

There has never been such access to great Christian teaching in the history of the world. The very fact that you can have a copy of all of God's word in your hand is a recent innovation in the span of human history. And we have access to 2000 years worth of books and Bible commentaries and resources and millions of sermons and hundreds of different languages. Most of which is available for free online somewhere and if you're willing to spend some money, there's so much more that you can find. Not even taking account the amount of YouTube videos or podcast or TikTok or whatever Christian teaching media is available now.

This is wonderful, however there has also never been so much false teaching so widely available in the history of the church. Because there is so much available at times be overwhelming. As the church and as Christians don't always know how are we supposed to handle false teaching? Especially how are we supposed to handle when false teaching and false teachers come into our local church?

And our passage this morning is gonna be about this very issue. There is a church that is not handling the false teaching in their church. Well. Part of my hope in my prayers we read this letter is that we will have a better understanding better knowledge of how believer should respond find false teaching in our church.

Turn in your bibles to Revelation 2:18-29

### **I. The church cannot tolerate false teaching in its midst (v. 18-23).**

We cannot tolerate false teaching.

The church can get a lot of things right.

The church can be doing a lot of stuff really well, serving the community, spreading the gospel, and teaching God's Word.

But the church cannot tolerate false teaching

This is the problem that's happening in this church.

They are turning a blind eye to it.

So let's take a closer look

Verse 18, **"And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: 'The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze.'"**

We begin again with another description of Jesus as the Son of God.  
He is divine and very God of very God.

And then there are two descriptions of Jesus that we see.

His eyes are described like fire.

They are intense and do not miss anything.

They are watching and nothing is hidden from his sight

There are times Bri asks me something like, did you buy a donut at Walmart today?

And she just looks at me with her eyes and can see the truth before I respond.

Jesus looks and can see things like that in a much great way.

It also points to Christ's feet.

This is pointing to the purity of Jesus

Feet in the Bible are usually symbolic of sin and creatureliness.

Especially in the ancient world because feet were just often so dirty and just gross from walking around.

But Jesus's feet are beautiful and pure.

And His purity is in contrast to the lack of purity in the church.

Verse 19, "**I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first.**"

They generally are doing very well as a church.

They are growing in faith and love and actions.

Their faith is something they lived out and is growing.

They are more like Jesus today than they were when they first became Christians.

Their hearts have not grown cold.

They have not lost their love for God.

They are continuing to be sanctified.

But there is one big problem.

They're tolerating false teachers.

I do think it's helpful to point out that Jesus is honest.

Our world, especially today has a hard time with nuance.

Everything is either the best ever or the worst ever.

Jesus tells the truth.

They have a real and significant, terrible problem that can lead to the destruction of their church.

They are deceiving people and some will end up in hell because of this false teaching.

But it doesn't mean that everything is terrible in their church.

There is things that are still good and are still worthy of praise.

Jesus points those out as well.

When we get to the problem if they're tolerating the false teaching

Verse 20, **"But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols."**

We see they are allowing a false teacher in their midst.

And so what do we know about this false teacher?

Well, John tells us she is a woman named Jezebel.

Now it's very unlikely that her literal name is Jezebel.

I mean, if you're gonna be a false teacher influenced by Satan to go into the church and lead them astray you probably don't want to have the name of one of the worst enemies of God's people.

Usually his demons are more crafty than that.

What is happening is that John is attacking her and identifying she might claim to be a great prophet, but she really is an enemy.

This is kind of similar to in the last church we saw that they were following the teachings of another false prophet Balaam.

It is a spiritual connection to these false prophets.

And so John is saying that this woman is a false prophet in the spiritual line of Jezebel.

Now, just because John does this, I don't think that means that we should follow his lead and call every woman as a false teacher of Jezebel.

Sometimes I can see that overdone in the church or Christians are a quick to throw this word around.

It is interesting that we do that with women. We will call them Jezebel's but we won't call every man is a false teacher Balaam.

Although maybe we should, I don't know.

