

02-09-11b Revelation

We're ready now to resume our study in the words of the Lord Jesus to the angel of the church at Thyatira. We have seen that it is one of the main points in this letter is the idea of spoiling a wonderful opportunity and a wonderful track record of faithfulness and of love and of service and of endurance by a lack of discernment. One of the hazards of functioning well in love and in faith and in endurance is that you can endure to a fault.

You can love to a fault. And it is just as much a fault to be too tolerant as it is to have the fault of intolerance. And so Jesus, this if you think about it, is a relatively gentle rebuke because he does not threaten the angel of the church at Thyatira.

He doesn't say change your mind or I will come to you quickly and remove your lamp stand out of its place. But because these are mature believers to whom he speaks, because they have been faithful and their last works are even greater than their first, the Lord Jesus in a sense, and this is sort of almost an anthropopathism, but he is treating them with respect. He is treating them as mature, as adult sons.

Someone who is intelligent and mature and sensitive, you don't have to come down with a big sledgehammer. Jesus by saying this is what is going to happen to Jezebel. I am going to throw her into a bed and those who commit adultery with her are going to be in great tribulation unless they change their mind.

And any offspring from this movement I am going to kill with death. You know that the faithful pastor and the faithful believers in Thyatira are going to feel chagrin. They are going to feel sorrow and some shame that they missed this.

They have done so well. You know how it is if you have an A student and they always get 100% on the test and then you give them one test and they only get a 96. They feel as bad about missing one question as some other child might feel about flunking.

It hurts their feelings because they have been trying so hard and they were working to achieve such a high standard. And failing to meet it in any area is a sorrow to the soul. Jesus does not have to browbeat.

He doesn't have to rebuke. He doesn't even have to directly charge the church with anything more than saying I have this against you. He said this is on the wrong side of the ledger for you.

But He makes no threat. He makes no warning or strong rebuke. He just says this Jezebel is coming under my judgment.

Here I stand with eyes like a flame of fire, with feet like that shining burnished brass, that fine brass that so brightly reflects what you see in the eyes. And He says the time of judgment is

already here for Jezebel. She has had the chance to repent and has not.

The people who follow her are at an earlier stage. They are going to be thrown into the bed. They are going to be shown exactly what she is.

That she is prostituting in a spiritual sense. That she is breeding disloyalty to the faith. And they are going to have to choose.

It is going to be obvious. There is going to be an obvious choice. They will either change their mind or this tribulation is going to strike.

And they are going to see the children of this movement. They are going to see the offspring and the outcroppings of this die and be cut off. It is going to hopefully shock them into wakefulness.

And this is enough just by Jesus describing what He is going to do to Jezebel. This is enough warning for the pastor in Thyatira. He says, I will give to each one of you according to your works.

And so the suggestion is there. You can see that it is at an elevated level. There is an implication there.

There is the suggestion. He doesn't have to say, and so I will do to you also if you continue to tolerate this. He doesn't have to say it because He is talking to people of faith.

He is talking to people who have love and endurance and an attitude of service. And this is all that is required for them to change their mind. So then we come to verse 24.

Now to you I say and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden. There was beginning to be a split. There was beginning to be a schism and beginning to be a falling away of the faithful.

Jesus reserves the term servant. When you see *doulos*, *douloi*, in the New Testament, it is almost always the faithful. Paul says, I am the bond slave.

I am the *doulos* of Jesus Christ. Now granted, you have in the parables the unjust servant or the lazy servant that beats his fellow servants. But generally speaking, when you get to the epistles, when you get to the Revelation and when Jesus says, these are my servants, He is talking about the faithful.

And it says, the teaching of Jezebel is leading the faithful astray. Later on in Revelation you will see it happen where people are deceived by a wonderful multimedia presentation. There is going to be a great 3-D presentation.

There is going to be a wonderful display of high-tech fanfare and people are going to be deceived. Talks about the fact that if this were left to continue, even the elect would be deceived.

