



Sermon Series: **VII — The Last VII Letters**

Message Title: **THYATIRA: False Prophets**

This morning we continue our journey into the **Word of God** focusing on **Jesus' Last VII Letters** to **His Churches** in Book of Revelation.

Ephesus — **Abandoned Love**

Thyatira — **False Prophets**

Laodicea — Lukewarm

Smyrna — **Persecution Coming**

Sardis — Asleep

Pergamum — **Repent**

Philadelphia — Persevered

The GOAL, of JESUS'S Letters, to SEVEN first-century churches was to **challenge, encourage, warn & build up** both believers & churches **throughout** church HISTORY, even to TODAY (**Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22**).

****OUR GOAL** with the **VII SERIES**, is to **CHALLENGE, ENCOURAGE, WARN & BUILD UP, ABUNDANT LIFE!**

We are ENTERING our FOURTH WEEK — of exploring JESUS' **VII LETTERS** to the 7 Churches in REVELATION.

Today we journey to THYATIRA...

Have you noticed, Today's society increasingly demands, we not only **TOLERATE**, but also **fully accept & approve of**, values, beliefs, & lifestyles that are an affront to God? Those faithful enough to hold to a biblical worldview are **vilified** for their unwillingness to **acquiesce**. Charles Stanley profoundly said, *"A culture that tolerates evil calls disagreement 'phobia.'"* Right now, taking a stand for Christ, is considered **"hate!"** Holding Christian convictions, is **defamed** as **bigoted fanaticism**. Foundational biblical doctrines are **denounced** as both **antiquated & discriminatory**. Tragically this position is held **not only** by the secular world **but also** by many **doctrinally WEAK churches**. *Which churches am I speaking of?* Those who elevate **political ideology** over **Gospel Truth**, **sexual diversity & inclusivity** over **holiness & moral purity**, those who seek 1st **societal acceptance** instead of **Christ's approval**, those who **will pervert the Word** to support **their choices** rather than **humbly submitting** their lives to **God's Word**.

This is nothing new under the sun however, **Thyatira** was facing similar situations in the Book of Revelation.

READ: REVELATION 2:18

To the Church in Thyatira

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**.

19 *"I know your works*, your **love** and **faith** and **service** and **patient endurance**, and that **your latter works exceed the first**. **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**. 21 *I gave her time to repent*, but she refuses to repent of her **sexual immorality**. 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*, 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. 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***. 25 Only hold fast what you have until I come. 26 The ***one who conquers*** and ***who keeps my works*** until the end, to him ***I will give authority*** over the nations, 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. 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.'

VERSE BY VERSE

18 Interestingly the letter to **Thyatira** is the **longest letter** of the 7 even though Thyatira itself is the **smallest & least significant** of the 7 churches. Jesus again opens His letter by **identifying Himself**, this time as, ***“the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze.”***

Jesus' identification as the ***“Son of God”*** is a deliberate statement, immediately calling attention to **His superiority & authority** in contrast to the cult of **Apollo** in **Thyatira**, who referred to Apollo as the "sun god."

Jesus also describes Himself as the One, ***“who has eyes like a flame of fire.”*** He reminds the church there is **nothing hidden** from Him. He is a **consuming fire** (**Hebrews 12:29**) signifying His holiness, purifying power, righteous judgment of sin. The **fire of God** cleanses believers, **burning** away our sin & **refining** our faith, much like a silversmith uses fire to **purify** precious metals. This contextualized illustration is all the more powerful for this audience who city is renown for its **trade guilds**.

******These guilds required those in them to engage in the worship of their gods & participate in the sexually immoral celebrations of worship to them. Those who refused were seen as **endangering the entire guild** by **incurring the wrath** of the gods. Such **rebellion** would not be tolerated, resulting in **expulsion**, **persecution**, & possibly the **execution** of the offender.

Choosing to honor God had real time consequences in addition to eternal ones.

Lastly, Jesus wrote His ***“feet are like burnished bronze.”*** Christ had overcome the fiery trials of suffering, sin, & death. His character's been **proved** perfect & righteous, His authority is unshakeable & His kingdom can not be toppled. He is the righteous judge who will tread upon His enemies, executing flawless justice.

19 Unlike **Ephesus**, who was also busy but left their “first love”, **Thyatira** exhibited a steadfast, loyal love that was both **a response to & a reflection of** the Jesus' love! They were commend by Him for, their **love & faith & service & patient endurance**, **& that their latter works exceed their first**.