But the problem here with this woman is, she calls herself a prophetess.

The problem is not that she is a woman who claims to be a prophet.

Because we know in the Scriptures, there are many women who are legitimate prophets.

Paul himself in 1 Corinthians assumes that there will be women who will be prophesy in the church.

Miriam, the brother of Moses was a prophet.

Anna, who worshiped in the temple who acknowledge that Jesus was a messiah when he was only a baby was a prophet.

The wife of Isaiah is a prophet.

And these are a few of the women who were true prophets of God.

The problem is not that she is a woman, but the content of her teaching.

She is claiming to speak for God and yet she is teaching things that are anti-God.

She is teaching and seducing people into sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.

It is false teaching.

She is leading people astray and saying oh no we don't need to worry about what Jesus says about lust.

We don't need to worry about what the Scriptures say about all those rules about who you can and cannot sleep with.

We have the gospel we can do what we want. We are free.

And whatever she is teaching, she is letting people believe that their sexual immorality is OK.

And sexual immorality in the Bible is a broad term.

It is like a catch all term.

Every kind of sexual thing that you can think of fits under this word.

And there are plenty of sexual sins.

And so we don't know which ones in particular or all of them, but it doesn't matter she is leading people astray from what the Christian sexual ethic is.

And they are tolerating it they are allowing it.

Verse 21, **"I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality."**

This makes it seem not just that God is giving her time to repent, but that the church has asked her to repent and she is not.

The church pulled her aside and said hey you gotta stop teaching this stuff that's not with the Bible says that's not with the apostles say that's not what Jesus said you need to repent.

It seems like they've started some kind of process of church discipline and trying to correct her.

But she has not repented she has not stopped, and she is continuing in her own sexual immorality.

And the church is just kind of thrown up its hands and said OK we give up. We'll just let it happen.

God says you can't stop.

They need to do something about this teacher

Because she is taking away from the gospel of Jesus.

That she is lessening the teachings of Jesus.

Man, there are plenty of false teachers like this all over the church aren't there?

There are plenty of people today who do the same thing.

There are plenty of false teachers, even if they don't call themselves prophets who are trying to lead away and seduce the church to embracing all different kinds of sexual morality.

And I've seen this on both sides of the political and the theological spectrum.

There was a professor at seminary who they found out that he had multiple wives and he was teaching people that this is what the Bible says and that it's actually OK and men can marry as many women as they want it's part of God's plan.

There are people who say monogamy is old-fashioned.

No one can stay faithful to just one partner anyway, so just we should be free to do whatever we want to have as many partners as we want.

And so people are embracing this and coming up with new terms and new ideas and new names for just same old sexual immorality.

There are plenty who teach purity and chastity are no the only way to follow Jesus.

They say sex outside of marriage is fine.

So cohabiting and living together is on the rise.

And the problem isn't there there's a man and woman living in the same house. The problem is that they're sleeping together in the same bed and what they're doing in that bed when they're not married.

And they are false teachers, who say that's fine that's OK. Our circumstances are so different or they give different reasons for why this is not a big deal.

There are false teachers who teach and allow sexual immorality in marriage.

There are those false teachers who say that men can abuse their wives however they want sexually because it's part of the marriage covenant.

And that you as a woman have to do everything that your husband ask you to do or you are insane no matter how degrading it is no matter how unloving he is you've got to submit.

They wrongly teach that this is God's plan for marriage.  
It is just another version of sexual immorality.

There are false teachers that say any kind of sexuality is fine no matter what genders are involved or deny that gender is a God given reality at all. They will try to say things like well. Jesus didn't really know about homosexuality as if these people didn't exist before, but I've just popped up recently.

And now the way we in our modern world might talk and think about sexuality certainly is different.

I find it hard to believe that all of a sudden recently LGBT people began to exist, and I haven't been with us since the fall in the garden.

False teachers who will embrace the world sexual ethic that as long as there's two grown adults and they're not hurting anybody, they can do whatever they want because God is love.

Look that is not the gospel.

That is false teaching.