It is possible for faithful, loving, enduring, ministering, faithful, loving, ministering believers to be deceived by crafty teaching, by adulterated truth, by tarnished witness from the Word of God.

That is what is happening here. He says, to you I say, all of the ones who have not been seduced by this, to the rest in Thyatira, you who are not going to be committing adultery with this Jezebel and being led into disloyalty, as many as do not have this, it says doctrine here, but this is didachane, this is just the noun form from the verb to teach, didascho, who do not hold this teaching. Exousen is from echo, to have and to hold.

People fall for this, they accept it, they cling to it as the truth and it is a false teaching. And he says, this is a phrase in apposition here, it is restating what it means to have this teaching. He says, who have not known the depths of Satan.

Now you can find other passages in the New Testament that talk about knowing the depths of God, knowing the truth that forms the depths of God, you can find that, but this is talking about the depths of Satan. If you have a New King James there, I think you have a text note to Second Timothy chapter 3 verses 1-9 and that is an excellent cross reference. This is where Paul tells Timothy, much as John would have told Polycarp and his other pastors in training in his circuit through Asia, realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come, for men will be lovers of self, self-absorption, occupation with self.

People have taken upon themselves sorrow over events that happened a year ago that is not rightly theirs. You can have an objective sense of regret, outrage, patriotism and so on, but to start feeling like you've got psychological problems and you've been traumatized and you need counseling and you need consolation and you're somebody living in bug scuffle Arkansas and knew nobody at the towers, nobody in your family died, it just means you watch too much TV and you're self-absorbed. Get a life, break out of it, get involved, move forward, don't let the press dictate your frame of mind.

I haven't had a TV on all day and only had the radio on long enough to find out the traffic report this morning and even then I got a dose of 9-11 stuff, but it's been wonderful. I haven't been depressed, I have my normal sense of patriotism and my normal sense of outrage at terrorists and so on, but this is twelve months after the fact, we've got a life to live, we've got things to do, we've got taxes to pay and military people to pray for and a president to pray for, we've got opportunities in this life to glorify God, to bear fruit, seize and redeem the time, and I can't spend all day watching videos of smoke and rubble and people crying and talking about, oh how my life has changed. What does it say in 2 Timothy chapter 3 verse 2, men will be lovers of self.

What does that mean? Well turn on your TV and you'll see what it means. Look around in our culture and you'll see what it means. People that are self-absorbed, my happiness is the criteria by which the world is measured.

If it makes me happy, it's good. If it pleases me, it's good. If I'm not happy and I'm not pleased, it's not good.

This is the kind of attitude we purge out of our children, isn't it? We teach them at a very young age, I'm sorry my dear child, it's not your happiness, it is my happiness that you better worry about. If I am happy, you can be happy. If I am not happy, you are not happy.

You were born and you came to live in my world. I am not going to try to insert myself into yours. Men will be lovers of self.

Oh, but you'll hurt their self-esteem. No, no we won't. Self-esteem is man's problem from the garden.

We're trying to get away from self-esteem. We have too much of it. Men will be lovers of self, lovers of money.

Let me tell you, having come into the gravitational orbit of a money-sotted environment, I will tell you that the love of money is the root of all evil. That is one of the most profoundly true verses in the Bible. You cannot believe the gravity warp, the psyche warp, the spiritual warp.

It is like a magnet pulling the worst trash from the bottom levels of the human soul. It just pulls it up from the scum and the slime and beneath the surface of the awful O-F-F-A-L that is in the human soul. That's what money does.

You have to see it to believe it. A lot of people have seen it. I have seen it in the past.

I have never seen it like I have seen it now that I have contact with some really heavy wallet type people. I will tell you, you just stand in awe. I have to push my jaw shut sometimes.

Men will be lovers of money. You will not believe the lengths of self-deception, of deception of others, of intrigue, of corruption, of deceit, of backbiting, of backstabbing, of underhanded, glossed over, whitewashed, unadulterated evil that comes out of the love of money. Men will be lovers of self.

Men will be lovers of money. Men will be boastful. Let me tell you of my accomplishments.

