

THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA

Message 11

Words: 6152

Scripture: Revelation 2:18-29

INTRO: We started our trip to the seven churches at the Mediterranean Sea where it meets the Aegean Sea at Ephesus. We then followed a short distance inland up the coast to Smyrna, the royal city which lies at the end of an arm of the ocean. From there we went north again to Perrgamos. From the height of Perrgamos one may look off into the distance some 15 miles away and there is the Aegean Sea. This is the capital of Asia and was that for some 400 years.

We left off there in the last message. We left off with the promises made to those who have an ear to hear and overcome the evil one. We do not know the exact meaning of these promises. No doubt, historically the believers at this church will have known what was meant by the hidden manna and the white stone. Possibly new discoveries will yet reveal what the Lord meant.

However, as I pondered the promise that the Lord would write on this stone a new name that no one knows except the one who receives it I could not help but think of the Church as the bride of Christ. Marriage describes the relationship between Christ and the Church, and when this promise is fulfilled, the Church will no longer be the bride, but the wife of the Lord. This speaks of the intimate, fulfilling relationship the true believer will experience with the Lord for all eternity. There will be a very special knowledge between Christ and every believer who arrives in heaven. And I think every believer will have some special knowledge that is shared only between the believer and the Lord. And whatever this name is, it will be the content of that special knowledge between the Lord and that believer.

Well, having left Perrgamos, we enter now a new stretch in the road which will end at Laodicea. We make a sharp turn from going mostly north to going east and even a little south and it is inland, away from the sea. And here, in a little less distance than from Smyrna to Perrgamos, we arrive at Thyatira. The first city, Ephesus had such accolades as the crown of Asia, the wealthiest city, the greatest city of Asia, the gateway to Rome. Smyrna was the beautiful city, the ornament of Asia, the flower of Asia, the fairest of the cities of Ionia, which was said to

have the grace which extends to every part like a rainbow, the brightness which pervades every part and reaches to the heavens. Pergamos the cathedral city. It boasted the second largest library in the world. It was the political center, the most beautiful city, the royal city.

What shall we say now of Thyatira? Not much. Nothing spectacular at least. Zondervan Bible Dictionary says it has no great history and is scarcely mentioned by ancient writers. J. F. Walvoord writes, "It is remarkable that Christ should single out a very small church in a relatively obscure city for such an important letter", end quote. Perhaps we might learn from this that no matter how unimportant we view ourselves, as Christians, we play an important part in the plan of God.

We have seen that some of the other cities were 1,000 years old or older. But Thyatira was founded by Seleucus, one of Alexander the Great's successors around 300 years before Christ, although it seems it existed as a city before that since it was regarded as a holy city because the temple of the ancient Lydian sun-god, Tyrimnos stood there. Thyatira was situated at a place that was the gateway to Pergamos. Armies heading for the capital city would have to pass through by Thyatira. So a garrison, a place where soldiers were placed to guard the pass to the capital city. For this reason Thyatira was destroyed numerous times. After the Romans took control in 190 BC, Thyatira became a safer place to live and it turned into a commercial center.

It was an unimportant city politically and spiritually and we'll look at more of that later. What almost every commentator notes is that, though this letter is written to the least important city, it is the longest letter of the seven. For example, 282 words were written to this church in 12 verses. The next church, Sardis, has 180 words and 6 verses written to it.

But, though the city was not very significant, one may not conclude that the letter written to it is not important. The Lord's Church has gone through a process. Like an organism, it has gone through stages. But in it all it is moving forward to the time when it will be completed and we are fully convinced that today we are in the last of the seven stages of the church age. We are filled with confidence that this battle is almost over for the believer. We live with the blessed hope given in the NT of being delivered by the Lord from the wrath to come, that which follows the Church age.

I. THYATIRA

A. The Historical Purpose (2:18-19)

1. The counselee 2:1a

1) The counselee (2:18a)

So we begin with historical purpose why the Lord wrote to this church. Revelation 2:18 says:

18 And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write...

Thyatira, is the name of this city significant? Some say it means, "the castle of Thya" (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 1939, "Thyatira"). The modern name is Ak-hissar, which means, "white castle". So the castle idea gives some connection. Some say it may mean daughter, from the Greek word thugateira. The name, "white castle" or white city likely comes from the white marble used in buildings here.