And there's a good debate, whether or not that is denying the gospel or whether that's denying, you know essential tenant of the faith like we normally think about denying Jesus God, we're denying the return of Jesus or denying that all of us are sinners in need of grace.

But there is no doubt that this kind of false teaching is turning its back on what Christians have affirmed and believed the Bible taught everywhere all the time by everybody for 2000 years.

And it isn't new in our day even if it feels like it.

And so this false teaching continues in our day and continues in many churches even in our community.

We cannot, and we should not tolerate that kind of false teaching.

Because it is so significant that Jesus talks about it.

He believes this is the biggest problem some of these churches face.

And it is so serious that their status before God is in jeopardy.

So, it seems Jesus believes it is deeply significant and important.

She is not just teaching sexual immorality, she is also teaching idolatry. We have mentioned before this is a problem other churches are having as well.

And the problem isn't unknowingly eating some of this meat.

The problem is when they purposefully do so in sexually sinful worship services.

In Acts 15, when the Gentiles and Jews got together.

And the apostles were discussing what the Gentiles had to follow.

They said they don't have to follow the law, but there are two nonnegotiable of the gospel.

You cannot knowingly participate in eating food that is sacrificed to idols.

You cannot knowingly do that because you are committing idolatry, and you were worshiping those gods.

And they said you can't be committing sexual immorality because we know that is part of the heart of Jesus calls us to.

This teacher trying to say no it's fine. We can do whatever we want and we can do whatever we want.

Verse 22, **"Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works,"**

There's some irony here.

He's saying that this woman who has been in bed for all of her sexual sin is now gonna keep being in bed and she's gonna be in bed because I'm gonna make her so sick she can't get out of it.

So there's this sense in which the punishment is fitting the crime.

Listen, God will judge and God can be harsh, but God's judgment is always just, it is always right.

He said he is going to deal with her.

Justice will come for her false teaching.

And all those who are joining with her and embracing this teaching and committing adultery and sexual immorality, they also will face judgment.



God will throw them into a great tribulation into a great trial and a great suffering.

They will face judgment alongside her.

But the only way to escape is repentance.

Look God's judgment in the Bible is always the same pattern.

You see it over and over and over.

God comes and offers salvation and redemption.

People usually accept it, and then they start falling back into sin.

And God comes and says hey I don't wanna have to do this. I will have to punish you if you do not repent of your sins and here's what the punishment is gonna be.

And the people don't listen and they don't listen and they don't listen and God says OK here it comes and then finally he brings judgment.

See this a lot with my children when they disobey and I say hey stop throwing at the table. I'm gonna have to send you to time out.

And then we have a conversation I say cause if you throw that, you're gonna have the consequence, and I don't think you wanna have the consequence.

And then they throw it and then I send them to time out for 3 minutes and they're shocked at how this could happen.

But the reason I'm threatening, isn't because I wanna send them to punishment it's because I want them to repent. I want them to stop.

This is the same thing that God wants he wants them to repent.

And this is something that we have to keep in mind.

Verse 23, **"and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works."**

He says I'm gonna strike her children dead.

This is not her literal children.

This is her spiritual children who follow her teaching.

And he reminds them that he knows everything and what he is going to give them is justice and what they deserve unless they repent and ask for grace.

God will not be fooled.

And we need to remember the gospel of grace, especially when we talk about false teaching.

Yes we must oppose false teaching in our churches.

We cannot let it slide. We cannot tolerate it. Something must be done.

But some of us can be so zealous for the truth that we forget the gospel.

We don't only oppose false teachers because they are wrong.

We should also oppose them because their souls are in danger if they continue.

2 Timothy 2 instructs us to correct but with gentleness.

We can do it boldly and we can do it gently because we are hoping that they will repent of their sins and come back to Jesus.

That we hope that those in our midst who have fallen for some of these false teachings that are all over the place will repent and come back to Jesus.

Our desire is not to beat people up or throw people out of the church. We don't want that.