Let me drop my history on you and tell you where I have been and what I have done that makes me so worth knowing. Men will be arrogant. What does it mean to be arrogant? It means that you are at the center of a pre-Copernican universe.

You are the point about which all of the other bodies of the solar system revolve. This kind of goes to lovers of self, but arrogance means that you are going to do something about it. You love yourself.

Arrogance says, I want the rest of you to love me the way I love me or I am going to make you pay. You will love me or I will make your life miserable. You will respect me.

You will give me my due if you do wrong. I was thinking about this because a good friend of mine has been teaching on Christian love and Christian unity. Going through Ephesians chapter 4 and the spirit of unity, the bond of peace and all of that.

I have visited those chapters. I have translated those chapters. I have thought about them.

In a vacuum, when you think about those truths and you think, let us love one another. Let us not be spiteful and kick one another and shove one another and knock one another down and stomp on one another. Let us love one another.

In the abstract it sounds nice and it almost sounds doable. I think I really can love my fellow man and here is somebody over here I think I can be generous and be forgiving and so on. But that is not reality.

Reality is when someone is out to get you. When someone has a plan and you are not in it and they are going to pull whatever rug you are standing on out from under you. When they are actively being mean spirited.

When they are obstructionist. When they are talking about you behind your back. When they are feeding false information to people who have an influence over your fate and their believers.

Then go back to Ephesians 4. Let us love one another. Let us bear with one another. Love your enemies.

Do good to those who hate you. Pray for those that spitefully use you. The key is let us really get spitefully used.

Let us really suffer at the hands of someone. I know a ladies real simple example. She was in a church parking lot with her brand new shiny Honda car.

Somebody in a church parking lot backed into her and put a big dent in her rear bumper. Big dent. I can spot her car anywhere in the parking lot which is quite large by just looking for that dent.

It is visible. I can see her block ahead of me in traffic. There goes Joyce.

There is the bump in her bumper. The lady was just as apologetic as she could be. She was a Christian church going woman dropping her kids off at school.

I am so sorry. Let me take your name and number. I will call you.

My husband and I will send you a check. We will pay for this. This will be great.

I called the lady up. I talked to my husband. We just really can't do that.

We can't afford to put it on our insurance or anything. She's got a \$700 dent in her car and a Christian woman just smiling as sweet as she can be who won't pay a dime. Won't file it on the insurance.

Didn't give the name of the insurance company. Won't return phone calls and has just left her with a dented car. That is being spitefully used.

That is just a mild example. There are people who can cause you to lose your job. There are people who can create schisms in your family.

Who can twist and distort your words and your actions. Then see if you can love. Well, this all stems out of arrogance.

Revilers. People who revile. Here are the people in Thyatira and they have managed to maintain their love.

Their last works are greater than their first. They are still serving. They are still faithful.

They are still bearing up. This pastor and the people who listen to him and follow him are mature believers. But men in the last days are going to be living in difficult times.

And that is putting it mildly. Disobedient to parents. Look at the list here.

Boastful, arrogant revilers. Disobedience to parents is put in that list. Ungrateful.

How many different times in the word of God are we told, in everything give thanks. In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving let your request be made known. We just forget the thanksgiving part or it is hollow or it is superficial.

Unholy. Not purging out the leaven. Not getting that last five percent accomplished.

Tolerating things we shouldn't tolerate. How much does it take to be defiled in Old Testament Israel? All you have to do is touch the unclean thing with one finger and you are defiled. And you have to go through the whole cleansing ritual.

Outside the camp, unclean until evening, all that kind of thing. Just by a touch. Somebody wings a dead fish out the window and it hits you in the head, unclean until evening.

You have to go through the whole purification thing. Unholy. People don't purify.

We as believers do not purify ourselves. Unloving. Irreconcilable.

I am not purifying myself. Going to be reconciled with that ingrate. This goes hand in hand with

arrogance.

If you are arrogant there is no way you can reconcile. Malicious gossips. I could tell you a lot of stories about this that I won't because I don't want to be guilty of the next one.

