

REVELATION – SERMON 14

HOLD FAST TILL I COME

Revelation 2:24-29

INTRODUCTION

- Among professing Christians, there is a multitude who have abandoned their responsibilities to Christ, choosing rather to follow the world and the desires of the flesh.
- “For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s.” (Philippians 2:21)
- In the Thyatiran church there were some who had been seduced away from sound doctrine and godly conversation by a false prophetess known as Jezebel; they had departed from the true worship of God, and chastity, to idolatry and fornication.
- Instead of holding fast to their calling they left their post, and the trickle of sin became a flood which engulfed the church with immorality.
- Because of their failure to repent, Christ pronounced His judgment upon them in vv.22-23, casting them into a bed of pain and anguish, and killing her children with death.
- But in the closing portion of the letter, Christ turns His focus back to the faithful members of the church who had rejected Jezebel’s seductive doctrine.
- Even where such ungodliness was taking place, God still had a faithful remnant that had not bowed to Baal (cf. 1 Kings 19:18)
- He gives them words of encouragement to continue in truth and righteousness.
- The seven letters contain many admonitions to steadfast perseverance in the faith (Revelation 2:10,13; 3:2,11)

Note three encouragements Christ gives to His faithful servants:

I. THE LIGHT BURDEN OF PIETY (24)

- A. “None other burden” but to oppose the antinomianism of the Jezebelites and abstain from their immorality
- B. There is a clear reference here to the decree of the Jerusalem council in Acts 15
 1. “No greater burden...abstain from meats offered to idols...and from fornication” (Acts 15:28-29)
 2. This is Christ’s sanctioning of the decision the apostles made in that council

3. If those in the church had been obedient to God's revealed will through the apostles, there would not have been a need for Christ to rebuke them here
- C. The Bible is sufficient to guide our lives
1. We must be careful not to add to what God has commanded in His word
 2. The Scripture alone is to be our rule in all matters of faith and practice.
 3. That means the explicit commands of the Bible, as well as the application of the many principles and examples given in the Bible
- D. True Christianity is not burdensome
1. God's commandments are not grievous (1 John 5:3)
 2. Christ's burden is light (Matthew 11:28-30)
 3. False, man-devised religion binds heavy and grievous burdens on its adherents (Matthew 23:4)
 4. Burdens are to be cast upon the LORD (Psalm 55:22)

II. THE LORD'S BEHEST TO PERSEVERANCE (25)

- A. That which ye have already
1. Christ does not ask them to hold what they don't have
 2. Too often we focus on what we don't have, when we ought to be using what we do have (Exodus 4:2)
- B. Hold fast
1. There are numerous "hold fasts" in the New Testament
 - a. "Hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21)
 - b. "Stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught" (2 Thessalonians 2:15)
 - c. Hold fast the form of sound words (2 Timothy 1:13)
 - d. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering (Hebrews 10:23)
 2. The Thyatirans were to hold and maintain their commendable graces listed in v.19
 3. They were to persevere in their opposition to idolatry and immorality
 4. They were to hold fast to the apostolic teaching they had received, now recorded in the New Testament

- C. Till I come (cf. Luke 19:13; 1 Corinthians 11:26)
1. The imminency of the Lord's return is a major theme throughout Revelation (1:7; 3:3,11,20; 22:7,12,20)
 2. He promised His disciples, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself" (John 14:3)
 3. The "blessed hope" of the Lord's soon return serves to encourage the believer to persevere faithfully (Titus 2:11-14)
 4. This provides a proper perspective on present suffering
 - a. It is only for "a season" 1 Peter 1:6)
 - b. It is not worthy to be compared with future glory. (Romans 8:18)
 - c. It works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory (2 Corinthians 4:17)

III. THE LAUREATE BLESSING TO PREVAILERS (26-29)

- A. The overcomer keeps Christ's works
1. Faith in Jesus Christ makes one an overcomer (1 John 5:5)
 2. An overcomer demonstrates his identity by his works
 3. This word (*ergon*) is used for the church's good works (v.19); the Jezebelites' evil deeds/works (vv.22,23); and Christ's works (v.26)
 4. We are not saved by works, but unto works (Titus 3:5,8)
 5. These are Christ's works – those that are commanded and required by Him in His word
 6. The overcomer keeps them "unto the end"
 - a. The true regenerate believer will persevere and keep the faith, while false professors fall away (John 6:66-69; Hebrews 10:38-39)
 - b. Evidence of saving faith is that such a person will continue in Christ's word (John 8:31)
 - c. "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;" (Hebrews 3:14)
- B. Power over the nations
1. Having just encouraged the believers by reminding them of His coming, Christ adds to that by describing the glory they would enjoy at His coming

2. These poor, despised and persecuted people would one day govern the nations of the world
3. At Christ's coming, believers will be reign with Christ over the world for 1000 years (Daniel 7:27; Luke 19:11-27; 1 Corinthians 6:2-3; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 3:21; 20:4)
4. The reign of the overcomer extends beyond the millennial kingdom into the eternal state (Revelation 22:5)
5. Verse 27 alludes to Psalm 2:9 and describes the judgment the saints will execute upon the nations of the world (cf. Psalm 149:5-9)
6. As the Father gives the Son a kingdom, so the Son gives a kingdom to His saints (Luke 22:29)

C. The morning star

1. Christ is the morning star (Revelation 22:16) and He pledges His own presence to His people (Revelation 22:16)
2. The morning star appears in the heavens before the dawn, and this may be a reference to the Rapture when the saints will be caught up to be with Christ before the Great Tribulation and the dawn of Christ's kingdom at His second advent (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)
3. As believers share in Christ's reign, so they share in Christ's glorious splendour "as the stars for ever and ever" (Daniel 12:3)

CONCLUSION

1. Christ's message to the church at Thyatira reveals His hatred for sin, and His love of righteousness
2. Do we have a sincere desire to be holy in God's sight, regardless of the cost?
3. "Lord, make me as holy as it is possible for a saved sinner to be." (Robert Murray McCheyne)
4. Our natural tendency is not to hold fast, but to let things slip (Hebrews 2:1)
5. The world, the flesh, and the devil all conspire to move us from a steadfast adherence to truth
6. The constant thought that our Lord will return soon will encourage us to hold fast in the faith
7. It will keep us pure as He is pure (1 John 3:3)
8. When ever you are tempted to sin, compromise, or slothfulness, bring to mind these three words: "TILL I COME"