

To the Church in Thyatira

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 October 2023

Preacher: James Tang

[0:00] Hey, the first Friday of every month, that is this Friday. So if you are interested in joining a midweek gathering this Friday, What time would we meet here?

! This is the place that you want to be.

Morning, everyone. Good morning. Good morning, Danny. What have you got there? What drink have you got? Coffee. Coffee, just straight coffee. There's fatigue. There's fatigue. I don't know if you're feeling it.

There's fatigue. We had a first month of September, and then, of course, it's a holiday now. It's break. We have a few people who are away. But we're here, and I'm excited for today. I'm excited for what we're going to share.

But as I said last week, we're going to keep repeating just so we remember some of the things that we're learning. We're starting this new season together, and we're saying, let's start with the end in mind. So let's go all the way to Revelation.

[1:05] If we're going to talk about church, let's go to see what Jesus says about the church, right? That's going to be the most important thing, because we don't want to start something that then, at the end, Zhao Zhou Yang, or he doesn't like, or he doesn't recognize.

And we're like, oh, we've been doing church for 50 years, Jesus. And Jesus is like, that isn't my church. That doesn't look like my church. Turn around. Like, I don't want that. I want to start with the end in mind, right?

And so he writes to the church, and he writes to seven churches, which represents the whole complete church. And the first church he writes to is Ephesus. And he says, you're doing all these good things.

You're A star, but you're missing one thing. What are they missing, Godfrey? Love. They're missing love. That sofa looks so comfy, by the way. It just looks so good.

You're missing love. You're doing all these great things for the community, yet you don't have love. Then because of that, I'm going to come and shut you down. That's what he says. Then the messenger keeps going up the coast, and he goes to the next place, which is Smyrna.

[2:04] Oh, good, guys. Smyrna. They have trouble coming. They're going to be thrown into prison. And he says, for 10 days, you'll be thrown into prison, and you'll be tested, and you will have tribulation.

Be faithful unto death. What? There's no help coming. I'm not going to come and break you out of prison. I'm not going to stop you from going into prison. I'm going to give you something even more. If you are faithful unto death, I will give you the crown of life. You won't be hurt by the second death. We'll all die once. But the prayer is that we don't die twice.

It's huge. And then he carries on going to the next city, which is the city of Pergamum. What was Pergamum's thing? Mark? Some of them were doing some things that weren't good.

Questionable. Compromised. They were compromised. They were like, hey, we can be Christians, but then we can do all this other stuff on the side, and then we can have the best of both worlds.

[3:08] The problem is when you have the best of both worlds, you give up eternity. When you have the best of both worlds, you give up the true life. At the very end. And now we reach the church in Thyatira.

Now this is different. Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, these were like almost, these are the big cities. This was New York, London, Tokyo. Thyatira is kind of like this working class city, and it's a little bit different.

But really the message time and time again, and actually this one has lots of overlap with the one from last week. Time and time again is what this is. Christians, you Christians, you have to be

different.

You just have to be different. You're built different. You look different. You sound different. The challenge though here is, we're trying to live in this world, and trying to make a living in this world, and trying to survive in this world, and often we're trying to reach people in the most relational way possible.

I think I've literally said this myself. Hey, those Christians are no different to you guys. We're not weird. We're just as normal. We're just as cool. We try to be cool. Haven't you heard someone say that, or you want to say that?

[4:16] Oh, we're no different. We're okay. But the truth is, if you look at these letters, it seems to say, Paul's saying, sorry, Jesus is saying to the church, if you're a follower of me, you've got to be different in some way.

You've got to be different. The question is, are we different? Are we different to any other group out there that's meeting because they have similar interests as well?

Is our one just because we're interested in this guy called Jesus? We're interested in talking about him because he sounded like a good guy. Are we different? And so as we reach this letter, I want to ask you, ask the Lord, what is it that you want me to hear today?

How do you want me to be different? Not abrasive, not rude, not obnoxious, not arrogant. How do you want me to be different? What does that look like?

And so to read the word, I'm going to actually ask one of the deacons of our church, Tony, who's been a long, long, long, long standing member of our church. And Tony, just going to invite you up to come minister to us with the word of God.

