

The Apocalypse of St. John

Weekly Discussion Group

Discussion Questions Week 6

- 1) The speaker said, "You can't believe right and live wrong." What do you think this means, and do you agree with it?
- 2) What does the idea of "compromise" mean to you in your daily life? How does it relate to standing up for your beliefs?
- 3) Why do you think Jesus presented himself to Pergamum as "the one with a sharp, two-edged sword"? How does this imagery make you feel?
- 4) The message mentions a battle for the mind, where the soldiers are ideas. How do you see this kind of battle happening in today's world?
- 5) How do you personally approach balancing inclusivity with holding onto core beliefs?
- 6) Why might it be harder to discern truth in a culture with a "Christian veneer" compared to one that opposes Christian beliefs outright?
- 7) Why do you think the speaker uses the phrase "eating at the tables of lesser gods"? What might that symbolize?
- 8) What does it mean to you that grace not only forgives but transforms? How has that transformation looked in your life personally?

Sunday's Text

Revelation 2:12-17 (NLT)

¹²"Write this letter to the angel of the church in Pergamum. This is the message from the one with the sharp two-edged sword:

¹³"I know that you live in the city where Satan has his throne, yet you have remained loyal to me. You refused to deny me even when Antipas, my faithful witness, was martyred among you there in Satan's city. ¹⁴"But I have a few complaints against you. You tolerate some among you whose teaching is like that of Balaam, who showed Balak how to trip up the people of Israel. He taught them to sin by eating food offered to idols and by committing sexual sin. ¹⁵In a similar way, you have some Nicolaitans among you who follow the same teaching. ¹⁶Repent of your sin, or I will come to you suddenly and fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

¹⁷"Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches. To everyone who is victorious I will give some of the manna that has been hidden away in heaven. And I will give to each one a white stone, and on the stone will be engraved a new name that no one understands except the one who receives it.

Sunday's Message Summary

This week, we talked about the church at Pergamum from Revelation, emphasizing the theme of compromise. Pergamum had right beliefs but flawed behavior, reflecting a struggle between faithfulness and cultural pressures. The city, a center of Roman religion and emperor worship, tested Christians through external persecution and internal doctrinal corruption. Jesus addresses Pergamum as one wielding a sharp, two-edged sword, symbolizing truth and judgment. The message underscores the importance of aligning belief and behavior while resisting both external intimidation and internal enticement.

Pastor Dale discussed the challenges Christians face in identifying false teachings, particularly those cloaked in religious language. It examines Jesus' message to the church in Pergamum, a city described as "where Satan has his throne," due to its emperor worship and temples. Despite external pressures, the church stood firm in faith but tolerated internal false teachings promoting idolatry and sexual immorality. The message warns against spiritual compromises, emphasizing the need for repentance and truth. It highlights the profound connection between body and spirit, rejecting the view that physical actions, including sexual behavior, are separate from one's spiritual identity.

He emphasizes that the human body is sacred and that engaging in actions contrary to God's will violates not just the body but also the soul. They critique ideologies that misinterpret grace as a license for sin, warning against worldly philosophies that fail to satisfy. Jesus calls believers to repentance, offering promises of spiritual sustenance ("hidden manna") and a new identity symbolized by a white stone. The stone represents forgiveness, restoration, and intimate friendship with Christ. The message challenges believers to pursue holiness, resist false ideologies, and align with God's truth for a life of unity, purpose, and abundant joy.

