

Session 4 Jesus' Message to the Church of Pergamos (Rev. 2:12-17)

I. THE PRIMARY MESSAGE: A CHURCH WITH COMPROMISE (REV. 2:12-17)

We are continuing our study of the Seven Churches in the book of Revelation. For those who are new with us here tonight for the first time, in Revelation 1, 2 and 3, Jesus gave a prophetic message to seven different churches. Each one of them was in what is modern-day Turkey. The word that He gave to those seven churches was relevant for their day, of course, but it is a prophetic word to the Church in the earth that will face the pressures, persecution, and temptations in the book of Revelation. So the reason those churches are in the book of Revelation is because the Lord is saying, as it were, "I am going to raise up a church after My own heart that will be victorious and operate in power through the events, the pressures, the setbacks, and the temptations throughout that book." So we read Jesus' prophetic word to these seven churches, and He is saying, in effect, "This is what I am going to emphasize in the generation that I return." And so these are very, very relevant prophetic messages straight from Jesus to the Church. Here we are at the church of Pergamos. You can say Pergamum, if you want to, as some translations say that.

- A. Jesus encouraged the church in Pergamos for standing strong in the face of persecution. However, He corrected them for not standing against false teaching that tolerated immorality and idolatry.

Jesus was encouraging this church to stand strong in the face of persecution, number one. However, He was correcting them because, though many were standing strong, they were not standing against false teaching. And, they were tolerating immorality and idolatry in their midst. And so He said, "Some of you are standing strong in the face of persecution; others of you will not stand even in the face of false teaching but are yielding to it or are cowering. You don't believe it, but you are backing away and will not take a stand against it." So the message here is, "Take a stand, and My eye is upon you as you stand."

¹²"And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: ¹³"I know your works and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. ¹⁴But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before...Israel to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality. ¹⁵Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. ¹⁶Repent or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth. ¹⁷...To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.'"
(Rev. 2:12-17)

Let's read through the whole thing here from Revelation 2:12-17. "To the angel," which is the human messenger, because the word, angel, means "messenger," either heavenly or a human one. Either way He is speaking to the primary leadership of the church of each of these cities. "...of the church at Pergamos, 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword.'" We know that for each one of these churches Jesus takes one or more of the descriptions of Himself from Revelation 1 and applies it to the unique pressures, temptations, and commissioning of each church. Each one of these churches has unique pressures, and so He takes a part of His description from the chapter before and is saying, in effect, "Focus on this one and it will help you in the pressures and commission I am putting before you." So these are not just arbitrary assigning of one of His attributes to these messages, but they are very, very relevant to the challenges which that church would face.

Verse 13, He says "I know your works." It deeply touches us that He knows our works, because most of our works are very, very small. Our acts of obedience and acts of service mostly go unnoticed by almost everybody. However, the Lord says, "I know them. I even write in My book if you give someone a cup of cold water. I write it in My book. It matters to Me, and it does not go unnoticed." And so I love that phrase, "I know your works." Some people imagine that one day they will do great and mighty works, which they probably will, but the truth is ninety-nine percent of our works and our acts of obedience are very simple and small things through the course of many years, and He remembers them and writes them in His book. That makes our life relevant though other people do not pay attention to what we are doing.

He said, in effect, "But I also know the unique challenges you are facing." That is, "You dwell where Satan's throne is." Now that is a really interesting statement! However, what He is saying is—because we can get lost on, "Woah, what does Satan's throne mean?"—but what He is really saying is, "I understand the unique and heightened pressures you are facing. They are not lost on Me. I know what it costs you to stand against persecution and to stand against false teaching. I know what it costs you. I know the dynamics in your city, yet there are many of you who are holding fast to My name," and He is honoring them. "These are the ones who did not deny My faith, even in the days of Antipas," who was a faithful martyr. Tradition says that Antipas was the bishop of that city. "He was killed among you," and now instead of saying, "where Satan's throne is," He says the same thing but a different way that it is "where Satan dwells," where there is an unusual manifestation of darkness in this city. Antipas, who probably was the bishop as that is what tradition says, was killed as he would not back away under the pressure and many of them stood true as well, so He is honoring them.

Verse 14, "But I have a few things against you," and we know that when the Lord is against something in our life, He is really for us and He is waging war against things that hurt us. So when He said, "I am against these," He was really saying, "I am against these issues that are hurting your spiritual life. You are not as aware of them as I am, but I am contending for your breakthrough and for your greatness in the Spirit. I am against anyone that is standing for these negative things, but I want to deliver you. I want to give you power to overcome this."

He then goes on with, "You hold to the doctrine"—which is the same word as "teaching"—"You hold to teachings of Balaam," which is an interesting phrase. Here in this church they were promoting different leaders. Different men and women with teaching gifts were promoting the teaching of Balaam who taught Balak. Balak was a foreign king, the king of Moab—which is modern-day Jordan and right next to Israel—to put a stumbling block before Israel.

Now what this prophet, who became a false prophet and some say was always a false prophet, did was taught this foreign king how to make Israel stumble. He said "If you will seduce them with idolatry and immorality then you can get God to judge Israel!" This foreign king, Balak, said, "Really? Does it work that way?" and he said, "Yes, yes, God is committed to Israel, and they are going to win, but if you can get them into idolatry and immorality, God will have to stand against them to correct them from it."

And this foreign king Balak said, "That is an amazing idea!" So he got the Moabite women to seduce the men of Israel, and they came to these idolatrous feasts, and God judged Israel. The king Balak said, "Man, that is an amazing strategy!" but the Lord was not at all happy with it.

He was telling the leaders at Pergamos, "You are doing in essence the same thing! You are promoting teaching that is giving people confidence to live in immorality and that it is okay or to engage in idolatry. You do not understand that you are emboldening them to do the things that is going to cause God's favor to be lifted from their life. You are really doing what Balaam the prophet convinced Balak the foreign king to do." Well, I kind of told you what it is, but I will give you a little bit more details as we unpack this.

He said, "And you do another thing," verse 15, "some of your leaders hold to"—which means promote—"the doctrine of the Nicolaitans." Now the doctrine of Balaam and the doctrine of the Nicolaitans were similar. In essence they were telling them that it was okay to be involved in immorality—that is the take-away—and it was also okay to be involved in idolatry.

Verse 16, He said, "I am calling the church to repent." Now there were a number of really faithful ones there, so He was telling the faithful ones, "I do not want you to repent for those deeds as you are not doing them, but some of you are silent while the others are doing them, and so I want you to repent from your silence. I want you not to stand just against persecution of the Roman Empire coming against you because you are a believer. I want you to bear even the reproach within the house of God of standing for these truths." Some of the people did not like it when they spoke up about these things. It is the same today. Jesus said, "Repent!" to the people involved in the immorality and to the leaders who were just silent about it. He is calling both groups to repent.