[5:21] And then as I invite him up, can I invite you, can I invite us to stand for the word of the Lord? Can you use that mic? Yeah, okay. To the church, 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.

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

I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. So I will cast her on the bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways.

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.

[6:39] 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 except to hold on to what you have until I come.

To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations. That one will rule them and with an iron scepter and will dash them to pieces like pottery.

Just as I have received authority from my Father, I will also give that one the morning star. Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

This is the word of the Lord. Thank you, Tony. Please take a seat. And well done, everyone who's on a beanbag. Standing and sitting is no easy task. Thank you for doing that. Hey, you know, it's just one of those things that we're trying to do.

I don't know about you, but I so often take for granted the word of the Lord. I'm like, oh, I've got to read my Bible. I've got to read this thing. Or like when someone reads it, you just glaze over or it just kind of goes in and out.

[7:52] Don't you have that? And I'm like, but if this is really what we say it is, if it really is as valuable to us, people die for this book. And then we treat it just kind of like, oh, I've got to read it.

So, I mean, it can be frustrating sometimes needing to stand up and down, but I feel as though it helps me. I'm like, man, this is God, and he's here and he's speaking to us and I want to take heed what he has to say.

This is the word of God. So, he's going to this church in Thyatira. I mean, we're in the fourth church now and it's kind of like, okay, there's a lot of things to be scared of out there, right?

There's the devil who's throwing people into prison. There's people who are doing all the right things for all the wrong reasons and they're going to get shut down. So, if I'm the church in Thyatira, I'm like, okay, it's now our turn.

What's going to happen? And he says to the angel of the church in Thyatira, write the words of the Son of God. He introduces himself as a big deal.

[8:56] I am the Son of God. Now, Thyatira was a city that actually worshipped lots of different kinds of gods and one of them was Apollo. Apollo, if you watch the film Troy, which I quoted last week, you can see a little bit of what that looks like.

It was the God of the sun. It was the God of the sun, sunshine. Apollo was known in Greek mythology to be the son of Zeus. In fact, some people in the city would call Caesar the son of God, the son of Zeus.

So, Jesus, seemingly knowing that and says, I'm writing to you, these are my words and guess who I am? I am the real son of God. You guys keep putting other people as the sons of God and sons of Zeus.

Let me tell you who I am. I am the son of God whose eyes are like a flame of fire. He's quoting from Revelation 1 when we introduce that picture of Jesus. Remember when I told you that Christina has eyes like fire?

Yep, this is it. Jesus is like, hey, I am the son of God and I see right through you. I see through what you're doing. My eyes, my sight, my vision is purifying.

[9:59] It's cleansing. You can't hide anything from me. That's who he's talking, that's how he's introducing himself and he's like, whose feet are like burnished bronze. Kingdoms rise and kingdoms fall.

Now it's the Romans. It used to be the Persians and it's the Syrians. Soon it will be the Americans and then it will be whatever kingdom, whatever nation, it doesn't matter. The kingdom of God, the other kingdoms rise and fall, the kingdom of God remains.

Like feast, like burnished bronze. Purified, gone through the fire, steadfast. I'm the last one standing is what he's saying.

I can see right through you and I'm the last one standing and I'm the son of God. So listen to my words. And then he says this. He says, I know you're, I actually like this.

This is, these guys are doing a good job. They've got the fab five. I know your works, your love, your faith, your service and your patient endurance. That's pretty good. Right?

[10:57] The Ephesus church had it all but they didn't have love. These guys have love. Can you imagine just hearing this letter, the fourth one, as you're telling me, like, dude, we have love. Oh, it's all good.

We've got love. And then it's even better. Then they say, and Jesus says, and your latter works are greater than your first. What does that mean? What do you think that means?

It means they're growing. Like you started off like this and all the works you've got to hear and then it's growing and now your latter works are greater than your first. You are a growing church. Praise God, we are a growing church.

We're figuring a lot of things out. This is our first week in trying a TV just to see those at the back.

Was that better or not? Having, having, it was a little bit better. With that Spotify playlist.

So if you still can't see the TVs, then the next best option is to download or get the Spotify playlist and learn all the songs off by heart and then you won't need the lyrics. We've actually got these sermons also on another Spotify podcast channel which we will share especially if you're in the gathering group.

