

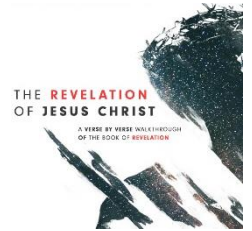
Title: Revelation, Part 8: True or False

Speaker: Kevin Norcross

Passage: Rev. 2.18-29

Big idea: The church in Thyatira reminds us of the danger of false teaching.

Memory verse of the month: Rev. 2:4-5 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first.



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My name is Kevin Norcross, and I am the pastor of Next Generation and outreach. I am so thankful to be able to share this message with you all today.

I have titled my message today: True or False, and I thought we would start things off by doing a little test today. You can answer on your own or with the people you are with.

True or False:

- Cows sleep standing up. – True
- Pinocchio was the first animated colour Disney film. – False (Snow White was first)
- There are 100 dimples on a golf ball. – False (there are about 300-500)
- Dalmatians are born with black spots. – False (their spots develop at around 3 weeks)
- Pastor Charles favorite snack is Cheetos. – True (I am sure you all got that one right)

We are in this series on the book of Revelation and are looking at the issues 7 churches in ancient Turkey were facing.

- The church today, named Thyatira, was growing in their love and deeds, and service and faithfulness, but there was a false teacher among them who was leading people astray.
- If you could grab your Bible, or bible app and turn to Revelation 2:18-29, and we are going to read it soon.

I've titled my message today, True or False.

**Big idea: The church in Thyatira reminds us of the danger of false teaching.**

Each of these 7 churches existed within a unique context, just like WP has a unique geographical and cultural context. The seven churches taken as a whole represents the church as a whole and illustrates problems the universal Church has faced in the past, currently faces, and will face in the future.

Thyatira – This city is about 70 kilometres from the previous church in Pergamum. The city was known for many things including excellent bronze work. They worshipped Apollo and Artemis and had festivals, celebrations, and feasts focused on that.

As John traveled to that church, he knew that he was about to expose the woman who was destroying the work of the gospel. Once he arrived, he prepared to deliver the message of Jesus to the people.

Here is what he says to this church in Thyatira.

Revelation 2:18-29

**<sup>18</sup> "To the angel of the church in Thyatira write:**

**These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze. <sup>19</sup>I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first. <sup>20</sup>Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. <sup>21</sup>I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. <sup>22</sup>So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. <sup>23</sup>I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds. <sup>24</sup>Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets, 'I will not impose any other burden on you, <sup>25</sup>except to hold on to what you have until I come.'**

<sup>26</sup>To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations— <sup>27</sup>that one ‘will rule them with an iron scepter and will dash them to pieces like pottery’<sup>[a]</sup>—just as I have received authority from my Father. <sup>28</sup>I will also give that one the morning star. <sup>29</sup>Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Overview (Coles notes):

18 – explains details about Jesus.

19 – good things about the church, encouragements.

20-23 – there is a rebuke and we see Jesus zeal and passion for the church and we see him fighting against the woman who is leading his people astray.

24-29 – more verses are about encouraging the church and expressing his love for them and encouraging them to keep going in their faith.

So we are going to dive into it verse by verse and then have some takeaways.

### Verse 18

<sup>18</sup>“To the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze

- Description of his eyes – like a flame of fire.
  - Penetrate through every façade and defense and pierce through to my heart.
  - When his eyes are on you, he sees right through you.
  - It is with this understanding of who Jesus is, that we see how he sees right through this church into the heart of what is going on.
- This is a reminder for you and for me as Christ followers and as a part of his church.
  - He sees down to our core, deep within our hearts.
  - A part of being a Christ follower is to be open to the direction and leading Christ and His work in our hearts.
  - To be open to His Spirit and give him the space to search our hearts and to listen.
- The description of his feet being like burnished bronze would have caught the attention of those in Thyatira because they were known for their excellent work with bronze. It speaks of the fact that Jesus is steady, strong, pure, and holy and he stands firm as the judge.

### Verse 19

<sup>19</sup>I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first.