J. B. Smith again feels that the name of the city is significant. He says the name Thyatira comes from *thuos*, *sacrifice* and *ateires*, *unweary*. In other words, they were unweary in sacrificing. Smith feels that this speaks of the rise of Roman Catholicism during the time period represented by this church.

Our subject then is the church at Thyatira and to give us the historical setting I'll read what Barclay has written about Thyatira. He says:

The longest of the seven letters is written to the least important of the seven cities. Pliny dismisses Thyatira as an unimportant town. Nonetheless, as we shall come to see, the problem which faced Thyatira and the danger

which threatened Thyatira were the problem and the danger which were universally involved in the position of the Christians in Asia.

Thyatira lies in the long valley which connects the valleys of the Hermus and the Caicus rivers, through which the railway runs today; and it was Thyatir's geographical position which gave it its importance.

(i) Thyatira lay on the road which connected Pergammum with Sardis and which went on to Philadelphia and to Laodicea, which linked up with both Smyrna and Byzantium. That was the road by which the imperial post travelled; and it was a road which was crowned with the trade and commerce of Asia and the east. Therefore, first and foremost Thyatira was a great commercial town.

(ii) Strategically the importance of Thyatira was that it was the gateway to Pergamum, and Pergamum was the capital of the province. The first we hear of Thyatira is that it is an armed garrison, manned by a company of Macedonian troops, placed there as an outpost to protect Pergamum. The difficulty was that Thyatira was not capable of any prolonged defense. It lay in an open, easy, smiling valley. There was no height and no hill that could be fortified; and all that Thyatira could ever hope to do was to fight a delaying action until Pergamum could prepare to meet the invaders. Thyatira was, therefore, strategically a most important frontier town, but it was fated never to be able to fight anything other than a delaying action to give Pergamum time.

(iii) Thyatira had no special religious significance. It was not a center of either Caesar worship or of Greek worship. Its local hero-god was called Tyrimnus and he appears on its coins on horseback armed with a battle-axe and a club. The only notable thing about

Thyatira from the religious point of view was that it possessed a fortune telling shrine, presided over by a female oracle called the Sambathe. Certainly no threat of persecution hung over the Thiatiran Church.

(iv) What, then, was the problem and the danger of Thyatira? We know less about Thyatira than about any of the seven cities; and we are, therefore, seriously handicapped in trying to reconstruct the situation. The one thing we do know about Thyatira is that it was a great commercial center. It was specially a center of the dyeing industry and of the trade in woolen goods. It was from Thyatira that Lydia, the seller of purple, came (Acts 16:14). From inscriptions which have been discovered we learn that Thyatira had an extraordinary number of trade guilds. These trade guilds were associations of the people employed in certain trades for their mutual profit and pleasure. We find that there were in Thyatira guilds of garments, dyers, potters, bakers, and slave-dealers. Herein we think, was the problem of the Church at Thyatira. To refuse to join one of these trade guilds would be much the same as to refuse to join a trade union today. It would mean that the person who refused to join had given up all hope of commercial prosperity, and had, in fact, given up all prospect of commercial existence. Why, then, should a Christian not join one of these guilds? These guilds had two characteristics. First, they held common meals. These common meals would very often be held in a temple. Even with a formal sacrifice to the gods, and the meat eaten at them would be meat which had already been offered to idols. Was it possible for a Christian to participate in a meal like that? Second, it often happened that these communal meals were occasions of drunken revelry and of slack morality. Was it possible for a Christian to enter into a social occasion like that?

