

“Cleaning Up A Contaminated Church!”
Revelation 2:20-29

Introduction:

1. **IE:** Several Years Ago, While Working At A Bank In Anderson, We Noticed A Very Strange, Strong Smell In The Building - It Became Stronger & Stronger - We Started Feeling Nauseous & Started Getting Headaches - Became Impossible To Work - Further Investigation Revealed That The Former Gas Station Next Door Was Being Excavated Because Of Soil Contamination From Oil & Gas - It Hadn't Been A Gas Station For Years - The Tanks Had Been Removed Years Ago - But The Soil Was Still Contaminated - And The Only Way To Clean It Up Was To Dig It Up – Remove The Soil & Then Replace It! The Contamination Was So Serious, That We Even Had To Close The Bank For A Couple Of Days!
2. After Seeing The Positive Part Of The Church In Thyatira (2:18-19), The Lord Turns To The Negative! - And He Shows Them That They Had Some Major Contamination In Their Church As Well! And It Stunk!
 - And Even Worse, They Tolerated & Allowed It To Remain! They Did Nothing To Clean It Up!
 - And So, The Lord Says In 2:20 - “Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee!”
 - The Lord Jesus Has Called His Church To Purity!
 - Ephesians 5:25-27 Says That He “Loved the church, and gave himself for it; / That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, / That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish!”
 - But, Because Of This World & Sin, The Church Is Frequently Contaminated! So, God Gives To The Faithful Christians Within His Church A Responsibility (Through Him) To Clean Up The Contamination!
3. As We Look At The Church In Thyatira, We Need To Look At Our Own Church As Well – Is There Contamination?
 - If So, We Have A Responsibility To Clean It Up! See How In These Verses:

1. *Responsibility To Resist Contamination In The Church!*

- 2:20 - “Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols!”
 - This Was Their Problem: They Were A “Working Church” But Their “Work” Didn't Go Far Enough! They Had Plenty Of Activities, But They Failed To Realize That The Church's Focus Is Not Just On Action In God's Work / But Also On Instruction From God's Word / And On Application Through A Godly Walk!
 - To Them, It Would Have Been Easy To Think Of The Church As Just Another Social Club!
 - **IE:** Thyatira Was The “Business District” Of The Entire Province - They Made & Traded Wool, Purple Dye, Valuable Bronze, Etc. Everyone Who Did Business In A Product Got Together & Formed Guilds / Clubs - Became Very Important - If Someone Wasn't Part Of The Club, It Would Affect Their Social Status As Well As Their Opportunity To Buy, Sell & Trade! They Made Religion A Big Part Of Their Clubs - Each Had Their Own God, To Worship & Pray To & Serve - And Sexual Immorality & Idolatry Was Normal! If Someone Didn't Participate In These Things, They Could Be Kicked Out Of The Club! So, The Question: How Could A Christian Be A Member Of The Church & A Member Of The Guild?
 - Some Believed You Could Be A Member Of Both In Good Standing! They Were Led By:
 - A Forceful Teacher!
 - A Woman Who Both Taught & Practiced That It Was OK To Participate In Both! And She Held Great Influence!
 - But, The Lord Jesus Himself Shows That This Is Not OK! Even Called Her “Jezebel” - Showing What Her Real Character Was Like! Because She Was Teaching:
 - A False Theology!
 - Her Intent Was: “To Deceive God's People By Persuading Them To Adopt A Lifestyle That Would Allow Them To Be Accepted In The World And To Continue Membership In The

Church!” (Kistemaker)

- This Was The Problem In 2 Of The Other Churches Also!
- But The Truth Is: 1 John 2:15-16 - “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. / For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world!”
- And Her Teaching Led To:
- A Flagrant Transgression!
 - “To Commit Fornication & To Eat Things Sacrificed To Idols!”
 - This Is Why Sound Doctrine – Biblical Teaching Is So Important! Your Principles Will Always Affect Your Practice!
- The Problem: The Church Allowed / Permitted Her To Do This!
 - Instead Of The Responsibility To Resist!
 - Should Not / Must Not Tolerate Teachers / Teaching / Actions That Are Clearly Against God’s Word & Will!
 - Responsibility: Resist! “Dig It Out!” Remove & Replace!
 - Jude 1:3 - “Ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints!”
 - It Is Our Responsibility To Identify & Combat Error!
 - In Our Church / City / Country! It Does Affect Our Church!