He continued, "If you do not, I am going to come to you quickly," and He did not mean the second coming. He meant, "I am going to visit you and bring you to an account." Then He said, and this is pretty intense, "I am going to fight against those with the sword of My mouth." Remember, that is how He introduced Himself back in verse 12, "I am the one who has the sharp two-edged sword in My mouth. I am the one talking to you, and I want you to take a stand right now. And if you will overcome," He gives three promises, "I will give you some hidden manna to eat, I will give you the white stone, and I will put a new name on that stone that nobody else knows or understands besides you." Let's look at some of the details of this passage.

- B. Pergamos was 20 miles from the Aegean Sea. A wealthy city, it was a center for idol worship. Pergamos is also spelled Pergamum or Pergamus. Today, the village of Bergama is on its site.

Again, Pergamos was in modern-day Turkey. All seven of the churches were in modern-day Turkey. They say that now there is maybe only one percent of the population of Turkey who are born-again believers. I think there are eighty million people who are mostly all Muslims. And so I believe there is going to be a great visitation of the power of God in Turkey. The Lord is going to recover all that He invested in the past in the seven churches in Turkey.

Pergamos was a wealthy city, a port city, and it was a center for idol worship. There is always in the ancient world, which will be true even in the days to come, economics tied to idolatry or, what will be in the future, to Antichrist worship which is always the same thing as Satan worship. Although Satan is hidden behind the scenes, it is Satan worship. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10 that when they worship idols they are worshipping demons but they just do not know it. Moreover, what is coming in the days ahead in the book of Revelation narrative is a worldwide Satan-worship movement that is going to have all kinds of money and incentives and privileges tied to it, and it will be raised up to persecute the Church, but God will pour out His Spirit in power on the Church, and the Church will have the greatest harvest in history in the face of that persecution. That will be the greatest outpouring of the Spirit in history, and the Church will be purified like no time in history. So in the generation the Lord returns the devil is again going to overplay his hand in this worldwide Satanic-Antichrist worship system, but it is going to backfire on the devil. What is going to happen is that God is going to pour out His Spirit, and He is going to raise up the most bold, obedient, love-sick worshippers, the greatest harvest, the biggest miracles, and the most pure Church in history. It is all going to backfire on the enemy, and the Lord is going to override all of it, but He is going to use this hostile context for this. That is one reason why He identified this early in the book of Revelation, because the end-time Church will face these very issues and really point it directly in their face.

- C. Jesus addressed three groups—those who held fast to Jesus' name, those who embraced false teachings (the doctrines of Balaam and the Nicolaitans), and the elders who refused to correct those in the church who gave the false teachings as well as those who embraced them.

Jesus is speaking to three groups here. First, those who held fast to His name; they were faithful. The pressure was there, and they said, "I love Jesus more than I love more than what I am losing. I love Him." He is honoring them.

The second group was the ones who promoted and embraced the teachings of Balaam and the Nicolaitans, which was idolatry and immorality. So they are the compromisers in the Church.

Then, the third group was what I am calling "the elders," because He is writing this to the leadership, but it implies more than just leaders, though they are the ones most accountable. He is telling the leaders who refuse to take a stand to correct these false teachings and wrong activities. He is telling them to repent too, for they had this man-pleasing, fearful spirit.

So those are the three groups. One group was faithful. One group was compromising and involved in immorality thinking, "Hey, no big deal. Nothing seems to be going wrong. I am getting away with it, so I am going to continue on as some of the leaders in the church say it is okay." Then He is confronting the teachers who have this man-pleasing spirit, who want everybody happy with them so they never address these issues. This is describing the church in America, and of course the church across the earth as well.

II. JESUS' REVELATION OF HIMSELF: WITH A SHARP SWORD (REV. 1:16; 2:12)

- A. The sword in Jesus' mouth speaks of Him fighting against sin in the government or the Church. John made references to a sword proceeding from Jesus' mouth (Rev. 1:16; 2:12, 16; 19:15, 21).

¹⁶...out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword...^{2:12}These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword... (Rev. 1:16; 2:12)

Jesus identifies Himself in chapter 2:12. He is quoting His own revelation from the chapter before, but in chapter 2:12, He says, "I am the one who has the sharp two-edged sword." That is, "I am going to manifest the power of that sword to bring forth victory in the church of Pergamos."

"Okay, Lord, so You are going to manifest the power of Your sword." Huh, note to self: this is serious. This is not just going to go away nor is it going to be ignored.

He is saying, "I really have the sword, and I am really going to strike against the persecutors of My people, the people who are killing Antipas. I am going to take them on. I am going to deliver My persecuted people with My sword, and I am going to visit the compromisers with My sword."

- B. Jesus uses the sword of His mouth to fight against believers who walk in immorality.

¹⁶Repent or...I will come...[to] fight against them with the sword of My mouth. (Rev. 2:16)

¹²For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit... (Heb. 4:12)

As we see here, He is going to come with the sword of His mouth. Look at this in verse 12 of Hebrews 4. He is going to fight against them. Let's read Revelation 2:16. He says, "I am going to fight against them with the sword of My mouth." Now what does this look like when Jesus fights against born-again believers with the

sword of His mouth? Well, in Revelation 2:16 we gain insight and in Hebrews 4:12 because the word of God is living and powerful, and it is sharper than a two-edged sword. So the first way God is going to use the sword against the believers in compromise is He is going to convict them of it.

I think very possibly some of you tonight are thinking, "Oh my gosh, I am doing this, and nobody knows. But, hey, there are a lot of Bible teachers who are saying that this is not a big deal. I am under grace, so it is okay, right? That is what they are saying on the internet, so it is okay."

Well, I am telling you that those guys on the internet who are telling you that it is okay are deceiving you, because it really is not. It is not that Jesus just wants to make sure you have no fun; that is not the point. Jesus knows that the way to liberty and to the fullness of love and greatness is under His leadership. He knows that this will injure your heart and your walk with God, and that it is not a small issue because He cares about you. He is not saying, "Oh my, you are having some fun out in sin. I am going to break up the party!" That is not what He is saying. He is saying, "You do not know how you are made. This is injuring your heart, and it is completely dulling your walk with God. I am going to use the sword of My word to convict you, number one."

Again, some of you tonight are undoubtedly thinking, "Okay, how many more minutes until this message is over. I am not very comfortable right now." This is the sword of the Lord touching you right now. It is His mercy to come with conviction.