Here was the problem at Thyatira. There was no threat of persecution: the threat came from inside the Church. Inside the Church there were those who were asking why the Christian should not be a member of a trade guild, and why he should sacrifice his business interests by refusing membership. Such people would argue that the Christians was so defended by the Holy Spirit and the presence of Jesus Christ that he would take no harm by sharing in the ceremonies and feasts of the trade guilds. In other words in Thyatira there was a strong movement, led by a woman addressed as Jezebel, which pled for compromise with the world and the world's standards in the interests of business and commercial prosperity. The answer to the Risen Christ is unequivocal. With such things the Christian must have nothing to do.

The problem at Thyatira was the universal problem, the problem which still meets us today, the problem of how far, if at all, the Christian may compromise with the world, end quote.

Well, that gives us some idea of the city. We now ask how a church started in Thyatira? Well, turn to Acts 16. We can at least make a possible suggestion or two. It is well possible that the Apostle Paul preached in all these cities. He taught for over 2 years at Ephesus. But even earlier, he was in Troas at one point which is quite a distance north of Ephesus. And a vision appeared to him at night to go to Macedonia. He crossed the Aegean Sea and came to Philippi. So we pick up the story at verse 11:

11 Therefore, sailing from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and the next day came to Neapolis,

12 and from there to Philippi, which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, a

colony. And we were staying in that city for some days.

13 And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there.

14 Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul.

15 And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded us.

So Lydia was a business woman from Thyatira. Let me read from John MacArthur. He says, *She dealt with the sale of purple. The purple dye that was used there was world famous. It came from two sources. One source was a root called the madder-root which grew around Thyatira and from that root they could extract purple dye.*

The other was a little sea shell fish called murex. And from the throat of that tiny little sea animal came one drop of precious purple dye. And so they would catch these little fish and extract from them this dye.

Because it was difficult to get it out of the madder-root and even more difficult to get it out of the little murex, it was very costly. And so this little city flourished as a commercial center for purple dye and for the garments that would go along with that.

Well, it is possible that Lydia took the Gospel back to Thyatira as certainly she had a connection there.

There are, as I see it, two important things about this city. First was its strategic place

with regard to protecting the capital city, Pergamos. And second was the trading guilds.

POSITION OF THE CITY:

So we look first at its strategic importance. Thyatira was the gateway for advancing armies to Pergamos. Pergamos was the capital city. It was built in a high place that could be protected. But Thyatira was not a place conducive to withstand a siege. This was agricultural land that had no high places in its favor for defenses.

But there was something strategic about Thyatira. Let me read here from John MacArthur. He says:

Thyatira was the gateway to Pergamos. In order to get to Pergamos, down that Caicus valley, you had to go through Thyatira. So all it was good for was to put up a fight so that the troops in Pergamos could get their act together and be ready when the enemy arrived. They were like bait. They got eaten. It was originally populated by soldiers of Alexander the Great as about a 30- or 40-mile buffer line of defense so that the troops in Pergamos, which was the greater city and the more desirable one, could defend themselves. It was little more than a military garrison to guard Pergamos. It provided nothing but delaying action. So it was destined to go through a history of destruction and rebuilding many times.

GUILDS:

The second significant thing about Thyatira was its trade guilds. MacArthur further says this, *But now since the Romans took over in 190 B.C. and they brought in what's called the Pax Romana, or the Roman Peace, they ruled the world and there was a certain amount of peace. And during that time this little city of Thyatira sort of flourished. And it turned from a military place to becoming a commercial city.*

In fact, it became the center of wool and dyeing of cloth. Historians tell us it became the center of guilds, trade guilds which would be much like unions today. There were people who had the same trade who banded together. And it had more trade guilds in this city than of the other cities in these seven letters. One of the very prominent things there was the dyeing of cloth, end quote.

So here is the second significant thing about Thyatira. More trade guilds were found in this city than any other. One article said there were wool workers, linen workers, those who made outer garments, dyers, leather workers, tanners, potters, bakers, slave dealers and bronze smiths. And it said, "It was said: 'if you wish to get ahead in this world, you must belong to a guild.'"

So if you were not in a guild, you could never really get anywhere. But if you were in a guild, they would expect you to join their common meals which were often in a temple, and they would begin and end with a sacrifice to some god. So the meat served was meat that had been offered to idols. And if they did not join in, their membership in the guild was in jeopardy. Furthermore, at these meals drunkenness and immorality were common. And here is the question, could Christians join in.