[12:03] We're trying to figure things out. Last week, we were pretty full and I know it's flu season and praise God for Agnes. Where's Agnes? Is she here or is she busy? There's Agnes. Round of applause for Agnes and I'll tell you why.

We were like, there's so many people here and everyone's like, because it's flu season and before you know it, we have seven air purifying machines dotted around the place with a sticker that says 99.9% COVID elimination.

That's good. We're figuring things out. We're a growing church. We don't know what to do. Some people are still standing. We don't know. We're figuring all those things out and it's exciting.

But let me tell you, as we're growing, here are the things on my heart. Do we have these things? If our works are getting more and I've had a few of you, actually, side reminder, if you filled out your

prison ministry form and you haven't given it to me yet, please give it to me.

Okay? My brother will be back next week because he's in the UK right now. Give it to me and we'll get that process started. Our works are growing. We've got fun things happening. But I pray as we're growing, we'll have the love of Thyatira that we would love God, that we don't love this space, that we don't love the view, that we don't love the songs, but we love God.

[13:22] We love His Word. We start to love His Word. Loving is hard. Anyone who's been married for any amount of time will tell you loving is hard requires effort. Learn how to love. Learn how to love Him.

Learn how to love His Word. Learn how to love people. If you've been around human beings at all, you'll know human beings are hard to love. That's why it's a command. Love. Because it's not easy. It's not natural to love.

I hope we grow in love as we grow. I hope we grow in faith. That we start to see, man, everything isn't quiet as it seems. This isn't just a service here.

This isn't just a group of people gathering to make each other feel better. The thing they're gathering for is real. We can't see Him, but it's real. The battle outside is real.

We have faith that the one who lives in us is greater than the one who lives in the world. I hope that we grow in faith. I also hope we grow in service. The prison ministry that whilst we gather, we also, what?

[14:22] Scatter. That we go out. That we go and meet people and introduce them to the gospel. I was just talking to a friend over lunch on Friday.

I'm like, you know, we do so many church things. I come to church and I do this Bible study. I do this group. I do that group. But then when I'm at work, I don't talk about Jesus at all. Who does that? Who does all the church Christian stuff in church, but none of it outside? Right? Your colleagues don't know what you do on a Sunday. When you see them tomorrow morning, how was your weekend?

Or you see them on Tuesday because it's public holiday. Woo! They were like, oh, what did you do this weekend? Oh, I did all this other stuff. But we don't talk about church. That's just like a side thing.

How do we grow in service and reach and scatter to the people who actually need this good news? And to grow in patient endurance because it's not easy.

[15:19] To battle against all the things in this world is not easy. To live harmoniously here is not easy. Oh, I think someone pressed the fire door outside.

Anyway. We are going to try and fight through that. As we're growing, do we have love?

Do we have service? Do we have patience? Do we have the endurance it takes to get one? The church in Thyatira has it and I want to have it too. But, here's the big but.

You guys are doing really well so that was really loud. But, you're doing all these good things, guys. You even have love. But, you tolerate that one person.

That woman who calls herself a prophetess. Now, that woman's name isn't actually Jezebel. It's not actually Jezebel. But, of course, we know Jezebel to be the evil woman in the Old Testament who's married to King Ahab who causes the Israelites to all worship Baal.

[16:31] This woman. And he's saying, you tolerate this woman. You're not joining her, but you're tolerating her. There's someone in your midst who's teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.

that's dangerous. The question is, do we have any of that compromise here? This is the same as last week to start with here.

Are there compromises that you've made? Is there a woman here? Is there a man here? Is there an individual here who is teaching and seducing people astray? Now, actually, it wasn't even that malicious almost.

You know what she was saying? Do you know the things that she was saying? Let me tell you a little bit about Thyatira. Thyatira was a working class kind of city. It had loads of trade guilds. So loads of associations of merchants and craftsmen and all these kinds of things.

And one of the essentials of joining one of these trade guilds, if you want to kind of do any kind of business, now, Thyatira, Lydia, has anyone heard of Lydia in the Bible? Lydia was a businesswoman from Thyatira.