Then for the people who respond and say, "Lord, I am going to let go of this," I tell you the Lord is so kind. He forgives. He is so gracious. Then He will use the sword of the Word in power to liberate the heart because now the person has repented, and they are saying, "Lord, I need to get liberty!"

He would say, "Now begin to meditate on My Word. Speak My promises over your heart, and as you do that, progressively My sword will cut lose the bonds that are tying you to pornography or immorality. I can free you with the sword of My Word after I convict you with the sword of My Word."

Well, it does not stop there. Because some folks do not respond, then the Lord will use the sword of His Word through one of your friends. You know, like, "How did they find out?" and the Lord says, "I orchestrated it. I wanted them to find out. Now I have the sword in their mouth talking to you."

Now you are thinking, "This is way more uncomfortable. I should have listened to the sword when that old guy was preaching on Friday night. Man, I should have heard it then or when I read the Word." Because, the sword will come through others in many different ways, and that is never pleasant; it is always unpleasant.

And it does not end there. He takes it up another notch as well, and He hems us in with circumstances that wake us up because He says, "I love you so much I am not going to give you over to your own way. You can resist Me, and in time I will let you live in hardness of heart, but out of My love I will resist you." He talks about that actually in His next letter to Thyatira, which we will see next week, where Jesus says, "I will come after you, and I will touch your lives, and I will actually make you sick." That is a verse a lot of people have trouble with, because in the name of Jesus they bind Jesus making people sick. However, it is really hard to bind Jesus in the name of Jesus. We will get to that next week. He says in chapter 2:21, "I am going to wake you up." That is the same thing as the sword. "I am going to make your life so difficult that you will say, 'It is not worth it! I want You!'"

The Lord is saying, "I am fighting **for** you! I am not against you. I love you, and I will free you. I will forgive you. I will reinstate you. I will give you a new tenderness again!" However, He fights with the sword of His word first. Do you hear or read the Word? Second, if you hear, read, and repent, then the Word of God, as you speak it over your heart, frees your heart progressively through the sword of the Word, and that is a very beautiful thing.

The next step is that He will allow the word of the Lord to come through the lips of others. That is always a bit uncomfortable. And then the next step He allows circumstances in a severe mercy to corner us, to wake us up so we say like the harlot said in Hosea 2, "It was better for me when I was with the Lord." That is what He wants to do. to convince us that "it is better for me when I was with the Lord" so we break off our sin.

The Lord is so good that He causes people to recover so much of what was lost. He is so gracious. He is so generous. He is not out to embarrass people. He is out to liberate us when He wins us to His leadership because He says, "I know the way to love. I really know the way."

This is such a relevant message for today because immorality is exploding across the earth through the internet—pornography—and where it is going in ten and twenty years we cannot even imagine. I mean there is insight to where this is going, and it is terrifying for people who do not want to take a stand against immorality. Satan is raising up a global outpouring of filth and perversion. It is his attack against the generation of the prepared Bride who will walk in the first commandment. Satan is raising up a counterfeit passion to shut down the first commandment, but it is not going to work. I mean, he is going to get a bunch of people, but there is going to be a billion plus—I mean nobody knows the number—who are going to say yes to the word of God, and they are going to walk out the first commandment. This whole immorality deception that is in the Church is said to be "under grace" like, "Hey, you know, boys will be boys. God understands. Do not worry about it." That whole deception and the explosion in the culture and on the internet is Satan's attempt to silence and cut out the first commandment in the generation the Lord returns.

- C. Jesus uses the sword of His mouth to war against the evil governments that persecute His people, especially the kings in alliance with the Antichrist in the end times (Rev. 19:21).

¹⁵Out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike nations...²¹The rest [of the kings] were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him... (Rev. 19:15, 21)

He not only uses the sword of His mouth to free or liberate His people from their own ensnarement in immorality, but He is going to use the sharp word of His mouth to strike the nations. He says this at the end of Revelation, in Revelation 19. He is talking about when He strikes the nations with the sword, which is very different than bringing the sword of His word to our heart. In context, this is the Lord striking the Antichrist Empire across the earth with the sword of His mouth, and what that means I believe is not that a sword actually comes out of His mouth, but, by the commands of His mouth, His heavenly arsenal destroys the Antichrist kingdom. The Antichrist kingdom is around the world, and by the commands of His mouth His heavenly arsenal—His swords, His weapons from on high—come and break the power of the Antichrist. That is what I believe the sword of His mouth striking the nations means.

In verse 21 of Revelation 19 it says, "And after the word of My mouth strikes the nations, then the sword of My mouth will kill the kings of the earth that were in alliance with the Antichrist." He is going to kill all of the kings that are in alignment with the Antichrist. Again, I do not believe that a sword leaves His mouth. I believe that it is the command of His lips that release the heavenly arsenal, and there may be a hundred ways that He does it as He is so creative and powerful as He releases His sword.

- D. Some of the Lord's judgments are *redemptive disciplines* to wake people up to receive more of His grace, and some of them are *punitive judgments* to remove those who oppress others, etc.

One of the most ignored and most offensive doctrines in the Bible is the doctrine of God's judgments. It is the most offensive doctrine in history, and it is offensive in the Church and outside of the Church. Today you rarely hear anybody talk about the judgments of God because it is so politically incorrect and people do not want to

hear it. And yet there is a lot of misunderstanding about His judgments because His judgments are released to remove everything that hinders love. His judgments are not a contradiction of love, but rather they remove what hinders love.

When we talk about the judgments of God, I want you to know that there are two different expressions of the judgments of God. There is His redemptive, divine discipline that is on His people when He disciplines us because He loves us. It says in Proverbs 3:12 He disciplines us like a father who delights in His children. He disciplines us because He is so for us. He knows we do not get it, so He is waking us up because He actually delights in us. Those are redemptive disciplines.

There is another kind of judgment which is His punitive judgment, punitive meaning punishment. That is what He releases on the Antichrist Empire at the end, upon those who have hardened their hearts and are settled in a permanent way with their agreement with Satan in darkness, and so He removes them. Those are punitive judgments. Whenever you read about the judgments of God, you always want to distinguish: is this a redemptive discipline where He is liberating His people and waking them up because He loves them or is it a punitive judgment where He is removing oppressors and those that are bringing the nations into perversion in a hardened way so He is stopping them and removing them?