Without self control. The greatest gift any child can receive is to be trained in self control. It is not hard to do and it is the most difficult thing in the world to do.

Brutal. Cruel. Unkind.

Haters of good. Treacherous. Reckless.

Conceited. Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. How many people camp all night on the doorstep of a church because a good teacher is coming? How many people camp on the doorstep of the ticket office when their favorite rock band is coming to town? How many people camp on the doorstep when the little X-Box game machine came out in the stores? How many people camped out and slept overnight to be first in line for a lot of things that are pleasurable.

Entertainment. So I momentarily lost my 2 Timothy chapter 3 here but in 2 Timothy 3 verse 4. Treacherous. Reckless.

Conceited. Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. Holding to a form of godliness although they have denied its power.

And this is the worst thing. How did this Jezebel get away with being tolerated in Thyatira? She had a form of godliness. This teaching was not completely Bible-less or truth-less.

It had a lot of Bible in it. It had a lot of truth in it. It was adulterated truth.

It was pornousi truth. It was disloyal. It was mixed.

It was an unholy application of the word of God. And there is all kinds of this going on today. Many of you remember our study of the prayer of Jabez.

Bless the guy's heart. I don't know the guy that wrote it. I don't know anything about him.

But I will tell you this. That teaching is adulterated truth because it takes an obscure scripture in the Old Testament and turns it into a mantra. It makes it into a formula for success.

I will just ask you one question. I taught like 4 lessons on the prayer of Jabez and I probably could have taught it in about 15 seconds. Because really if you want to know about the prayer of Jabez just ask yourself this.

What did Jesus say when the disciples said teach us to pray? Did he say let me take you over to your Chronicles. Let's look at the prayer of Jabez. This is what you need if you are going to pray.

Pray the prayer of Jabez. Did Jesus tell the disciples that? He did not. Why? Because prayer is not a formula.

It is not a mantra. It is not a magic open sesame that is going to produce this life. And my goodness the t-shirts and the coffee cups and the mugs and the prayer of Jabez for children and prayer of Jabez for women.

Now the guy has written some other book I saw on the web the other day. Those children are going to be killed with death. The offshoots of that syncretistic teaching because it is not the Word of God.

It is magic. Say these words. It is no different than the positive confession crowd.

In fact that is essentially what it is. It is warmed over positive confession. Power of positive thinking.

Say these things each morning and then wait for the windows of heaven to open because you have said the secret word. Holding to a form of godliness although they have denied its power. Avoid such men as these.

Do not afiemi them. Do not tolerate Jezebel in your midst. Call the teaching what it is.

I take flack from time to time for picking on experiencing God and picking on the prayer of Jabez and picking on some of these others. But of the many faults that are going to be revealed at the judgment seat of Christ, one of them is not going to be tolerating false teaching. For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins.

Have you ever looked at the crowd shots on some of these Christian networks? Who is up there in the audience with their eyes shut having an experience? Weak women weighed down with sins. This includes the men who are led by the nose and led astray. Led on by various impulses.

Something hooks into the soul. It is either your guilt, your insecurity, your desire to master your circumstances, your desire to escape. Some of the same things that cause people to go out and party to a huge extent.

Forgetfulness. Soak me in a different experience. I want to have a transcendent moment.

Always learning. Why are they always learning? In verse 7 there. Because somebody is always teaching.

It is a teaching based error. They are learning something. Always.

It doesn't say they are always praising or they are always charismatifying or they are always emoting. It says they are always learning. We talk about pseudo-intellectuals.

My brother in law used to love to watch this program called Cheers. The postman on that show is a guy that pontificates and seems to be a duty expert on any subject that comes up. But in reality he is making it all up.

He is a pseudo-intellectual. There is pseudo-intellectualism in the spiritual world where there are people who will go to the Word of God and produce fantastic allegorical interpretations, who will make wild unfounded promises and claims for the Word of God. Sow the seed of your financial bounty into our ministry and God is going to bless you.