- He sees marvelous things in this church as he looks at it.
  - God is on the move in this church.
  - Specifically, the fact that they are a loving church and their acts of service are praised.
  - Also, their faithfulness is revealed even through the trials that they have faced.
  - There are good things happening at this church and their good deeds are being praised.
  - There is a sense of growth and revival in this faith community.
  - These good things are not just happening now, but they have happened before too and it is growing
  - Jesus who sees through everything, sees these things happening here
- Remember the imagery in verse 18 that Jesus eyes are like fire ... piercing and seeing through to the very core.
  - These words to this church would have been so encouraging for them to hear.
  - Jesus who knows the deepest complexities of this church and their people is saying some very profound and encouraging things to them.
  - I imagine them being on the edge of their seats listening and being so encouraged by what they were hearing.
- Next, he talks about the issues in the church. It is important for Jesus to address these issues like it is necessary for a doctor to address health issues in their patients.
- Jesus sees this tumor growing on this church and calls it out.

Story – When Kaden was 1, we decided to have another kid. I remember being at the ultrasound appointment when we found out we were having twins. I laughed and Kylie cried. Kaden was 2 years old when they were born. About 2 weeks after bringing them home Jayla got sick. She was turning grey. Hospital, stopped breathing, intubated, moved to London. This is Jayla 4 pounds. She was in there for awhile and recovered.

Here is my point – when we brought her to the doctor, we wanted to know what was wrong, not what was good.

- Yes, I know she is beautiful, sweet, precious, 4 lbs, all fingers, toes, etc. But tell me what is wrong and how to fix it!
- The doctor is the expert, and we desperately want to know what is wrong.

Like a physician giving a health report, there are many things that are good, but the doctor must point out the things that could cause harm.

- That is what the doctor needs to do.
- They explain things that need to be fixed because the doctor is concerned with the health of their patient.
- Jesus is the great physician, and he cares deeply about his church. He cares deeply about you and your spiritual health and well being.
- He knows that if sin, and compromise, and complacency, and false teaching creeps into this body of believers, then they are in trouble and they will not be able to function the way they can.
- They will never reach their full potential.

So ... the doctor addresses the cyst that is growing on this faith community and calls it out.

#### **Verse 20 –**

[<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols.](#)

Jesus points out that there is a false teacher who is still in the church that is leading people astray by encouraging them to participate in sin

- The genuine gift of prophecy was highly respected in the early church. Both men and women were appointed to leadership. Prophets generally brought direct revelation from God to the people
- She was a self-appointed false-prophetess, not a church appointed. She called herself a Christian and was leading people astray.
- Some people within the church realized that she was not a good person, so they labeled her Jezebel. This was the name of Israel's King Ahab's wife who led people astray to Baal worship. She was leading people astray just like Jezebel did.
- She didn't go to the church leadership and ask how she could get involved, like serving at the Canada Day event – she decided that she wanted to do her own thing and cause people to sin against God
- What is her crime? False teaching. By what she is teaching, she is leading people within the church into sin
- Jesus then talks about her more

#### **Verse 21 –**

[<sup>21</sup> I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling.](#)

Jesus says that he has given her much time to repent, but she has refused.

- She has been given the opportunity to repent and make things right but she continues to do what she does.
- She hardened her heart and rather than finding her place within the church to serve and lead, she continued to rebel and disobey scripture.

This is a reminder to us that Jesus' heart for his people is that we would turn from our sin and repent.

- He wants to work with you and he wants you to change and to repent.
- His heart is that there would be restoration and repentance, and forgiveness and healing.
- In this case, that does not happen and so there needs to be penalty and judgement for the sins that she is committing.
  - Jesus loves his church and there is an infection within the body and he needs to get rid of it.
  - He needs to do his job as the great physician and deal with the sin that is hurting his church.
  - So, he talks about the punishment.

### Verse 22-23 –

<sup>22</sup> So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. <sup>23</sup> I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.

Jesus says that He will judge her and discipline her.

- Also, that he will judge and deal with those who are “her children” those who are listening to and following her ways.
- It is a reminder that God will deal with issues that are out of hand.
- He set up the local church leadership in a way to be his representatives and he will judge and deal with someone who goes against the church.
- Jesus loves the church and died for the church and will not tolerate anyone who is out to hurt the church and lead people astray.

Story – I remember visiting Kylie’s dad out in Montana when Jayla, Mekhi and Kaden were really young. He took us up in his truck up one of the logging mountains to pick blueberries. Kylie and I got the kids ready and loaded in the truck. Her dad went inside to get his handgun. Me being a naive city kid asked him why he was bringing a loaded handgun on his waist like a cowboy. He said ... you never know if we get in between a mother bear and her cub, we will need to defend ourselves.