So when you read the subject of judgment, always ask which one it is, but both of them are expressions of the love of God. As a people, because we love Jesus and His leadership and we love His Word, we are not going to back away from politically-incorrect subjects. You know Jesus as the Bridegroom, King and Judge. Jesus the King, everybody likes that because of His power, awesome healing, miracles, financial breakthroughs. We like the King. Jesus the Bridegroom: He loves partnership with us. He wants intimacy with us. Yes to Bridegroom and King. Judge? Well, Jesus the Judge, let's kind of lock Him in the back room when the neighbors come over. You know, like our drunk uncle, we will put Him out of the way when the neighbors come over. No, we do not have to hide Jesus. He does not contradict anything ever in His love. His judgments express His love.

I have said this dozens of times: we just need to be really confident and bold that we love Him and that He is the One who walks in love. And, we do not want to buy these arguments that are filling the internet, saying that God never judges, because that is a completely distorted view of God's leadership and Jesus' personality when they make those statements. Or that the God of the Old Testament judges but the God of the New Testament does not. This is the New Testament, and this is Jesus talking about Jesus.

And so we want to be proud of His leadership. We want to be confident in His leadership, not like the leaders at Pergamos who did not want to confront sin. Some of them did, but other leaders tolerated it, and the Lord says, "Stop! Do not be ashamed of My leadership. My ways are always to promote love, humility, and gratitude, and that is what I am doing."

III. AFFIRMATION FOR FAITHFULNESS

- A. Jesus knew their works in being faithful to Him in the face of persecution and demonic darkness.

¹³I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. You hold fast to My name and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. (Rev. 2:13)

Now He is going to affirm them. He says in verse 13, "I know your works. I know your small acts of obedience." We mentioned that. And, "I know the difficult situation you are in." He is so compassionate and sympathetic! He said, "I know you are in the middle of a city of darkness. I know the persecution is much more

fierce than in other cities, and I know that the perversion is much more fierce than in other cities. I get it, and I am in your presence. The sword of My Word will liberate your heart if you will speak My Word over your heart and interact with My leadership." He said, "You dwell where Satan's throne is." Now it is hard to know where Satan's throne is. Nobody knows, but He says later in verse 13, it is "where Satan dwells." It is certainly describing a city that has an unusual manifestation of demonic power and authority in it. And so He might dwell in other cities in this way; we do not know if it is the only city or the main city, but we know that it has an unusual manifestation in it.

When Satan has a stronghold in a city, two things that will always be emphasized: persecution of the faithful saints and promotion of perversion. Perversion and persecution are the two things that he will always promote. I do not have this in the notes, but this is a very important verse: Revelation 19:2. When all the saints are around the throne, all of the angels are there, and they are praising God for His judgments, they say, as it were, "We get it now! All the information is before us, and we get it!" They say, "You judged because they killed the saints and they perverted the nations with immorality. We get it!" Those were the two issues: persecution and perversion.

And wherever Satan has a greater manifestation of authority, it is more challenging for the saints, but it is doable. The Lord says in 1 Corinthians 10:13, "I will not put you in a situation without giving you a way of escape," so, in essence, "I will release greater power in those cities." And so when He says, "the place where Satan's throne is" you can be sure of those two dimensions of persecution for standing with Jesus and of perversion, the promotion of the occult and demonic activity along with violence and immorality; they all go together under perversion. And, those are, Revelation 19:2, the two things the saints highlight when all of them are before the Father at the end, when they are rejoicing in God's judgments because it finally fully makes sense when we see the whole picture and the whole story.

- B. **Satan's throne:** Pergamos was the center of Satan's activity in the east as Rome was in the west. The combination of temples dedicated to Satan worship with the prominence of the teachings of Balaam and the Nicolaitans in the church and the persecution (martyrdom) of the saints made Pergamos a city with an unusual amount of satanic activity.

They had many temples dedicated to Satan worship in the city. It was a major city of idolatry, which is Satan worship. In 1 Corinthians 10, Paul said that is demon worship. I mean, they did not think they were worshipping Satan. They thought they were worshipping the Greek gods or the Emperor Augustus, the Roman Emperor. They were worshipping him, and then the political leaders were patting them on the back, saying, "Hey, if you worship those gods, we know you are loyal to us as Romans, as a province of Rome here. We know that if you are worshipping the Emperor, you are not going to betray us if we are attacked by another army." Now a lot of this was just political. They made them worship the Emperor to get the guarantee they would stand for the nation if ever they were attacked by an enemy. And so some of them said, "Hey, you know that is not a big deal; I don't really believe it," but the Lord says, "No, no, it is a big deal. You are actually worshipping demons; you just do not know it."

And so the city had a lot of that, and then the city was known for the teaching of Balaam and the Nicolaitans. Not just in the church, that teaching was moving around the city. The teaching was that it was okay to participate in immorality and the idolatry and the idol feasts. They had these regular feasts where they would go worship the idols, and they had temple prostitutes, so they would worship demons without necessarily believing in demons. They gave their offerings to the idols. There were a lot of temple prostitutes involved and a lot of money exchange going on, and some of the teachers said "You know, what you have to do to honor Rome, it is what the culture is doing. Just don't go there in your heart. It is just an outward experience of your body.

Your heart loves God, so do not worry about it. Just hold your breath and go through the motions, then come out and say, 'Oh Lord, that is not who I am' "

Jesus said, "No, that is not okay. You have to take a stand against this." And so it was the throne of Satan in the sense of where those three components were brought together; the persecution, the teachings of Balaam and the Nicolaitans, and the Satanic worship centers all combined together in one geographic area. There were many, many temples in that city, and it was famous for them.

1. Many temples in Pergamos were dedicated to Satan worship in context to worshipping the emperor and the Greek gods (Zeus, etc.). They built a temple to worship the emperor Augustus, making Pergamos the center of emperor worship in Asia. At each temple were many temple prostitutes, as immorality had a central role in their idolatrous feasts.
2. Will the "throne of the Antichrist" be at Pergamos (Rev. 16:10)?

¹⁰The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast [the Antichrist], and his kingdom became full of darkness... (Rev. 16:10)

- C. **You hold fast to My name:** Jesus knew those who held fast to His name in the midst of so much satanic activity. To hold fast to Jesus' name refers to being faithful even in the face of death.

He said, "You hold fast to My name." Now He is focusing in on the faithful. He said, as it were, "I get what it cost you to stand true in persecution, and I get what it cost you to stand true in purity. I get it! I honor you for it and will remember it. It moves Me that you are standing. And though you might even be trembling, you are standing, and I am helping you. I want you to know that it is not unnoticed. It is in My book. Other people may not even know you are taking a stand against persecution or standing for purity, but I want you to know that it matters to Me. I care about it, and I will remember it forever."