[17:38] She's mentioned in Acts 16. She's the woman who actually backs Paul in Philippi to start the first church in Europe. So she's from Thyatira and she was a woman, a businesswoman of purple cloth.

And so Thyatira is filled with this kind of business here, filled with all these trade guilds. And the thing with these trade guilds was you have to attend all these dinners, all these banquets. You do all these things to kind of stay within the trade guild so you can be, you can have, you can network, you can have a community, you can have connections.

And so this prophetess was basically just saying, hey, it's actually okay to go to those things. Christians, we are freed from slavery now. We can actually, we're free to go and go to all these banquets and these things.

Now the problem was as you enter these things, so often these banquets and these events would descend into chaos, would descend into sexual immorality. But she was saying, hey, if we're saved by Christ, we can do whatever we need to do.

Do whatever we need to do to stay ahead, to be part of society. That's what she's saying. And then Jesus is saying, and you tolerate her. The question is, what do we tolerate?

[18:48] And last week, I asked you this question, right? I said, like, we're called to be in Hong Kong, but what if Hong Kong has seeped into our church? What if Hong Kong, what if the city has seeped into the church?

What banquets do you have to go to for your work? I don't know, finance guys. Finance is the big thing here in Hong Kong. What are the things that you have to do to go to to keep your career going, to expand your business empire?

Whether you go out for dinners with clients and it descends into something else that you know is going there, but you're like, and you reason to yourself, oh, it's okay. It's the same thing I said last week, going to a party to help your friends who are getting drunk to look after them.

What are the things that you're justifying if you're a finance guy, if you're in real estate and you have to take these meetings that go late into the night that there's lots of alcohol involved. What are you thinking here?

What's your thought process here? Is there any area of compromise that we have in our lives that we have in our friendship groups? I want to keep this group of friends, but I know this group of friends has to go and do this kind of stuff.

[20:01] and you're like, oh, but it's okay. It's okay. That's the compromise. What about those in the entertainment industry? Those who are influencers, those who are online.

What do you have to do? What are the things that you have to do to kind of like, man, if I don't go to that, I'll be ignored, right? If I don't play ball in this, then I won't get my career going.

In church, if you're a newcomer here and you don't know anything about Jesus, we welcome you. We're not weird. We're no different. But we are also very different because we believe there's something outside of this world.

We welcome you and we want you to see what it is. But we also need to know that we're trying not to compromise it. Maybe it's not even compromise.

Here's a dangerous word that I want to post to you. Guys are particularly good at this.

Compartmentalize. I was talking to a good friend of mine who's the managing director of a big consulting firm and I was like, hey, you're a Christian.

[21:10] Why has God put you where you are and what does that look like? What does your faith and your work look like? Do you know what he said? He's like, oh, actually, they're two separate things. There's just two departments that I'm trying to, I mean, typical consultant language.

There's just two different areas that I need to kind of, oh, oh, that's interesting. I'm not where you are so I don't dare say how I would react and do that, but something tells me that this book doesn't want us to compartmentalize.

That Jesus is either your Lord or he's not. But are there certain things that we compartmentalize and the easiest one is, hey, on a Sunday morning, I am good. I come to church, I'm good, I'm tired because on Saturday night I stayed really late and I got home really late.

So we compartmentalize certain parts of our week into being for Jesus and the rest of the time is whatever. Do you compromise and do you compartmentalize?

Jesus wants us to, Jesus wants all of us. He doesn't say, love me with your mind, soul, heart. He says, love me with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Do we compromise and do we

compartmentalize?

[22 : 28] Are there parties that you have to go to? Are there things that you have to do in order to be accepted to get where you want? Who's watched Chariots of Fire? That's a really old film.

I think the older people are like, oh, yep, that was me. Watch it. It's about a guy who doesn't compromise. It's about a guy who is a sprinter but doesn't want to sprint on a Sunday because that's God's day and everyone's just outraged.

Outraged. Why would you not do it on a Sunday? Just do it. Do church on another day. There's reasons for everything, right? Now, of course, there's some jobs. There's some, like, you have to go to work on a Sunday.

I get it. Erica, don't not show up to work on a Sunday. She's a doctor. Like, that's not good. I know Trevor has to go to work. Like, there are some jobs you can't, but there are other things that are kind of like, we reason, right?