John MacArthur makes some most interesting comments on the guilds. He says:

One of the curiosities of this town was the guilds, the people banded together for the various trades they were engaged in. But more interesting than that was each guild had a god. Each guild had come to define a guardian god that particularly gave himself to taking care of them. And they worshiped that god. If you were associated with a guild, you were in a religious group. And there was a god over that group that you had to worship. Associated with

that worship was immorality, as in almost all the pagan systems. And so there would be idols, idol feasts and celebrations, immoral orgies. And that could be very difficult for a Christian because now if you were in a guild, let's say you were a weaver of cloth, or you were involved in the wool industry and you were working with sheep, or you were someone who processed purple dye, you would belong to a guild. In order to have good standing in the guild you would need to engage yourself in the guild activities. If you did not engage yourself in the guild activities, you could easily be dispossessed. Here is a Christian. The guild has a god. The guild has routine activities which involve sacrifices to that god, feasts to that god, along with immoral orgies. You're a Christian, you say, "I can't do any of that," you could lose your job.

By the way, that's not unlike some unions today. I remember when I was in a union for a brief time when I was working in school as a kid. I went down to the union hall because they said I had to be sworn in to the union. And so a man got up in front of about 600 people who were all there for this union meeting and he said, "I want all of the new people to stand up," and I stood up and he said, "Now I want you to raise your right hand and swear..." Well, I don't swear to anybody but the Lord. So I didn't raise my hand and I didn't say anything, I just stood there. And they said, "Do you swear to have allegiance to local 770, it was, the retail clerk's union? Do you..." And it went on and on throughout all of this stuff and I didn't put my hand up because in my simple understanding of my Christianity, I don't swear by anything. My word is good. My yea is yea and my nay is nay. And I just felt that my conscience wouldn't let me put my hand up and I didn't want to swear allegiance to anybody but Jesus Christ and I had no idea what I was getting in to and what I'd have to be held to if I did swear. So while I was standing

there without my hand in the air, a man grabbed me by the neck and threw me out of the building...and asked me why I didn't put my hand up. And I explained to him that I was a Christian and my allegiance was to Jesus Christ and that I would be a faithful and dutiful employee and do everything that I was told, but I wouldn't swear my allegiance to anyone other than Christ. So I was a little bit of a taste of maybe what it was like in a severer way in this little city of Thyatira for a Christian who didn't want to go along with the system because the system here involved false gods,
end quote.

You might be interested to know that today there are from 20-25,000 people at Thyatira and they are still in the textile business. They make rugs there, I understand.

Well, that is some information on the counselee, now we go to Revelation 2:18b for some information on the description of the counselor, who, as we know by now, is the Lord Jesus Christ.

2) The counselor (2:18b)

2:18b These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass...

Now if this letter was written to us, what do you think it would say to us if the Lord said to us, "These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass..."

Well, note first that the Lord calls Himself the Son of God. His favorite title for Himself in the Gospels was the Son of Man. In the book of Revelation, only here is He referred to as the Son of God. The title Son of Man is used in 1:13 and 14:14.

It seems likely that He is introduced this way because Apollo Tyrimnos, and the Roman Emperor were called the sons of God. Apollo was supposedly the son of the god Zeus, and there was a temple to Apollo in Thyatira. Emperor worship was common to the Romans. He was considered to be the son of God. And so Christ, in opposition to Apollo and emperor who is viewed as the son of God, is introduced here as the Son of God. In Perrgamos, where a Roman resided who had the right of the sword, the Lord is described as the one who has the sharp two-edged sword. Here He is described as the Son of God.

The Lord is further described as the One who has eyes of fire. He has the age to see clear through a church and He has eyes that bore right through. When our eyes hit some solid material, vision stops right there. Not so with the Lord. What would we do if we were in the presence of someone who not only saw us but saw what we were thinking as well?