Then He goes on in verse 17 and gives three different rewards in the age to come that He is giving to people who overcome in these two areas.

- D. **Antipas was My faithful martyr:** Tradition says that Antipas was the bishop in Pergamos and was boiled to death in a copper vessel over a fire.
- E. The word for martyr is *witness*.

IV. CORRECTION FOR COMPROMISE

- A. Jesus is for His people, even while being against an area of compromise in their lives.

¹⁴I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before...Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality. ¹⁵Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. (Rev. 2:14-15)

He has said, "Okay, I have honored those that stand for Me, and I have let you know that I understand your plight and your difficulty." Verse 14, "I have a few things against you," that is, some of you in the church. Undoubtedly the leaders in the church, because they are who He is talking to. He said, "You hold to the doctrine of Balaam," and they might say, "Well, we do not really talk about Balaam." He could have said, "I

know you do not mention his name, but the essence of what he taught is what you are teaching" because they might have said "We never say 'Balaam!' We do not know who Balaam is!"

The story is in Numbers 22-25, and it is quite an intense story. It has good, bad, and ugly in it. Balaam the prophet, maybe he started real and became a false prophet, though most people assume that he was always false. I do not know. We do not really know for sure, but we know for sure that he ended up false. So these guys in Pergamos may have said "I do not know who Balaam is. I don't even read the book of Numbers, and I don't even know the story."

Jesus said, as it were, "I want you to know you are being caught up in the same spirit that Balaam was caught up in, even though you do not know the Bible verses behind it.

What did Balaam do? Well, read Numbers 22-25. He went to the king Balak, the Moabite king, which was the nation right next door, just a couple of miles down the road from Israel. The king, Balak, of the neighboring nation Moab, which is modern-day Jordan today, sent to Balaam and said, "Hey, I will give you a lot of money because I know you are a prophet or something. I do not quite get how all that works"—and I am sure that Balak did not get it all—"but I will give you a lot of money if you will curse Israel."

Balaam said, "Okay, how much?" Now I am making this up.

"A million dollars, but you have to curse Israel, because we heard what they did with the Red Sea and the plagues. They scare us, and we do not want that group coming through our country on their way to Israel, so curse them and we will give you money!" because they believed in sorcery and demonic power, which is real.

So Balaam said "Okay!" He took the million dollars—that is a made-up amount—and he tried to say, "I curse you, Israel!" but the Spirit of God came on him, and he said, "You cannot curse Israel! I bless Israel!" says the Lord." Balaam said, "Whoa!" and said to Balak, "Man, something strange happened! I was cursing them, and the anointing of the Spirit came, and I cannot curse them. I have to bless them!"

So Balak said, "Well, I will give you more money!" thinking, "Man, it is not working!" And we do not know all of the details of how the interworking of that story happened, but it is quite an interesting story.

And so Balaam said, "You know, it will not work. Every time I try to curse them, the anointing of the Spirit goes opposite and blesses Israel."

Balak said, "Yes, but they scare us because of what they did and how Egypt got destroyed, and so we are nervous about them. We don't get who they are and we don't get the power that is behind them, the power of the gods." You see, the Moabites and those four nations did not believe in the God of Israel as the one true God. To them He was just one of the gods, and they said "He is mighty! We have heard the stories: the sea split, the Egyptian army was drowned, my goodness! Well, do you have any ideas?"

Balaam said, "Well, I know God enough to know this: if you get them into idolatry and immorality, God will judge them. God will judge them."

"How are we going to get them into that?"

Balaam said, "You get all of your young women and you come over into the camp and have a party! And say, 'Israel, we are glad you are in town!' Then just put up your idols and be a little bit subtle about it, but get it going and seduce them. Get them drunk, and they will start doing stuff with you."

Balak said, "Well, that is a good idea." So he did it. Numbers 25 is pretty intense. So the ladies came over the state line and brought all their party goods, and the Israelite soldiers said, "Hey, you know, whatever!" and they did it. And God judged them; twenty-four thousand Israelites were killed by the plague. The Lord was

angry and He let it happen. So Balak said, "Balaam, that was good! Do you have any more ideas that really worked?"

And what is really happening here is Jesus is telling the leaders in the church there at Pergamos, "You may not be saying the name, Balaam, but you are teaching this idea that it is okay under the grace of God, that Jesus paid the price, that you are not really doing it with your heart, that it is just outward body stuff, and that it is not a big deal!" He said, "Those teachers are leading the Body of Christ astray. Expose that and do not be quiet. Shake off your fearfulness and take a stand for the word of God!"

Again, it is not that God wants to make sure that His people do not have a good time. Rather, He knows the superior pleasures to the human spirit are found in the gospel. There is nothing more superior than when God reveals God and touches the human spirit. That is the most intense pleasure in the human make up, the way God's Spirit reveals God to our hearts and our hearts are fascinated. Our hearts are satisfied, and the Lord says "This is what I have ordained for you, the superior pleasures of the gospel, not the inferior pleasures of darkness. I have something greater for you. You are too easily satisfied with those inferior, simple pleasures." Hold out for the superior pleasures. Go deep in God, and you will find there is a transcendence, there is a place to live at the heart level where you do not need to have those things in order for your life to be satisfied. That is what Jesus was wanting them to teach.

- B. The doctrines of Balaam and the Nicolaitans had similarities, yet some distinctions. They both taught a perversion of liberty in grace. They taught that believers could participate in the drunkenness and immorality of the idolatrous feasts under the pretense of Christian liberty.

⁴***Certain men have crept in unnoticed...who turn the grace of God into lewdness. (Jude 4)***

1. Antinomianism is the belief that the gospel frees us from obedience to moral standards.
2. Since salvation is God's gift that is given by faith, antinomians teach that believers do not need to repent. (Greek: *anti* – against; *nomos* - law).

- C. ***The doctrine of Balaam:*** The doctrine of Balaam taught that believers could participate in the "parties" associated with temple feasts and their orgies.

1. The false prophet Balaam was paid by King Balak to curse Israelites, but when he tried to curse Israel the only words that he received from God were prophetic blessings for Israel.
2. Balaam told King Balak that he could not curse Israel; however God would judge them if Israel entered into sin. Balaam advised Balak to get the Moabite women to seduce the Israelite men to participate in feasts engaged in idolatry and immorality that would lead to God judging Israel (Num. 25)—24,000 Israelites died under God's judgment. The false teachers in Pergamos had a similar impact on some of the saints who embraced their errors.

- D. ***The doctrine of the Nicolaitans:*** The common view among the early church fathers was that this was a reference to followers of Nicolas, a deacon in Jerusalem who fell into error (Acts 6:5).