Why was Jesus so harsh and so severe?

- Think of it this way.
- Imagine the length that a mother bear will go to protect her young against a predator.
- Videos of mother animals protecting their young.
- She will go to extreme measures as the instinct kicks in to protect.
- We have a great Dane, Wallace.
  - He went out in our back yard and saw a baby robin learning how to fly and caught it under his paw.
  - As this was happening, the mother robin was freaking out and squawking at the dog and flying towards him.
  - Now there is a bit of a size difference between a great Dane and a robin, but this mother was willing to do whatever it could to protect this baby. It ended up getting free and seemed to be okay.

Jesus is protecting His kids, his church against teaching that will destroy them and lead them astray. Jesus’ severity in dealing with this woman is also a reflection of his immense severe love for his church and his people.

We see this throughout the teaching to the churches and in the book of Revelation that Jesus understands that false teaching and ungodly influence will destroy the church unless it is guarded against.

Again, the issue here is that this woman and her followers not only sinned, but they refused to repent. Jesus needs to deal with this refusal to repent with judgement. Our approach when God convicts us of sin must be to repent and turn our hearts towards God who loves us and cares for us and desires to heal us and forgive us.

### Verse 24-28 –

<sup>24</sup> Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan’s so-called deep secrets, ‘I will not impose any other burden on you, <sup>25</sup> except to hold on to what you have until I come.’

<sup>26</sup> To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations— <sup>27</sup> that one ‘will rule them with an iron scepter and will dash them to pieces like pottery’<sup>[a]</sup>—just as I have received authority from my Father. <sup>28</sup> I will also give that one the morning star.

Here we see Jesus encouraging the church again.

- There were those within the church who did not follow the false teaching but stayed committed to the truth. He says ...
  - Hold on because I am going to continue to establish my authority and you will be a part of it.
  - Those of you who realised her false teaching and did not follow it ... good job.

- He tells them to hold the course, to keep going and it reminds us of Jesus teaching in Matt 24:13 “he who stands firm till the end will be saved.” And also, that we should be steadfast and diligent until Christ returns.

This is a good reminder to us to hold the course, stay committed to the truth. To never grow weary and tired in doing good, but to keep working hard to honour God and pursue relationship with Him.

### Verse 29 –

<sup>29</sup> **Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.**

These are Jesus Words to the church. They are to be taken seriously, and not just brushed off. If you have ears to hear – listen to these words.

So you must ask yourself the question. What is God saying to you today to encourage you and to bless you and challenge you?

In light of what we have learned today, what are some things that we can take away and take to heart?

Think of a little kid going to a birthday party. That is one nice thing about lockdown is that I have an excuse to having 20 kids in my house for a birthday party. Kidding. Well maybe not. But when a kid goes to a party, they usually leave with a loot bag.

- We just dove into these few verses and had a bible study party and now it is time for the loot bag.
- What can we take with us and bring home (well you are already home, but you get my point)?
- I have a couple of things and perhaps you have more, but here are a couple of suggestions.

1) Remember that Jesus cares deeply about you and will go to great lengths to protect you against the lies of this world and false teaching.

- This should encourage you.
- When Jesus nudges you and convicts you of something ... respond.
- Just like the mother bear that protects her young, Jesus went after the false teaching in this church and worked with those who were sinning and wanted them to repent and change.

● What do I do when I sin?

- There will be times where you will fall into temptation.
- There will be times that you will make bad choices.
- First of all, you need to run to God and not run from Him.
  - There is a tendency to run from God and try to hide your sin from Him.
  - There is a temptation to think that when you mess up God is mad at you and is going to pound you.
  - God hates sin, but He loves you and desperately wants you to be free from sin.
  - You need to confess your sin to God so that He can forgive you.
  - God is “faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9
    - Some of you are listening today to this and you know that there is sin in your heart that you need to talk to God about.
    - I challenge you to bring that sin to God and confess it to Him so that He can take it from you and set you free.
    - If you hold on to your sin it is like walking around with a backpack full of bricks
    - Sin weighs you down whereas God wants you to be free.
    - Don’t let the mess of this world get the best of you but look to God to set you free.
    - There is freedom to those of you who desire it.
  - Holy spirit will help you by telling you about things in your life that he wants you to change.
  - It is called conviction.
  - Conviction is not something that you need to be afraid of, but something that you need to embrace.
  - Difference between conviction and condemnation.