Here is a letter I got from someone who sent us \$10 and now he is making \$50,000 a month and so on. Always learning. Never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

There is no more poignant scene in human history than the Pharisees who were students of God's Word all their lives, learned it from their youth up, staring into the eyes of the Lord Jesus and not knowing who he was. It doesn't get any sadder than that. And pray God it doesn't happen to us that we don't look at the truth and find ourselves unable to recognize it.

Ever learning. Never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. It talks about these who oppose Moses.

These men also oppose the truth. Men of depraved mind rejected in regard to the faith. But they will not make further progress for their folly will be obvious to all.

What did Jesus tell the pastor at the church in Thyatira? I am going to throw Jezebel on a bed and all these who commit adultery with her. This is going to be an example. All of the churches will know that I am the one who tries the hearts and the minds.

It will be obvious to all. Now you can't throw out the baby with the bath water. This is something else that is a part of our local history here in Dallas.

There are people who said, oh this terrible thing happened in our church. It must be this teaching emphasis we got. We have to get away from this emphasis on the Word of God and this doctrine mode and we need to do something different.

Let's go mainstream. Let's try to be well rounded and do the things that all the rest of the churches do. Paul here turns right around and says, look Timothy you followed my teaching, didaskalia, the very same word that is used of Jezebel.

You followed my teaching. If there is such a thing as false teaching it doesn't mean that there is no such thing as true teaching. It means that you have got to discern.

You have got to look for true teaching. He doesn't say, Timothy there are these false teachers who are putting this stuff out and people are going to be ever learning and ever able to come to a knowledge of the truth so just give up on teaching. He says, you followed my teaching.

You followed my conduct, my purpose, my faith, patience, love and perseverance. Oh wait a minute, what are those last four words again? Faith, patience, love, perseverance. Those look familiar? It is part of the same package we have in Smyrna, the same package we have in Thyatira.

Faithful believers who are doing what they are supposed to do. Pistis, agape, hupomene. My persecutions and sufferings such as happened to me at Antioch.

You are going to have suffering for ten days. Paul uses the word here, diagma and pathemasin for his persecutions and sufferings at Antioch, Iconium and Lystra. What persecutions I endured and out of them all the Lord delivered me.

Out of them all the Lord delivered me. Indeed all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. Well there is a promise to hang on the refrigerator.

There is a little encouragement to get up and hang on the mirror when you get up and shave in the morning or get up and paint on your face or whatever it is you do first thing. Indeed all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. It is just not the most cheerful thought to start the day with unless you stop and think it through.

This is our opportunity. Why would God allow this? Why would God give us such a cheerless outlook? Because it is for a limited time and it is for a specific purpose. Job's suffering was for a limited time and for a specific purpose.

All suffering for faithful believers, all suffering for those who desire to live godly is for ten days. It is a limited time and it is for a specific purpose. It is to give you the opportunity to seize and wear the crown of life.

You can't get the crown of life if you don't endure to the end. You can't endure to the end if there is not something to endure. It is kind of like, well, we hate for anybody to be a loser in the race so we are just not going to have the race.

We had these great prizes for first, second and third place, but people would feel bad so we are just not going to have the race. Well that means nobody gets to excel. No one gets to win.

No one gets to wear the victor's crown if there is not a race. Races are hard. People that have run and competed know how it feels to use up all of the gas in your tank to use up all of the energy in your muscles until they burn with lactic acid and you can hardly stand it.

But you do it because it is worth it. It is an unpleasant experience for a short amount of time that yields a greater good. That is what our persecution, that is what our suffering is in whatever relatively mild form we experience it in this life.

Evil men and imposters will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. That is

what we are going to do. I confronted her with what she is doing.

I confronted her with the need to change her mind and she chose not to. She deceives and she is being deceived. You however, what is the solution? What should we take away from this letter to the church at Thyatira? You however continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of.

There is good teaching. Don't be suspicious of all teaching. Don't throw all teaching out the window.

I know a whole group of people who decided that because a teaching pastor fouled up they just weren't going to listen to teaching anymore. It doesn't work. Continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them.