The doctrine of the Nicolaitans is kind of the same thing. It has a different application, but it is the promotion of and saying that it is okay to participate in immorality because you are not really doing anything with your heart, that you are still loving God and that it is just outward, that it is physical and does not touch your spirit. And they were teaching those kinds of things.

⁶***But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. (Rev. 2:6)***

1. In the second century, Irenaeus taught that the Nicolaitans were without restraint in their indulgence of the flesh, especially with immorality. This distortion of “liberty in grace” is common today. Jesus corrected believers in Ephesus related to the Nicolaitans (Rev. 2:6).
2. Twice Jesus mentions His hatred of the Nicolaitans (Rev. 2:6, 15). The *deeds* in Ephesus and the *doctrines* in Pergamos allowed immorality to go unchallenged.

Jesus twice says, “I hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans. I hate this teaching in My church.” Beloved, this teaching is increasing around the Body of Christ in the Western world and maybe across the whole world. There is a false, distorted gospel of grace that is telling people that repentance is not needed anymore because we are under the grace of God, that Jesus paid the price so it does not matter what we do.

Jesus paid the price to forgive us freely and to give us a new beginning every day and power to overcome what is contrary to love. That is what the gospel freely gives us. I consider this distorted grace message to be the most dangerous and damaging thing in the earth. Some people say, “I think the most terrible thing is this, that or the other...” and those are terrible, but I think that the most dangerous thing in the earth is the distorted gospel being preached in the pulpits all across the land, wooing God's people to sleep, giving them a false confidence that they can live in compromise and that it is what it is and it is all in the grace of God!

The Lord would say, “That is not what I have called you to. I have called you to a free grace message to forgive you freely, and if you stumble and repent, I forgive you a thousand times, with a new beginning every day. I will forgive you if you are sincere. I will give you power to overcome it and to walk in love on My terms!” That is what the gospel is about. It is not this other thing which is getting into the lips of students on the campuses and in the ministries, and not just students; it is everywhere, and it is increasing.

Of course the scripture said it would, but I do not look at that and think, “Oh no!” I am not cowering back.

The Lord says, in essence, “I am going to release a great outpouring of My Spirit, and I am going to have a faithful people, a prepared Bride, in that generation. The first commandment will be established in first place.”

So I am going about my business calling it forth and interacting with the group that is saying, “We are going all the way!” There are groups like this all over the earth who are going all the way for God. There are thousands of them, maybe millions, I do not know, but thousands and thousands all over the earth, and it is a beautiful thing. So do not get stuck in some fellowship circle where all they are talking about is that greasy grace. Get involved in the Word of God and the beauty of Jesus' leadership. Go all the way, man! Be lovesick for Jesus! Give Him as much as you can give Him. “How far will You let me go? How abandoned will You let me be?” That Misty song, I love that song. She sang it years ago, and I never get tired of it.

- E. **Idolatry:** Paul taught that covetousness was idolatry—pursuing riches without reference to Jesus' leadership. Most idolatry throughout history and at the end of the age is economically driven.

⁵***Therefore put to death...fornication...evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. (Col. 3:5)***

Well, idolatry, I mentioned this before, and it is a little confusing on the first read. Paul said in Colossians 3:5 that covetousness, loving money, is the same as idolatry. You say, “What? How could that be?” Many of the people in the ancient world weren't only involved in idolatry. They went to those festivals and engaged, and some believed there were good gods behind it, the Greek gods. If you made them happy by sacrificing and giving money to them and being involved in all the immorality of all the rituals and rites around the temple, those gods would give you more money and the rain would come. Your crops would be bigger, and your animals would produce more. Many believed it. They had the evidence and said, “This is really real,” and the

people would say, "Wow! I do not know how it really works, but I will do it if I am getting more crops and more livestock." And so it was about money.

Others did it because they wanted the alliances and the networking and the support of the state. They did not really believe in the Greek gods. For them it was like, "Whatever. I will go and do all the stuff because I want the government and the social networking involved for participating in that." It was about money. It was about trusting that way of money instead of the Lord. So idolatry, though there is a demonic power most people are not aware of it, is mostly money-driven.

The great harlot in Revelation 17 at the end of the age is this seductive and religious economic system that is about money. It is rewarding people in many different ways if they will embrace the dark agenda of Satan that the Bible calls the harlot Babylon. It is about money at the end of the day. As twenty-first century westerners, we say we do not know anybody in idolatry, but Paul says that the same spirit that makes us pursue money without any regard to the will of God is the same spirit that was operating in idol worship. And as twenty-first century westerners, we say, "Huh, I did not know that. I just thought idol worship is stupid!" However, it was mostly about money to the people who did it even back then.

V. EXHORTATION TO RESPOND (WITH A WARNING)

- A. Jesus warned them to repent of tolerating and embracing idolatry and immorality. Jesus comes to His people to evaluate them in various seasons. This is not a reference to His second coming.

¹⁶Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth. (Rev. 2:16)

He warns them and says in verse 16, "If you do not repent, I am going to fight them." He is talking about believers here. In Revelation 19, when He fights and strikes the nations with His sword, He is talking about the Antichrist Empire. However, here He is talking about fighting against believers. Meaning, He is not against them, but He is going to resist them. First He is going to send the Word to their heart; then He is going to send the Word through others; then He is going to create other situations. He would say, "I am contending against you. I am blocking you at every angle until you wake up and say, 'Lord, I want Your leadership!'" It is Hosea 2, "It was better for me when I was with the Lord!" He says, "Gotcha! I am fighting against you."

Now somebody might read this and think, "Boy, this is in the New Testament; it should be in the Old Testament!" That is mixed-up thinking because the Jesus of both Testaments is exactly the same. He does not change in one degree. He never, ever changes.

- B. ***I will fight against them:*** Jesus releases the sword of His mouth against immorality in the church. He fights for us by fighting against those things in our life that are in agreement with darkness.

¹⁷The time has come for judgment [God's discipline] to begin at the house of God... (1 Pet. 4:17)

In 1 Peter 4:17, Peter talks about this when he says that it is time "for judgment to begin in God's household." He is not talking about the punitive judgment of the reprobate. He is talking about the redemptive disciplines. When God fights against His people, it means that He is blocking them, contending for them to repent. And so His idea of fighting—some people might inject their own ideas into that word but—when Jesus fights against us He is fighting for us by exposing and removing the things that hurt us. And so when He fights against us in this context He is fighting **for** us, so do not let anybody confuse that.