When you see eyes of fire, what do you see? You see, here is the eternal Lord and His eyes are lit up. Barclay says of these eyes that they speak of two things and I quote, "they must stand for the blazing anger against sin in the eyes of the Risen Christ: and they must stand for the awful penetration of that gaze which strips the disguises and sees into a man's inmost heart'" (128). There is the look of a cutting torch that cuts right through metal.

Today we have this unconditionally loving Jesus who is like one who hands out candies everywhere. The book, *The Shack* paints a picture of this modern day Jesus. He is a clumsy kid who spills stuff. He is like one of us. And His Father is not the one we think He is. No, his father doesn't judge anybody. He heals everybody because their sin is judgment enough. He is the candy god. I don't want to take time to tell you about all the judgments God dealt out to man in the OT.

Sometimes thousands of people were slain at one time. God's eyes were ablaze.

But let me take some time to tell you about this Jesus, the real Jesus. Turn to Mark 3. At this time Jesus was in a Jewish place of worship. And what He saw made Him angry. We begin in verse 1:

1 And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand.

2 So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him.

3 And He said to the man who had the withered hand, "Step forward."

4 Then He said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they kept silent.

5 And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.

Now we might say what some other Jews said. They said, "There are six other days on which you could be healed. Don't do this on the Sabbath, for goodness sakes!" And we might say, "That's right! Why does Jesus have to do this on the Sabbath?" Well, the Jews lived by tradition. And what does Jesus think of that? He knew that unless He could strip their tradition away and restore true spirituality they would forever be lost in their sin. And what was the Jews response? Verse 6:

6 Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.

No candies here. Let me show Him to you again. We turn to John 2. He has just done His first miracle. He turned water into about 120 gallons of pure grape juice. You say, "No, no. That was wine." Well, you might wish to listen to our series on wine in the Bible. It was grape juice which is called wine in our English Bibles. Turning water into fresh grape juice was a far bigger miracle than making aged wine. Check out our series on Wine and the Bible.

Now it was close to the first Passover that He went to after He began His ministry. News of His miracle will no doubt have gone on ahead. So, if He wanted His popularity to continue He needed to look for another opportunity to do a miracle. He is now at Jerusalem, the capital city of the Jews and He is at the heart of Jerusalem, the temple. We'll read verses 14-15:

14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

Look at Him. No candies here! He made a whip! Now look at this event. He poured out their money, real nice and gentle like, right? No! He overthrew their tables! And I am asking you, do you see fire in His eyes?

Well, let us look at Him another time. We go to Matthew 23. It is close to where they will crucify Him. And He is in confrontation with the pastors of the day, the spiritual leaders. He spoke to the common people. They have come to a very solemn feast, the Passover. And Jesus said, "Come here. Let me tell you something about your pastors and shepherds." So we read verses 1-12:

1 Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples,

2 saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.

3 "Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.

4 "For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

5 "But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments.

6 "They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues,

7 "greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.'

8 "But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.

8 "But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.

9 "Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.

10 "And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ.

11 "But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.

12 "And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

Maybe this view of Jesus is new to you and you say, "Wow! I wonder if He had the courage to talk to the leaders like that? Well, He now turns to their leaders and says:

13 *"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.*

14 *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.*

16 *"Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged to perform it.'*

17 *"Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold?*

18 *"And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged to perform it.'*

19 *"Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift?*

20 *"Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it.*

21 *"He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it.*

22 *"And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it.*

23 *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.*

24 *"Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!*

25 *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence.*

26 *"Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.*

27 *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.*

28 *"Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.*

29 *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous,*

30 *"and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.'*

31 *"Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.*

32 *"Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt.*

33 *"Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?*

Do you see Jesus here with unconditional love or with fire in His eyes? No candies here! The Lord sees clear through anyone of us. We must remember

this because we are going to stand before Him at the judgment seat of Christ. I have told you about the young man who stood before L.E. Maxwell, aged founder of Prairie Bible Institute. And he said, "Mr. Maxwell, can you see me?" And he was briskly told, "I can see clear through you young man." Now consider here, that the speaker in our verse is the One described in chapter one as having hair as white as wool. He is the aged One. Hebrews 4:13 says, *And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.*

And I must ask you, is this your Jesus? If not, you are worshipping another Jesus. Not the real One. And do you know what is said about Him in the Bible? He is the same, yesterday, today and forever. He is immutable. He does not change. And we do well to remember right here that we must stand before Him some day. He is not different today from when He confronted these religious leaders.