- Condemnation
  - It comes from other people who think that you should act a certain way and they put pressure on you to be perfect.
  - This is an unrealistic expectation that people put on you.
- Conviction
  - Conviction is different.
  - Conviction comes from Holy Spirit.
  - The purpose of conviction is to help you to be holy.
  - You cannot work at holiness without God's help, so if you want to be holy, you cannot resist conviction.
  - Conviction is not a bad word.
  - Conviction is surrounded with love.
  - Conviction is extremely tough because it requires you to take action.
  - God will not force you to change your behavior.
  - Once He convicts you about an area in your life, he leaves it up to you to take action.
- Repentance
  - When you embrace conviction, and God bring something to your attention, Scripture teaches us to repent.
  - Repent means to turn to God in deep regret and remorse.
  - We need to recognize our sin as sin and call it for what it is and rather than try to hide our sin and run from God and hide from God, we need to run to God with our failures and sins and embrace his forgiveness.
  - "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us." Psalm 103:12
  - God forgives us and sets us free by the power of the cross and cleanses us.
- Sin is like a leach.
  - Sometimes without you really knowing it, sin grabs onto you and begins to suck the life right out of you.
  - You are afraid to take it off cause it will hurt, but if you leave it on, you know that it will hurt you more.
  - Today is the day where you need to get it off.
  - God, please help me to get the sin out of my life.

Remember the big idea - The church in Thyatira reminds us of the danger of false teaching.

2) Think of some ways that you can protect yourself from false teaching.

- Be careful who you are listening to.
  - These days it is so tough to know what is truth and what is a lie. Specifically with world issues, and politics, and other social issues.
  - In order to find the truth you are going to need to search it out. If you just consume media that is thrown at you, then you will only be hearing one side of the story.
  - There are some godly people in the media today that are working very hard to report on their side of the story ... but you are going to have to look for it.
  - It is important for you to know what is going on so that you are able to have good conversations with people on these topics and give your perspective and also, we need to know how to respond as a Christian community to all the things that are going on in the world. We have the opportunity to contribute to the conversation in a humble, gracious, spirit led way. The world, your friends, co-workers, fellow students need to hear a genuine Christ follower contribute to these conversations in a way that represents Christ.
- If something doesn't sit right in your heart ... dig for the truth.
  - Specifically, when it comes to all the teaching out there that falls under the Christian heading.
  - There are so many teachers who are putting out content and even so much more in the last year and a half.
  - Get to know certain teachers that you trust and consume that content.

- Everything that is put out there under the Christian banner is not right.
- You need to be savvy. You need to be diligent. You need to strive to know the truth and not allow false teaching into your hearts.
- Remember that Jesus is passionate about it, and you should be too.
- Daily devotions are critical – In order to protect yourself from false teaching, you need to spend time with God on a daily basis and grow in your relationship with Him and pursue Him.
- You need to have the desire to get to know God.
  - Since it requires work, you need to actually have a desire and act on it.
  - You can't just walk around and hope that maybe, possibly, by chance, you may get close to God.
  - It is definitely not going to ... just happen.
  - NO – the devil does not want you to do that so he is going to do whatever he can to prevent you from getting to know God.
  - You need to desire it.
    - Pursue it.
    - Not ever give up on it.
    - Work at it.
    - Make sacrifices for it.
    - Give things up for it.
    - Motivate yourself.
    - Push past distractions – do whatever you need to do to get close to God.
    - Sometimes the pressure of this world is caving in around you, but you need to press through and live for what is right!
    - Your daily commitment to bible reading, and prayer is vital to be able to protect yourself from false teaching.
- It is in your quiet time.
  - The light of Holy Spirit shines on you.
  - Where you become strong.
  - That you work out your issues.
  - Where you seek God and get direction for your life.
  - Where you can expose your deepest feelings, and no one is around.
  - Where you can let down your guard and be vulnerable.
  - Where you can be honest.
  - That you don't feel the pressure on all eyes on you.
- Daily relationship building with God is vital.
  - If you and I are going to make a difference in your world, you need to get yourself in this routine.
  - Get in that place that is quiet.
  - Get in that place of preparation.
  - Get in that safe place.

Hopefully, there are a few things you can take away from today's message that will help you guard your heart against false teaching.