- C. Phinehas is an example of one filled with God's zeal in standing up against the sin that Balaam facilitated. Balaam was eventually killed by the sword (Num. 22:23, 31; 25:5; 31:8). However, the Lord sent an angel with a drawn sword to warn Balaam to obey God's Word. He would have been killed with the sword earlier if his donkey had not spoken up (Num. 22:22-25).

It is glorious that Phinehas —we are back at the Balaam story now—this guy Phinehas, oh how amazing! You know how I told you Balaam the false prophet got Balak to get the Moabite women to come over and seduce the Israelites at the big party so they would worship their idols and get involved in immorality? God's judgment hit, and twenty-four thousand people were killed by a plague that came over the land. Phinehas, who was a priest of Israel, rose up, in Numbers 25, and turned back the wrath of God by his actions, because he was zealous with the Lord's zeal. He took a stand for the Lord in a way that no one else did and so, "He was zealous with My zeal; therefore, I only killed twenty-four thousand. I was about to wipe out half the army, but I stopped because one man rose up with zeal for Me and stood for Me in the midst of Israel." You can read the whole story on your own. It is quite an amazing story.

¹¹"Phinehas...turned back My wrath from the children of Israel, because he was zealous with My zeal among them, so that I did not consume the children of Israel...¹²Therefore say, 'Behold, I give to him My covenant of peace;¹³ and it shall be to him and his descendants after him a covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God...'" (Num. 25:11-12)

Verse 12 basically says, "Therefore I will give that man a promise to his generation and to his descendants because He was zealous for Me." God is raising up men and women with the spirit of Phinehas who have a zealous stand for Jesus in the midst of encroaching immorality, idolatry, and compromise. They will stand where God stands. And the Lord through Phineas turned back His wrath and reduced His judgments on Israel because all God wanted for them to turn and this man caused them to turn. The Lord is raising up Phinehases in this hour, and they can be fifteen-years old or they can be ninety-years old. It does not matter what age, or what your gifting is. What matters is, do you have zeal for Jesus' leadership in your generation? And if you do, there are blessings that come on Phinehas that are really quite dramatic.

VI. THREE PROMISES FOR OVERCOMERS

- A. ***I will give some of the hidden manna to eat:*** This speaks of the Spirit giving overcomers an increased capacity to delight in and be fed on the Word of God today and in the age to come.

Three promises for overcomers. He promises three promises in the age to come, in the millennial kingdom, though these promises have some fulfillment in this age. They have a limited fulfillment in this age, which is worth it, but they have a fulfillment in the age to come that goes on and on and on and on and on. A lot of folks, because they never read these promises, do not think about them, but think, "Well, whatever. I will take my chances." No! These are awesome promises! They are for overcomers, and in this context the overcomers are the people who are resisting the idolatry, who are resisting the immorality, who are taking a stand against it and are standing for the Lord, even in the face of persecution. That is the overcomer in this context. This promise is given directly to that context.

The reason I say that is because you do not want to read that and think, "Well, everybody gets all of this any way. What is the big deal?"

"No," He says. "These are for the people who overcome," not just at Pergamos but I believe throughout Church history. I believe at the end of the age, to the generation in which the Lord returns, that the Lord will give these three things.

17...To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it. (Rev. 2:17)

He says in verse 17—this is Jesus talking—“I will give some of the hidden manna to eat” and some of that we get in this age. “I will give a white stone, and I will put a new name on the stone which nobody knows except for the person who receives it.”

So the first thing is the hidden manna. The hidden manna, in one sentence, speaks of an increased capacity to delight in the word of God and to receive it. Beloved, it takes God to love God. It takes the power of God touching us to love God. It takes the power of God touching us to understand God. What I need and what you need is the Holy Spirit's escort when we read the Word of God. He is talking here about the Word of God. Jesus says in John 6, “I am the manna! I am the bread from heaven! I am going to feed your soul with the revelation of who I am!”

Beloved, there is nothing more delightful than when God reveals God to the human spirit. I am not content to know basic Bible truths. I like basic Bible truths, but I want to go as deep in God as He will let me go in this age and in the age to come. In the age to come, every believer will be in the New Jerusalem undoubtedly, and we will all have certain things, but every believer will have a different degree of the glory of God in their being and in their circumstances. Paul said, “As one star differs from another star in glory, everyone in the resurrection will differ in glory.” Different people will have different capacities like angels do. Some angels have a far greater capacity than other angels; some angels have far greater power than other angels. There are many, many different assignments.

He is telling them that in this age—but also in the age to come—He says, in effect, “If you stand for Me in persecution, you stand against immorality and idolatry, and the covetousness, you resist it, and you take a stand publicly as well in your personal life, you actually stand publicly for it, I will give you this increased capacity. It will happen in this age, but it will be more in the age to come. You will not be sorry that you missed a few moments of the inferior pleasures of sinful things. You will not regret it at all. I will satisfy you beyond anything you could imagine.”

I tell you, even in this age the Lord wants to fascinate us with the Word of God. I can study all day long, but if the Spirit does not help me, it is just words bouncing off a dead heart. However, if the Spirit helps me, my heart can have like the lightning and thunder from the throne room. Revelation 4 says, “Lightning and thunder!” I always picture lightning and thunder flashes when I am reading the Word, touching me. It resonates in me, “Oh, I feel it!” Not always, but more and more in the last ten years than the ten years before, and more than in the ten years before that and the ten years before that. It is not like it grows every day, but over the months and years it keeps increasing, and I tell the Lord, “God, I love this!”

I remember when I was a new pastor, and I was teaching Bible studies. I mean, I loved Jesus, but I did not like the Bible. The Bible was so boring. The only thing worse than the Bible was prayer. They were the two most boring things to me. I remember, I was a leader in the Body of Christ in youth ministry and college ministry, and I loved meetings, but “Augh!” when it was me and God alone. It was like dreadful. I said, “God, if You could make this a little more interesting, more people would do this.”

And I am sure He smiled and thought, “You just stick with it, little guy, and I am going to shock you because one day you are going to love the Word of God. You are going to love My presence, something you cannot fathom, but it takes the Spirit.” This hidden manna, it is the Spirit increasing our capacity in this age and in the age to come.

1. Jesus is the true bread, the true manna from heaven that sustains us (Jn. 6:48-51). The overcomer is promised full enjoyment of that of which they had a foretaste in this life.
2. God supernaturally sustained His people with manna in the Old Testament. The manna was called "angel's food" (Ps. 78:19-25).
3. Manna was hidden only after it was put in the golden pot in the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies (Ex. 16:32-36; Heb. 9:1-5). Only the high priest might see this hidden manna once a year, on the Day of Atonement, as he entered the Holy of Holies.

