

EARS2HEAR

WHEN ANCIENT LETTERS MEET CURRENT REALITY

THYATIRA - MARCH 7

BIG IDEA

Faithful, loving, and patient Christians can compromise when their livelihood is threatened.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Revelation 2:18-29

1 Kings 16:31-33

Jeremiah 3:20

Acts 21:8-9

Revelation 13:15-18

1 Kings 21:25-26

Psalms 2:7, 9, 12

Ephesians 5:23-28

Revelation 1:12-16

2 Kings 9:22

Matthew 15:12-14

Numbers 25:1-2

Isaiah 54:5

Acts 5:38-39

1. Thyatira, even today as the town of Akhisar, owes its existence to it being in the right (strategic) place. Can you think of a time when something happened to you because you happened to be in 'the right place'?
2. If someone invited you to meet a person whose love and faith were incredible and whose service and perseverance laudable, how would you picture them? What word would you use to define them? Can you think of a person you have met who meets these positive qualities?
3. From Jesus's perspective, the church of Thyatira is as righteous as its weakest parts. In His corrective Jesus invites the faithful, loving, and patient not to persevere with wrong behavior. What was true then, is true today. How best can faithful, loving, and patient members of a local church, deal with 'wrong behavior'? In what ways do we 'tolerate' the 'intolerable'?
4. What are the 'intolerable teachings' in your mind? With Matthew 15:14 and Acts 5:38-39 in mind, consider forming guidelines to you discern when to leave alone and when to step in.
5. Read the following scriptures in Revelation: 20:7-10; 12:9; 18:23; 19:20; 20:3. How do these verses portray 'fornication'? Now read 2 Kings 9:22 and Numbers 25:1-2. In what way are spiritual immorality and physical immorality connected?
6. Part of the Thyatiran Jezebel's argument may well have been that since a local deity was not real, a Christian could eat the temple meal. After all, they had to live. Scripture doesn't see it like that, however. The Bible calls this 'spiritual unfaithfulness.' Consider our lives today. In what areas of our lives are we tempted to compromise in ways that could be defined as 'spiritual unfaithfulness'?
7. "Do we really have to live?" This was the radical thought of Tertullian, a 3rd Century Christian who boldly declared that ultimate loyalty to Jesus is the ultimate goal of a Christian's life. Such loyalty cost hundreds of Old Testament prophets their lives and many early church believers as well. As you think about your life:
 - a. In what ways are you tempted to compromise professionally. God knows you need to live; but he calls you to live for Him first.
 - b. In what ways has the authority you hold, or someone you know, been used to legitimize illegitimate behavior? What effect did that have?
8. The Letter to the Church in Thyatira begins and ends with a proclamation of the authority of the 'Son of God' who searches hearts and minds. Jesus warns that the private world and the public life will converge at the judgement. He urges the church to merge them now. What's true for them is true for us: our private faith must impact our public behavior. While everyday living requires only our skills and dedication to work; God requires our souls and devotion to Him. As we conclude this study, consider simple ways where your public and private can meet. In what ways do you, have you, or are tempted to separate your private soul from your public skills?