2. *Responsibility To Repent Of Contamination In The Church!*

- 2:21-23a - “And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. / Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. / And I will kill her children with death!”
 - **IE:** When We First Noticed The Smell In The Bank, We Searched & Sniffed All Around Our Building – To Make Sure We Were Not The Ones Who Stunk! In Dealing With Contamination, It Is A Good Practice To Make Sure You’re Not The One Who Stinks! Jesus Says In Luke 6:41 - “Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?”
 - God Calls Both The Leaders & The Followers Of Error & Sin To Repent! To Turn Away From It As Fast As Possible!
- God Gives You Space To Repent!
 - Even To This “Jezebel!” That Is Mercy!
 - This Allows The Church To Warn & Exercise The Process Of Church Discipline, To Try To Restore The Member In Sin!
 - But There Is A Limit To His Mercy! Do Not Miss The Opportunity To Repent Of Your Sin!
- God Gives You Reason To Repent!
 - When There Is No Repentance, There Will Be Judgment!
 - The Judgment Can Be Gradual – To Get Their Attention & The Attention Of The Rest Of The Church!
 - Here, It Is Speaking Of Sickness Or Disease That Can Even Lead To Death!
 - “Bed” - A “Bed Of Sickness Or Death”
 - See This Also In 1 Corinthians 11:28-30 - “But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. / For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. / For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep!”
- God Gives You The Responsibility To Repent!
 - Even Though Some In The Church Followed After This Jezebel’s Teaching, They Were Still Responsible For Their Own Works & Needed To Repent!
- Are You The Cause Of Contamination Within The Church?
 - You Have The Responsibility To Repent! And Then:

3. *Responsibility To Respond To The Contamination In The Church!*

- 2:23b-25 - “And all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. / But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as

many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. / But that which ye have already hold fast till I come!”

- When Error / Sin Is Uncovered & Identified, We Have The Responsibility To Respond To The Lord!
- **IE:** Otherwise It Will Just Sit There & Expand! When The Exxon Valdez Hit A Reef In Prince William’s Sound In Alaska On March 24, 1989, It Caused The Largest Oil Spills In US History! It Dumped Almost 11 Million Gallons Of Oil & Covered An Area Of 11,000 Square Miles! It Took Thousands Of People / Billions Of Dollars / And Years Of Time To Clean It Up! But, Without This Kind Of A Response, The Disaster Could Have Been Much, Much Worse!
- Follow The Lord!
 - Because He “Searches The Reins And Hearts!”
 - He Knows Your Heart & Mind!
 - Therefore, Follow The Lord’s Leading When He Searches Your Heart & Finds Something That Needs To Change!
 - Psalm 139:23 - “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: / And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!”
- Fear The Lord!
 - Because He “Will Give Unto Every One Of You According To Your Works!”
 - God Will Judge Sin! God Never Intended For A Sinner To Be Comfortable In His Sin!
- Be Faithful To The Lord!
 - Don’t Be Distracted By Or Attracted To Sin & Error!
 - The “Burden” He Gives You: “That Which Ye Have Already Hold Fast Till I Come!”

Conclusion:

1. When We Fulfill Our Responsibility To Clean Up A Contaminated Church, The Lord Finally Promises A **Reward!**
 - 2:26-28 - “And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: / And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. / And I will give him the morning star!”
 - Those Who Take Their Responsibility Seriously To Clean Up Contamination In The Church Are Those Who:
 - Overcome The World By Obeying God’s Word!
 - A Reward Of Future Service! (Quotes Psalm 2:9)
 - The City Of Thyatira Was Not Known As A Powerful City! But The Lord Promises To Delegate His Own Power & Authority To His Faithful Servants – To Serve Him & Reign With Him In His Coming Kingdom!
 - A Reward Of Future Splendor!
 - His Faithful Servants Will Also Share In The Glories Of Jesus, Who Is Himself Identified As “The Morning Star” In Revelation 22:16!
2. The Responsibilities Are Great! But The Rewards Are Greater!
 - So: “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches!” (2:29)

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