But, not only does He have eyes of fire. It says His feet are like burnished bronze. If you would observe the OT tabernacle, everything that touched the ground was brass. The Lord's feet touch the ground. And what does brass speak of? These Thyatirans are familiar with brass. One of their guilds was the guild of brass. I take from the brass that He comes to this church with the threat of judgment. That is what it pictures in the tabernacle. Walwoord says: "In 1:14 a similar picture is given where Christ is pictured as the righteous Judge who, knowing all things, can ferret out every evil. His sovereign judgment deals with all who fail to measure up to His perfect righteousness" (72).

We are in a day when in many churches we have another Jesus. He is not a Jesus who judges, or gets angry and has fiery eyes. But the real Jesus is holy and He requires holiness.

Let me mention something I have said before and that has gripped me. It comes from A.W.Tozer's book, *The Knowledge Of The Holy*. Here is what he said that has gripped me, "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us." Let me ask the question like this now: What first comes into your mind when you think about Jesus? Maybe I should ask this, what is your fuller picture of Jesus?

At Pergamos they had trouble with worshipping idols. In Thyatira they have trouble with worshipping idols. I ask you, in the church, do we have trouble with worshipping false idols? If the Jesus we have in our mind does not match the Jesus of the Bible, we are worshipping a false Jesus.

So let me ask you another question now. When you think of someone worshipping a false god, what do you think of? Do you see someone offering something at some shrine, or someone bowing down before an image? Here is what Tozer is saying, "If the god I have in my mind does not match up with what the Bible actually teaches of Him, I am worshipping a false god." Think of that. Is he right?

Now let me say this, "If the Jesus I have in my mind does not match up with the Jesus that the NT presents, I am worshipping a false Jesus." I then have, what Paul calls 'another Jesus.'" So Tozer said this: "Let us beware lest we in our pride accept the erroneous notion that idolatry consists only in kneeling before visible objects of adoration, and that civilized peoples are therefore free from it. **The essence of idolatry is the entertainment of thoughts about God that are unworthy of Him.**"

Now I ask you, in the sum total of your picture of Jesus, do you see one with eyes of fire and feet of brass when it comes to sin? May I ask

this, if you do not have that as part of your picture, are you sure you have the right Jesus?

Now listen to Tozer once more: "It is impossible to keep our moral practices sound and our inward attitudes right while our idea of God (and I might add Jesus too) is erroneous or inadequate. If we would bring back spiritual power to our lives, we must begin to think of God more nearly as He is", end quote. And I ask you one more question: Is he right? And if he is, do you have the right God and the right Jesus?

To Thyatira the Lord is introduced as the Son of God who has eyes of fire and feet of brass.

CONCL: Well, our text for this morning has been Revelation 2:18, "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, 'These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass...'" Philip Yancey, a modern writer wrote a book called, "The Jesus I Never Knew." That Jesus was another Jesus. It is most crucial that we get to know this Jesus who has eyes like a flame of fire and feet like fine brass. When it comes to dealing with sin in the Church, that is what He looks like.

If this picture of Jesus is something strange to any listener, it may be time to do a restudy of this Jesus. We will see later why He is described like this to the church at Thyatira. I have no doubt this is what He would look like to many churches today, if we could but see Him. But what we have is His written record, that from this we might learn all we need to know.

If you would read the book of Revelation and see God at work in judgment, you would see this same God, and sometimes destruction takes place that destroys millions of people at one time. And I remind us this morning, He is the same, yesterday, today and forever. Read His Word. Learn to know the real God and the real Jesus. And if we walk with Him, we will find real love and if we learn to repent, we will find real grace and real forgiveness.