And also, the reminder is that there is always forgiveness for those who are even for the worst of sinners, even for one who God causes Jezebel

We hope for people's repentance and we called them to repentance.

So we oppose them, but we do hoping for their repentance they will join the church again true members.

Now I do hope and I pray that our church continues to be a place where we do not tolerate false teaching.

Because we do not tolerate it in our church.

But there is false teaching everywhere.

We don't need to spend all our day and energy arguing on facebook or the internet with every false teacher we find.

We can ignore many of those.

But we cannot ignore it when it is in our midst and in our church.

I also hope that our church continues to be a place where those who have fallen for false teaching, and those who are sinners can come and be welcomed.

I hope that this is a place that those who are sending sexually, and you have sexually can come and be loved and hear the gospel of Jesus.

I hope that this is a church where people who are gay and people who are trans and people who are living together and people who are sleeping together and people who are single parents and people who have gotten divorced to people who have whatever send you wanna put up there Can come. I don't feel like we're gonna throw them out.

And we can still be bold and we can still say we don't tolerate false teaching in this church and saw one here's what God says about sexuality. Here's where you're wrong, but we do it, inviting them to repent, inviting them to embrace the gospel of Jesus and forgiveness.

Because we can welcome visitors who are sinners and who don't know Jesus, we will not welcome false teachers there's a difference.

Because those who teach will face a harsher judgment from God and they should face a harsher judgment in our church.

## **II. Hold fast to the gospel, not legalism (v. 24-25)**

As we resist false teachers, we have to hold fast to the gospel

Verse 24, **"But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden."**

Jesus encourages the rest of the church saying now I know there are some of you are being faithful.

There are many in the church who are deceived and are going astray, but there are those in the church who are holding fast to the gospel

There are those who have not fallen for the false teaching of this false prophet.

Although I love this phrase in the middle of the deep things.  
Now this woman is not coming claiming to teach the deep things of Satan.  
Because even baby Christians or the ignorant would not fall for someone who does that.

John is saying that she claims to be teaching the deep things of God, but the reality is that she is teaching the deep things of Satan.

Something I want us to see here.

We need to be really wary of anyone who claims to be teaching deeper things and deeper truths of God's word.

Those of us who may have been Christians for a long time or done lots of Bible studies and heard countless sermons a lot of times we might say I just don't like this is too surface. I wanna go deep.  
I want to go deeper Bible study.

I don't think the Bible tells us that we need deeper Bible study.

Hebrews does tell us to want solid food not milk.

But there's plenty on the surface that we have not mastered.

We have not figured out.

Because we'll stand up and say we want to go deeper and then someone can ask if you ever read Leviticus?

Have you read through the entire Bible this year yet?

Have you spent an hour straight just praying?

Have you spent time simply meditating and contemplating God and His word?

Have you been memorizing Scriptures, or even an entire book?

Have you studied theology or read through a systematic theology book?

Have you read church history to see how doctrine has developed?

Or worked on learning Hebrew and Greek for the original languages?

But people don't want that.

Because by deeper study we really just mean we want to be entertained more and have our ears tickled. We don't want to work.

What are the only times in the scripture talks about deeper study is here and it's the deep things of Satan.

What I'm trying to get it you need to be really careful when you hear somebody come up and start teaching you and say I'm gonna teach you some really deep stuff.

And some of my experience most of the time I have heard that it has ended up being false teachings just ended up being wrong.

This is what Jezebel is doing.

She's tempting them with a deeper stuff.

You don't need the deeper stuff just hold fast to the gospel.

Hold fast to the simple truth of God's word.

You're grasping and grabbing for all of these other things just hold onto Jesus.

And what I love because he says at the end of the verse that he doesn't give us any other burdens.

Is this is something that we can do especially when there is real sin.

False teaching is leading people to embracing sexual immorality and so as an over response, we can do with the Pharisees did and like tons of burdens on people.

Instead of just standing for truth and say no, that's not what God teaches about sex, we decide to create extra rules.

The burden will go one step further and say well.