Thyatira was growing **increasingly** in their love, service, & endurance **in spite of the persecution**. This supernatural fortitude could only have come from **constant communion** with Jesus & **complete dependance** on the Holy Spirit.

20 UNFORTUNATELY, even though Jesus was pleased with them, there were a few things to address.

Let's Review:

Ephesus had a heart condition, they did the right things but didn't keep the main thing the main thing, elevating the love of service over the love of relationship. Jesus encouraged them to return to their first love. **Smyrna** was faithful in persecution & encouraged not to be afraid as it increased. Jesus knew their suffering personally & reminded them, this life is fleeting but eternal life is the reward of the faithful. **Pergamum** was literally surrounded by evil, but Jesus exhorted not to let the evil in! Though compromise could spare them from persecution, trusting Jesus & holding on to Him would be their True sustenance & only Salvation.

Thyatira was rebuked for **tolerating** evil within!

20 "that woman **Jezebel**, who calls herself a **prophetess** & is **teaching and seducing my servants** to **practice sexual immorality & to eat food sacrificed to idols**. (Jezebel is not her real name — it's a ref. To **OT** wicked wife of King Ahab who encouraged Israel to engage in idol worship — Baal — worshippers even sacrificed their children on altars to Baal — modern day abortion - operating tables)

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

Before we are **too quick** to **accuse God** of being unjust, unfair, unconcerned, uncaring, etc. Let us pause a moment to focus on verse **21**. Jesus called her, JEZEBEL! This is not a good woman, in the OT she was famously WICKED!!! BUT, still He called her to repent, to turn back to Him, to **confess**, in response He would be faithful & just to forgive & purify her of all unrighteousness (**1 John 1:9**). BUT **SHE REFUSES!**

How patient is God? Have you ever took the time to ponder that? We take our shots at His character & question His actions, inaction, etc. But have we considered the depths of his patience with US?

Jezebel insist she's right, she can **mix-n-match** & it's all good! But not it's not **just her**, she entices the whole church too! Her proposal was they could serve God on their own terms, serve the gods of the trade guilds, engage in idol worship & immorality while enjoying the benefits of serving BOTH masters! She was a prophetess, speaking for God & as authoritative as His apostles!!! **JESUS' REPLY...**

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, **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**.

WOW! There are CONSEQUENCES to sin.

John 10:10 — the thief comes only to ROB, KILL, & DESTROY.

Romans 6:23 — the wages (price) of sin is death.

This is both a **physical & spiritual** death. Have you ever seen someone who's countenance, physical body, voice, tone are ravaged by sin? You can literally see it! I am not saying all sickness is due to a persons sin, but some is. Drugs, alcohol, guilt, lies, all of these can affect your physical body, emotional, mental, physical health.

BUT GOD...have you ever seen a persons countenance, physical body, mental, emotional, physical health restored because of repentance? Turning back to God? I know I have!!!

John 10:10 — Jesus comes to give us LIFE, ABUNDANTLY!

REPENTANCE was possible, the **sickbed**, was GRACE, **tribulation**, was GRACE all are an attempt to turn hearts BACK to GOD! If **repentance** is refused, **forgiveness** is impossible because **forgiveness** is God's **merciful response** to repentance. If **repentance** is refused, then all that is left is the **wages of sin**.

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.

Jezebel wasn't just choosing sin for herself, she was also leading others into a life of idolatry, participation in immorality. Jesus eyes like the flame of fire saw through her facade, lies, & justifications. His eyes saw her motives even though she tried to hide them. He is the suffering servant but He is also the righteous Judge who examines the hearts, minds, motives, thoughts, and feelings of His creation. He is the one who will give to everyone according to their works.

24–25 “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**. 25 Only **hold fast** what you have until I come.”

Those who have been faithful are encouraged to hold fast as they wait for Christ's return.

This waiting is not inactive! It is focused on actively loving & serving Jesus and others until He comes. That is our mission as a church!

26–29 **26** The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, **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. **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.

In the end our inheritance is to be with Him, as His Bride, enjoying all the benefits of that relationship!

LET US...

CONTINUE to WALK by faith, in step, with the HOLY SPIRIT

REFUSE to COMPROMISE & A choose instead to FOLLOW HIM, & OBEY HIS WORD

LOVE & SERVE The LORD 1st & all those around us with the Fruit & Gifts of the Holy Spirit

ALTAR CALL (*Repentance, Healing, Restoration, Hope?*)

& *COMMUNION...*