And that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to deliverance through faith, which is in Christ Jesus. And that is living deliverance. That is daily deliverance.

That is redeeming the time. That is bearing fruit. That is being delivered out of this present evil age and delivered from our sinful selves.

And then you have the wonderful verse. How many times have we heard it? All scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for didaskalia. Don't decide that because some people distort and twist and abuse the scriptures that teaching is a dangerous thing and it is not a part of the Christian faith and walk.

It is the very first thing in the list. What is Paul's emphasis here to Timothy? Yes, there are going to be deceivers. There are going to be the deceived.

They are going to twist and distort. They are going to play into the hearts and minds of people who are lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers and so on. But remember there is great teaching.

There is great truth. Continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of because you know their source. If you are taking in the sincere milk of the word, you recognize the source.

It lives and breathes in your soul. On Tuesday nights we have been talking about fundamental things and we have begun at the very beginning the existence of God. And one thing you can confidently say to every normal human being is that God the Holy Spirit either has or will come to your soul and convince you of sin, righteousness and judgment.

You don't have to talk about have you ever come to a knowledge or a realization that there is a God. Every thinking human being does. It is a fact of scripture.

You can assume it. You can take it for granted. It is true.

There is no one who doesn't know there is a God. God says what may be known of God is manifest in creation and they are without excuse. Jesus said I will send a comforter and he will convince the world of sin, righteousness and judgment.

Well, that same source of knowledge is present for those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. For people who want to know God's truth. You can count on it.

If you ask and if you seek and if you knock, God will give you the truth. Timothy was that kind of an individual from childhood. He said, you know Timothy, you know where this good teaching has come from, don't you? He can say that with confidence because Timothy does.

Truth of the Word of God rings true in your soul. God the Holy Spirit is present and he confirms it. He uses it.

It lives and breathes. It is alive and powerful. It is sharp like a sword.

It convicts. It rebukes. It instructs.

It enables. It empowers. It guides.

It illuminates. It comforts. It strengthens.

It encourages. It keeps. How many different things does the Word of God do? We know it.

We know it in our soul. You have become convinced, knowing from whom you have learned it, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to deliverance. You don't have to be thrown on the bed with Jezebel.

You don't have to be rebuked. You don't have to be stopped in your tracks by a blow on the head. You have the wisdom that leads to deliverance through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Christ Jesus is the object of our faith. We trust in him. We trust his provision.

We trust his promise. We trust his gift of the Holy Spirit. We trust his words when he says that the Father will not give us a stone or a snake or a scorpion when we ask for nourishment.

We have confidence and we have the teaching of the Word of God and the didaskalia of the Word is good. Cling to it. Remain in it.

That is what the Lord Jesus tells through John. To the church at Thyatira. So back now to Revelation chapter 2 and verse 14.

Actually we are down below that. I am having a little bit of technical difficulty here. Verse 24.

I say to you the rest who are in Thyatira who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan as they call them, I place no other burden on you. This is another one of the characteristics of false teaching. It is presented as a sort of a false musterion.

It is a false mystery. It is the inside track. It is the latest thing.

Here is the secret. Here is the big key. This is why I use the prayer of Jabez as an example and it stands in for a lot of other examples we could use.

But you will notice that the fads that sweep through Christianity and the big deals that attract the crowds are always presented as, oh, we have uncovered kind of a fresh thing. Whoever thought that this obscure passage in Chronicles could give us such wonderful insight and be the key to cracking through to God's purpose and blessing in your life. The next big thing will do the same thing.

Blackaby did it with experiencing God. I could name ten or twelve others just off the top of my head that all had this same formula. It is a deep thing.

But instead of being the bathos theou, the deep things of God that Paul talks about, this is instead the deep things of Satan. I place no other burden on you. He says, just hold fast what you have until I come.

Don't be swayed. Don't be drawn away. Don't be diverted.

Don't be deflected. Don't be distracted. Don't be carried away.

Don't be tossed about. What is it by the way? You know the rudderless ship idea that Paul talks about? He talks about people who are tossed to and fro by every wind of what? Didascalia. Every wind of teaching.

