

REVELATION

A LETTER TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

Session 3: Church of Pergamum - “Repent”

Ice Breaker (optional)

What’s one situation (work, school, friendships, online) where it feels hardest to live out your faith honestly? Why do you think that pressure exists?

Sermon Summary

This week we examined Jesus’ letter to the church in Pergamum, a faithful church living in one of the darkest spiritual environments in the ancient world. Jesus introduced Himself as “the One with the sharp two-edged sword,” reminding them that His Word carries absolute authority and has the power to both encourage and confront. Although the believers in Pergamum remained loyal to Christ under intense persecution—even after the martyrdom of Antipas—Jesus warned them that faithfulness under pressure does not eliminate the danger of compromise. He specifically rebuked the church for tolerating teachings like that of Balaam, who could not destroy God’s people through external attack but instead corrupted them from within by enticing them toward idolatry and sexual immorality. In the same way, false teaching and moral compromise had been allowed to coexist inside the church at Pergamum. What persecution could not destroy, compromise threatened to dilute. Jesus urgently called them to repent, warning that tolerance of sin invites His discipline, yet He closed with a gracious promise of true fulfillment—hidden manna and a white stone—to all who overcome through wholehearted allegiance to Him.

Group Objective

To help us recognize the danger of compromise, submit to the authority of Jesus’ Word, and pursue faithful obedience in a culture that pressures us to redefine truth.

Study Questions

1. Jesus introduces Himself to Pergamum as “the One with the sharp two-edged sword” (Read Revelation 2:12). What does this image communicate about the authority and power of Jesus’ Word? In what ways can God’s Word both comfort us and confront us at the same time?

Further Scripture: Hebrews 4:12; Isaiah 55:11

2. Jesus commends the church for remaining faithful where “Satan has his throne” (Read Revelation 2:13). Why do you think faithfulness in dark places matters so much to Jesus? What are some modern-day environments where following Christ requires courage and conviction?
3. Antipas is called Jesus’ “faithful witness” after being martyred (Rev. 2:13). What does faithfulness look like when obedience costs us something? How does this challenge our understanding of comfort, success, and faith in American Christianity?

Further Scripture: Matthew 5:10–12; 2 Timothy 3:12

4. Jesus’ complaint against Pergamum was not denial of Christ, but tolerated compromise (Read Revelation 2:14–15). Why is compromise often more dangerous to the church than persecution? What does it look like to “redefine obedience” in subtle ways today?
5. The teaching of Balaam and the Nicolaitans involved blending worship of God with cultural sin. Why do you think it’s tempting to coexist with sin rather than confront it? How can churches balance grace and truth without becoming either cruel or careless?

Further Scripture: 1 Corinthians 5:9–13; Romans 12:1–2

6. Jesus’ command to Pergamum is urgent: “Repent” (Read Revelation 2:16). Why does Jesus treat tolerance of sin as dangerous rather than loving? How should repentance function in the life of a believer and in the life of a church?
7. Jesus promises “hidden manna” and a “white stone” to those who overcome (Read Revelation 2:17). How does this promise speak to true fulfillment versus counterfeit satisfaction offered by the world? Where are we tempted to settle for less than what Jesus offers?

Internal Question

(Take a few moments of silence to pray through this question) Where might I be faithful to Jesus on the outside, yet quietly compromising obedience on the inside—and what step of repentance is Jesus calling me to take this week?

Closing Prayer

Jesus, You are the One with the sharp two-edged sword. We thank You that Your Word does not only comfort us, but also lovingly confronts us when our hearts begin to drift. We confess that it is often easier to tolerate compromise than to walk in courage and obedience. Forgive us where we have blended in instead of standing firm. Help us to be a people who remain faithful in dark places, who love truth, and who repent quickly when You reveal sin. Strengthen our devotion to You alone, and lead us away from counterfeit satisfaction and into the true fulfillment You promise. We want wholehearted allegiance to You. In Jesus name, amen.