Oh, it's okay. We can, we can, I guess, Sunday used to be church, but we can do that instead and we'll wake it up somehow. You know what? We'll watch it online. We'll watch church online so we can go and, we can go and do what we do.

[23 : 36] Little things, little things that we let through the door, little things that sound reasonable and that's all it takes. Church, I want us to grow, but I want us to grow in love, faith, patient endurance and service, but also not to compromise, to not make things so seeker sensitive that we become sin sensitive.

If you're a seeking here, we welcome you, but we also can't tolerate when there are things that are in our lives that are destroying us, consuming us, corrupting us.

If we truly loved you, we wouldn't, we can't just stand by and let you do it. Oh, because we're a tolerant society. No, tolerance isn't a spirit, fruit of the spirit. Love is, grace is.

And this is the hardest line because society out there has so many things that are challenging. Go, hey, what do you guys think about this? What do you guys think about that?

Would you let that kind of person in? Christina and I finally got around to watching the Jesus Revolution film. Has anyone watched that? It's on Netflix now. It's about the kind of the Jesus hippie movement from the 70s.

[24 : 46] Pretty cool. It's actually a really well done movie and it's not your typical cliché, cheesy Christian movie. Worth a watch. And of course, there's loads of flaws and actually they do highlight some of those things there as well.

It's on Netflix. But one thing is basically there was a church, a small church filled with the kind of typical people that you'd expect to be in church in the 70s in America. And then suddenly, like, they start inviting hippies in.

And you can imagine the tension there. And then the pastor says this one thing that I love. He says, how can we close our doors to them? How? If you look at the Bible, the essence of the faith is that we welcome anyone.

Jesus himself hung out with people. Actually, the most disputed thing about Jesus is who he shared the table with, who he ate dinner with. Why did you eat with them people?

Why did you eat with these people? And the guy in the book says, the essence of the faith is that these people are welcomed in. But there's a difference between welcome and accepting.

[25 : 58] I'm trying to find this line. I want to welcome every single person in. And you come just as you are. That's what God says. You come but he loves you enough to not keep you where you are.

Right? I can welcome you but I don't necessarily need to accept what you're doing. You guys help me and God help us find that line.

Jesus does this so well. Have you read Jesus' stuff? Have you read his sermon? Jesus says, the law says if you commit adultery, you can't do that.

That's not good. And then Jesus says, the law says this but what I'll say is this. If you look at someone, you better cut your eye out. He sees the law and then he like ups it each time.

But haven't you found it fascinating that each time he does that yet the lowest, the worst of the sinners keep coming to him? I don't know how he does it. I really don't know how he does it. But that comes back to bring them to me.

[27 : 09] Bring them to me. So they even just reminded me just now. That's what the Lord wants. As a church, we are pointing people to him. I'm like, I don't know what to do with your situation.

I don't know whether Jesus likes it. Well actually, there's some things I know that Jesus doesn't like that. There are other things I'm like, I don't know. Come to us. Be with us. We welcome you and go to him and let him be the one that tells you the truth.

Let him be the one that delivers the truth with grace and love because I can't do it. Not to the level that he can. That's why Jesus says, bring them to me and I'll do it.

But you as a body, welcome. You don't have to accept but welcome. But don't tolerate. It was harsh for these guys because actually they weren't doing anything. They were just tolerating.

They weren't joining in necessarily. And yet Jesus says, that's the problem because when you have a group and I pointed at that couch last week, maybe it's this couch. Maybe it's just you two. Maybe it's just Sonny and Godfrey.

[28:10] You're teaching us how to compartmentalize, how to compromise and you start telling people, hey actually, it's okay. It's okay to do this and then you can do this.

It's okay to be there and then you'll be there. Jesus is saying, that's dangerous because that kind of just seeps through to everywhere else. That's the danger.

It's interesting, he says this. He says, to the rest of you, so that's the naughty corner, but to the rest of you, sorry guys, I'll come and give you a hug later. It's just the couch.

I'm just jealous of that couch. To the rest of you, you have not held to this teaching and you have not learned the so-called deep things of Satan.

