray Himself to the world around you?

QUICK THOUGHT: Compromise in the Christian life often looks or sounds good in the moment. Take a moment to look back at the times you have been willing to compromise from a holy lifestyle. How did it go, and how did it end? I think most often we would agree that pursuing Godliness in our daily lives has always had an end effect of joy, and not regret. Let us not forget that thought...