Jesus said don't even look at a woman with lust, that's adultery.

So we go overboard and we start saying OK well you need to be careful with every single thing that you wear so that nobody could possibly look at you and commit adultery.

And now that you're responsibility.

We make a rule women can't even be alone with a man.

Or now women need to be completely covered up, or maybe even sit in a separate section for church.

OK, so we just we go overboard create rules and get legalistic.

What Jesus says here in His word is he doesn't put extra burdens on  
He doesn't go above and beyond to say these are all of the stuff you must  
do to make sure you're not like those people.  
Just say it's just Hold Fast to me.

Verse 25, **"Only hold fast what you have until I come."**

Just hold onto until Jesus comes.

Hold onto Jesus.

This is true, not just when you're dealing with false teaching in the church.  
We're just in your life hold onto to Jesus.

If you like rules, rules and productivity feels better.

I sure feel a lot better in my day at the beginning of the day I make a list of  
things I have to do and at the end of the day I finish the list instead at the  
beginning of the day I sit and I contemplate and I just spend time praying  
and thinking about God for three hours, and there's nothing on my list.  
Doesn't feel great or like I accomplished something.

But Jesus says don't work on your list.

Don't add things to your yolk.

My yoke is easy. My burden is light hold onto to Jesus.

And there's a promise for those who hold onto Jesus.

### **III. Those who hold onto to Jesus will be vindicated. (v. 27-29)**

It describes the promise of the gospel and the promise of salvation for  
those who conquer.

Conquering the kingdom of God does not look like conquering of the  
world.

And the conquering in each church looks a little different here. Those who  
conquer are those who obey God.

Those who keep those who hold fast to Jesus until He comes until the  
end.

So those who hold fast are rewarded.  
They are given authority over the nations.  
The church of this point is on the lowest end of the Roman empire.  
But those who hold fast, will be in charge.  
This is the great reversal, the Christians, who are mocked and belittled and ignored and spit upon and trampled on and killed and executed and persecuted at the end they will be seated on high and they will get to pass judgment.

Verse 27, **"and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father."**

This is talking about Christian getting a hand down rules and hand down judgment

Part of this is that those who hold onto Jesus when Jesus returns and when Jesus is passing out the judgments on the nations and the judgments on sinners, he is saying that Christians will get to play a role in that.

That we will not get to have a front row seat to see how God will punish those who wronged us those who are supremely wicked, and those that we saw destroy and wreck and ruin lives in this world.

Those people that every day we thought and we wondered, how could God let this happen? Why is no one doing anything? How can the supreme wickedness continue in the world.

One day, we will get to stand there and we will get to rule.  
And a lot of judgment, these pots, being broken into pieces, this is symbolic and is talking about the judgment that will come.  
That we will get to sit, we will get to pass on judgment on the nations and a part of it is you may get to decide what is just alongside Jesus what is fair.

And its authority doesn't come from us. It comes from Jesus Christ who got his authority for God, the father he is sharing it with us and Grace if we hold fast.

Verse 28, **"And I will give him the morning star. 29 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."**

The MorningStar

What is the MorningStar?

This isn't like where you can pay some money and get a piece of paper that tells you that you own a star and you named it after somebody. This isn't that.

Some of the Roman emperors called themselves the MorningStar. Jesus, also in the Scriptures referred to himself as the morning star.

I think this is just not saying he'll give us Jesus. Ultimately the gospel salvation, heaven, the new heavens, the new Earth, the greatest thing there isn't getting to pass judgment on sinners. It's not that there's no suffering your pain anymore or that we get glorified bodies. The greatest thing is Jesus.

And those who hold onto Jesus who desperately call on Jesus and beg, for Jesus will get rewarded with Jesus.

So that is what we need to do.

We need to hold onto Jesus

At the end of the day, the problem with false teachers is that they take us from Christ.

It takes us away from Jesus.

It gives us a false Jesus and tries to pull off our hands from Christ.

But we need the real Jesus.

We need to hold onto Him and then we can be with Him forever.