What's that? Can you see that? Can you read that there? What a strange way to put it. Jesus does a little like so-called. Verse 24, but to the rest of you in Thyatira who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan.

[29:11] there were some people, some people sat in that corner over there who were telling people, hey, we've actually got a secret thing.

We actually, we've got a secret revelation. We know more now. Do you know what we found out? That the body and the soul are separate, which means if you've accepted Jesus and you believe in him, your soul's going to be saved and your body, you can do whatever you want with.

There's a rising group of people, they were called the Gnostics at the time who were professing to have this special realization of the spiritual things. Saying, oh, in the spiritual realm that's okay and in the physical realm this is okay.

So that's why Jesus was kind of doing the air quits, the so-called deep things of Satan. There was another group that was saying, hey, do you know how you conquer the things of Satan? Go do them.

That was the, hey, do you know how to stick it to Satan? Go do the things that he wants you to do. That was literally the reasoning. It's like, if you do them, if you go deeper into sin, then you will experience grace to a deeper level.

[30:20] Have you done that? Have you convinced yourself of that? When you're in a place where you're just in self-pity mode, that's it, I'm, I suck at this Christian stuff this week, I'm just going to go deeper in.

I don't know, God will save me at some point. To the rest of you who haven't, Jesus is saying, to the rest of you, hold fast till I come. Hang in there is what he's saying.

He also says something interesting. If we just rewind a little bit, I found this is pretty cool. He says, verse 21, he's talking about Jezebel, who's the one who's leading all of this, and then he says, I gave her time to repent.

Isn't that cool? The worst of them, the one who's leading everyone astray, seducing everyone. Well, he's trying to, Jesus is saying, I gave her time to repent. He's not hasty with his judgment.

I don't know whether you feel like the sheep being led astray by the prophetess, or you feel like the prophetess who's actually doing the leading. This is saying, however deep your sin is, it doesn't matter. Jesus still gives you time to repent.

[31:30] Even if you are Jezebel, no one should name their daughter Jezebel. It's not a name to give if you're having a daughter anytime soon, or a son, but that's for different reasons.

Don't, no one likes this name Jezebel. This prophetess, this evil queen, some describe her to be the most evil woman in the history of mankind.

And yet, Jesus says, I gave her time to repent. Just to give you a glimpse of what Jesus is like. He's fierce, his eyes are like fire. Can you imagine that?

He's piercing through to the very depths of your soul, knows all of your sin, yet in that moment, he still gives you time to repent. That's who Jesus is.

But then he says, but she did not repent of her sexual immorality. Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed. That's a bit of a strange thing to say. But really, it's tied into the saying of, actually, you make your own bed.

[32 : 35] Have you heard that saying before? You make your own bed. You suffer the consequences of your own sin. And this prophetess, who's teaching people to commit adultery, often done on a bed, he's saying, I will throw her onto a sickbed.

I will let her, I will leave her to her own devices, and she will suffer the consequences that she deserves. she's made her own bed. So often, we think about Christianity as these are the things that we're not allowed to do.

Oh, we're dating, but we're not allowed to have sex before marriage. Hey, we're doing this, but we're not allowed to go to that party. We're not allowed to do this, we're not allowed to do that. And yeah, those are things, but what are they there for?

Why do I tell my children that they are not allowed to play with the firehop in the kitchen? Because it'll hurt them. Until we realize that actually Jesus is for our good, he gives us time to repent, even if he sees the very depths of our soul.

What he doesn't want is for us to suffer the consequences of our own sin. Because every time a couple decides to give in to the temptations and to give in to the insecurities, when a couple decides, okay, if I don't do this with this person, I'm not going to keep them.

[33 : 56] I'm going to lose them. That insecurity, after it's done, is that insecurity gone? Not. It just worsens. It just gets worse.

The sins that we have that keep us captive are actually things that are destroying us. That's why Jesus is so harsh on them. Not because he's harsh about the actual things, but because he loves you and I so much that he's like, don't do them.

Don't do them. Those consequences are so painful. Every time you give in, every time you compromise, you know it doesn't help. You know it doesn't get better. And I just need to quickly address this.

Verse 23, and I will strike her children dead. That's as harsh as it gets. But what he's saying here is there are people that she's teaching and following. There are her disciples. There are her spiritual kids. There are people who follow her way.