Every time you see the word doctrine in the New Testament, it is didascalia. It is teaching. Somebody is teaching.

Somebody is putting out a false truth in those contexts. That is, be no more children tossed to and fro by every wind of teaching. There is a new teaching, a new insight, a deep thing, a breakthrough, a fantastic insight.

It is in our book and on our tape. Send 2495 and for that love gift we will send you the whole set. Jesus says here these deep things, He says they call them deep things.

They call them bathos. We have bathosphere, the little round thing that goes way down to the bottom of the ocean. Bathos means deep in Greek.

These are deep things. This is the inside track, hot scoop. He says these deep things are of Satan.

He says just stay away from that. I won't put any other burden on you. Your love, your faith, your ministry, your perseverance are great.

Just continue to march until I come. There is no other burden. I have no other thing against you.

Just don't be sucked into this Jezebel. Don't tolerate her presence. What you have, hold fast until I come.

And he who does overcome in verse 26, and he who keeps my deeds until the end. This is the first time and the only time in these seven letters that you have a qualifier on overcomer. We have Hanukkah unto the one who overcomes and who keeps my deeds until the end.

Because you can run well and then be tripped. You can start great and get to the 95% mark and then quit. I told my daughters, you know you work so hard, you do such a good job, you get 95% of it done and then you lose your focus.

You lose your attention to detail. You leave that last 5% undone and it spoils a great start. It mars what otherwise would have been a very commendable and praiseworthy effort.

And I have to come back and scold you for the 5% when you did 95% right but you stopped too soon. You didn't hold fast. You didn't persevere to the end.

You didn't push on through and get the last 5% right. That's the message of Thyatira. Keep pushing.

You don't want to run. Patty and I have talked about this many times running. You run four miles.

To me the first three and a half miles are just warm up for the last half mile. You've done that first three and a half miles just to get to the last half mile. That's where what you do really counts.

You've tired out your muscles. You've drained your reserves. Now what you do prompts your body to build endurance and build muscle and build cardiovascular strength.

The first three and a half miles don't do much but that last half mile is where it really counts. You ran the whole first half an hour just to get to that last 5 minutes. So push.

Use it. Don't stop when it counts the most. And that's what Jesus tells the people at Thyatira.

You've run well. You're almost to the tape. Just hold fast.

Don't slow down. Don't be diverted. Don't get tripped up.

Just hold fast. You're doing so well. Don't be like the Galatians.

Don't get tripped up and diverted. Don't let anyone hinder you. If you overcome, and he

emphasizes it here in an unusual addition to the Hanukkah formula, he says, you've got to keep my deeds all the way to the end.

Then to him I will give authority over the nations. He will rule them with a rod of iron as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces as I also have received authority from my Father. This is a wonderful promise and it deserves its own study and that's what we'll look at next time.

We want to remember to not flag, to not fade in the stretch, to not fall down just short of the tape. It was a great illustration of the first lady to ever swim the 26 mile Catalina Channel in California. The first time she swam it, the conditions were not ideal and it was foggy.

She swam and swam and swam and swam. She couldn't see. It was cold.

She was tired and discouraged and she quit and crawled in the boat. She was only half a mile. She had swum 25 and a half miles but she couldn't see the shore.

She didn't have the hope that she was almost there and she gave up. She went back the next year and swam it and became the first woman to set the record. She could have done it a year earlier but it was foggy and she couldn't see.

She gave up just 25 and a half miles and a half miles ago she gave up and she had it in her. She just got discouraged. We don't want that to happen.

The Lord Jesus doesn't want it to happen in Thyatira and He doesn't want it to happen to us. Let's close in prayer. Father, we thank you for the wonderful encouragement and strength that we derive from your word.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will use it to motivate and encourage us in the specific circumstances, trials and challenges that face us. We pray that we will not be diverted or deflected but that remembering these truths from your word will enable us to live in a way that is pleasing in your sight. We pray it in Jesus' name.

Amen.