B. ***I will give him a white stone:*** Precious stones were given to honor those who offered valiant service to their community or in battle. Those receiving these stones were also given special privileges. This was similar to winning a gold medal in the Olympics. A stone with a person's name on it gave them admission to special events hosted by the emperor or a senator in Rome.

"I will give them a white stone." Now this white stone was like memorial stones. These were the reward of remembrance. They gave a white stone in the ancient world when a person would do valiant deeds for the community, or a person would have a great victory at war and help the community, or the gladiator would win in the games, or somebody would win the Olympic gold medal, so to speak, and they were given a white stone. There are many different versions of it. They were honored in the community for helping the community, acts of heroism at war, winning the gold medal in the Olympic games, the gladiatorial games, many, many different reasons. It was like the Medal of Honor at the military banquet. It was that kind of thing. It was the gold medal on the awards stand at the Olympics or whatever they call it. They would give these to honor the person in the ancient world. Jesus was alluding to this and said, "I have a stone that is way beyond a trophy or gold medal. Trust Me you cannot imagine what this stone will be like."

Now there were many privileges that went along with the stone. When the military man received the Medal of Honor at the military banquet, he got the stone, and it gave him many privileges in society. There are many ways to describe all of this. It is a glorious thing.

1. A stone that is "white" (Gr. *leukos*) refers to one that is *shining* or *glistening* (Mt. 17:2; Rev. 3:4, 5; 6:11; 7:9, 13; 19:14). The stones that will be given to the saints are probably similar to the gems in the walls of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:19-20), on the high priest's breastplate (Ex. 28:17-21), or those in God's presence (Ezek. 28:13).

The Greek word for "white" is bright, brilliant, and radiant. It is not just a little stone that is white and there you have it. I think when the Lord hands people in the New Jerusalem this stone, it is not going to be some little, dead stone. Here is how I picture it, and I could be wrong, but if I am wrong it is because I am way underestimating it, not because I am overestimating it. This is the Man that created the New Jerusalem who is giving us this stone. I mean He is really powerful, really creative, and He has a lot of money, and He really likes us. He is creating the Medal of Honor to give to you. I picture this stone—purely from my imagination I picture it like this—the size of a big bowling ball or way bigger, and it is crystal glass with the most beyond-technology enhancements of anything you can imagine.

In this stone, this ball, that He gives us, this medal, it says "I will write your name on it," and when God writes your name, it means He tells your story. It is not like "Mike's stone." That is not what it means. When Jesus says, "I speak your name to the Father," He is telling the story of your dedication. That is what it means when He speaks your name to the Father. It is a long story. And I picture this ball with all these abilities, all the events of our life are seen, and with all of the video technology times a thousand we can relive and relook at the times when God was moved by our dedication in this life. It will never ever be forgotten.

He might say, "I will say things about you that nobody else will know you did. Only you will know those stories, and you will not even know them and how I felt about you when you did them, but I am going to give it all to you openly, and you will relish how I have been moved by your dedication, forever and forever."

Beloved, the white stone with your name on it, your story, is that, times a thousand. This is a big deal. Some guy says, "Well, great, a little white stone with my name on it. Put it on the counter."

No, no, no! I do not think you will ever let this thing go. You will say, "Okay, let's go back when I was fifteen. You saw when I said yes to purity? How do you remember that?"

"Oh, I have every deed you have ever done! I saw every tear of repentance, and here is the story of it." Because, telling the story of your heroic dedication and love is the reward.

Well, I tell you, I want to be an overcomer! I think these rewards are so understated. The Lord would say, "Come after Me, and ask Me more about them, and I will tell you more about them from the written Word of God." I think it is far grander than this because, remember, whatever these rewards are, the Man that made the fifteen-hundred-mile New Jerusalem like a diamond city, the Man that made streets that are of crystal and gold, the Man that has all of the gems shining in the city; the Man that did Genesis 1, the uncreated God, the Man Christ Jesus, fully God, fully Man, He is the one forming these rewards. They are not dull, little things that you put on the counter and forget. Trust me. They are commensurate with His abilities and His personality. These are massive awards.

¹⁷And you shall put settings of stones...the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and an emerald...¹⁸the second row shall be a turquoise, a sapphire, and a diamond...²¹And the stones shall have the names of the sons of Israel... each one with its own name... (Ex. 28:17-21)

2. A white stone will be given to overcomers in the age to come. This might apply to various degrees of honor and privileges in the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:9).
- C. **On the stone a new name written:** A special name will be given to indicate one's faithfulness, character, and role in the Millennium. A new name reflects one's unique relationship with Jesus.
1. A new name reveals one's character, destiny, and dedication (Gen. 32:28; Isa. 62:2; 65:15). As earthly parents give their child a name of endearment, so Jesus will give His faithful names that reveal how He feels toward them.
 2. Simon was renamed Peter, speaking of his character and position as the rock. Abram's name was changed to Abraham to indicate that he was to be the father of a multitude (Gen. 17:5-15). God changed Sarah's name. Jacob's name was changed to Israel to speak of his place of government and access to God.
- D. **Overcome:** To overcome in this context is to refuse to participate in idolatry or immorality and to stand up against false teaching on grace which allows others to be confident in their compromise.

Amen and Amen! Let's stand before the Lord.

I want to call forth some Phinehases tonight. I am going to call forth men and women, old and young. You say "I want to be like Phinehas, Numbers 25." He took a stand in the midst of Israel's judgment and compromise. He stood for God, and God said, "With My zeal he stood for Me! He turned My judgment back, and I am going to promise him something for future generations."

Lord, I ask you to raise up Phinehases!

You do not have to be gifted. You do not have to be overly trained, but you have to have a heart that says "Yes!" You do not need to have money or networks. You do not have to have all of the platforms. You just have to have a heart. Nobody knew Phineas before this, and he stood for God. I want to call forth people in the room who want prayer and are saying "I want to be a Phineas. I want to be not just an overcomer and say no to these things, the immorality, and the idolatry, and I do not want to just stand in the place of persecution, I want more. I want to take a stand and affect the people around me. I am not going to draw back in fear."

Beloved, you might be stuck in pornography tonight. You might be stuck in a relationship that has immorality going on in it, regularly. The Lord says, "I will forgive you." You heard the sword of the Lord tonight. I shared the Word, and the sword touched you. He says, "Cry out against your sin, and I will free you. It might take a while for you to get really free of that, but if you speak My Word over your heart, and you do those various things that are the common things that are not mysterious, and you speak the Word, My sword will liberate you." Beloved, if you are stuck tonight, you can still be a Phinehas. Set your heart.