They will be removed. They will be gone. The body of Christ cannot tolerate these things. Bring them to me.

[35 : 00] Let me confront them. And only hold fast till the end. And keep my works or keep my will till the end. Hold fast.

That's like a battle. I was talking to someone about this recently. I was like, life is just filled with battles. Does your life feel like an uphill battle? What are we facing here?

What are the battles that we face in society here? Let me ask some questions here. What are the battles that we face in society? What do you think? Trevor, what do you got? Lust.

That's an uphill battle. There's a book called Every Man's Battle. But of course, lust isn't just unique to men either. It's to women. For women.

It's for all of us. And it's not lusting even just physically for other human beings. It's lusting all kinds of things. Lust is a huge one. What other battles do we face?

[35 : 56] Paul, what battles do you face? Greed. Greed. Always wanting more and always needing more. I said a couple of weeks ago, one of my friends who knows super wealthy people, and he says, it's really funny.

The more wealthy they are, the more poor they feel. They genuinely feel I need more. Lust. Greed. What are the other things? What have we got?

Tony, you got anything for us? What are we battling in this society? Success. Success.

Needing to feel like we've achieved having X amount of followers on IG and likes that come with it or the job title that we need.

Those are the battles. There's this interesting battle that I watched in a video by the Bible project. There's this battle going on between the garden and the city. The values and the principles of the garden, the garden of Eden, the way that God created the garden to be, one of peace and tranquility and prosperity, filled with everything.

[37:09] That's what we were supposed to have. Yet, as you see in the Old Testament, you start seeing these cities come. That's where you get the Tower of Babel and you get all these Sodom and Gomorrah and all these things.

The values of the city that are pitched against the values of the garden. That's a battle right there that's happening for our souls. Our souls yearn to be in the garden.

Psalm 23, that we lie by still waters. Yet, we're filled with the city of cities where the battle is just constantly, the battle of success, the battle of busyness.

Hong Kong is nuts now. Of course, there's the whole wanting to get the nightlife and the night markets and all those things, which are quite fun as well. But, the battle of busyness, success, lust, greed.

The battle of excessiveness. Between the garden and the city, between the flesh and the spirit.

Romans 8 talks about that battle. Romans 7 talks about the battle that Paul has within it.

[38:06] He's saying, man, I want to do this. The things I know I shouldn't do, I want to do. And those are things I know I should do, I don't want to do at all.

He's got a constant battle within. And then it's an uphill one. But then what's Jesus' comfort? What's Jesus' encouragement? And this is where he finishes.

In the midst of that battle, whatever battle it is that you are facing right now, Jesus says, the one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, 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.

The ESV version is a little bit hard to understand. What he's saying here is, to the one who conquers, to the one who keeps my will, I will give him authority. He will win. He will win all of those battles.

He will win like a shepherd who is holding a rod and has the authority. Why? Because the father gives authority.

[39:11] That's what he's saying. The father gives you authority to win that battle, not because you will win it, but because Jesus already has. To the one who holds fast to the end, to the one who conquers and keeps my works until the end, you will win.

I want you to have a little thought exercise right now. The battle that you're going through, and I was just talking about this with a good friend over breakfast, who feels as though when he's going to work, he's just going into the battle ring.

Like, every time, I'm just ready to fight. I've got to fight something, I've got to fight someone.

Imagine for a second how you would approach that if you truly believed that Jesus has already won. Just imagine with me for a second, whatever battle it is that you're facing, whether it's one of lust, whether it's one with greed, whether it's one with success, whether it's one with busyness, approval, whatever it might be, imagine with me for a second, whatever arena that you're battling in, whether it's finance, entertainment, education, health care, whatever it is, imagine if the truth of Jesus' victory actually rung true in your ring.

Imagine if Jesus himself is in that ring. How would that change the way you live?

[40:40] How would that change the way you fight? Would it? It should. And we were just talking about that. We were like, if we're battling in the ring, in a battle that has already been won, that means, and Jesus is in the ring with you, so he won't let anything happen to you, the one who conquers won't be hurt by the second death, then it changes the way you fight.

Do you know what it means? It means you can turn the other cheek. It means you can take punches and hits from the people that you're fighting with, because you know that the one who conquers and keeps his works until the end, he will give authority over the nations.

He will give you victory. Imagine, in your arena, Jesus who won is stood there right with you.

That changes everything. Right? That's what he's saying here. It means that if you're competing against a colleague to win a project in your company, and the colleague is using dirty tactics, you don't have to worry, because if Jesus wants you to win that project, he will win it for you, so you don't have to compete in the same way.

When you have a friend who's slandering you and saying things that aren't true about you, you don't have to worry what everyone else thinks or whether you'll lose your status in the friendship group, because Jesus is in that ring, is in that friendship ring with you.

[42:23] So that changes everything. You can turn the other cheek. You don't have to feel offended. Because Jesus is there with you, and he took on the ultimate offense for you, so you won't have to feel offended.

Changes the way we fight, brothers and sisters. This battle that we have, when you know that the battle is won, the way you fight it is completely different. You fight by holding fast to what you have until the end, knowing that that promise is coming.

And then he says at the end, and this is where I'll finish, and I will give him the morning star. I'm not an astrophysicist here, but actually the morning star is the one in Revelation 22, when Jesus introduces himself as the bright morning star.

The ancient Christian astronomers would say that the morning star would be the one that comes at the darkest part of the night, which apparently is 2, 3 a.m. When the night is just as dark as it can be, the morning star, as faint as it can be, pops up.

And do you know what that little morning star does from that moment on? Because that's the darkest point of the night. From that moment on, the sun follows. That morning star pulls in the morning.

[43:41] Morning is broken because of that morning star. We now know that star to actually, the one that the Christian astronomers back then to be looking at is actually Venus. What's interesting is after Venus shows up in our sight, shortly after the sun shows up, and that's how each day goes around.

Jesus says, I am the morning star. I am the one that will usher in the light. I am the one that comes at the moment when it is the darkest, and I am the one that gives hope. When you are in your ring, and you are battling, and you are on the ground, and you've been KO'd because someone slapped you hard, because people all around you, you have a target on your back.

When you think it's the darkest, in that moment, Jesus says, and I will give them the morning star. I will give them myself. I will enter the ring. I will introduce myself already in the ring, and the victory will be yours.

Imagine if we held that truth going into our work on Tuesday morning. Imagine if we held that truth going into our socializing this weekend, that there are some things that we don't have to strive for, that we don't have to battle for.

It's off our shoulders. The victory is his. Imagine that, just for a second. The morning star pulls in the morning in behind it, just like Jesus pulls in the kingdom of heaven just behind him.

[45:14] That's what he promises us. He who has ears, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Let those of us who have an ear to hear what is being said right now from this word, let us take heed to that.

The victory is won. The victory is his. If you sum up that whole book of Revelation, that confusing book filled with imagery, it's simple.

Jesus wins. And because of that, we win too. So every battle we face is no longer the same battle that we think we're fighting. Can I ask you to continue to imagine that?

What that looks like for you as you face your battles? If I can finish with an encouragement, an exhortation, that is when you leave this place and you go back to the battle that you're facing, whatever it is, the battle that is within you or the battle that is in front of you, can you have that victory deep in your heart and soul?

That's what Jesus is trying to instill in the church in Thyatira. And I think it's the thing that he wants us to hold on to until the end.

[46:31] I'm going to invite Paul now to come up and we're going to have a short time of response. Again, just to sing this song. When we sing songs, this isn't the only way we worship.

You guys have been worshiping simply by listening to this word and just asking God to speak to you. You guys are worshiping by being here. You guys are worshiping later if you have lunch, whether it's here or with anyone else. Worship is everywhere.

Don't compartmentalize. You can worship him anywhere. He doesn't need us to worship him either. The rocks outside would cry out and worship him if we don't. But as we sing now, worship music worship, I often call, is a low-hanging fruit.

It's an easy way to do it because it's hard sometimes to worship when you're in your workplace, in the ring, fighting your colleagues. So worship with us here. Worship him here. And I pray that it will fill you with the kind of faith that the church in Thyatira had as they face their trade guilds.

May we face our life here with that same faith that the victory is his. Can I invite you to stand?