

Rev 25-11-02a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services here at Grace and Truth Bible Church. It's the 2nd of November, 2025. We're in Revelation chapter 2. We are in the midst, right in the center, literally, of the seven churches looking at Thyatira and getting ready to move into Sardis.

Let's ask God's blessing on our time of fellowship and study and we'll begin. Father, how grateful we are for another time of fellowship and investigation in your word to seek a better understanding of why we are here, who we are in Christ, and how we can best redeem the time and avail ourselves of the wonderful blessings that you have bestowed on us in Him. We pray that as we look at this passage together, that your Holy Spirit will be our teacher, help us to see clearly the truth that you entrusted to the Lord Jesus to transmit to us so that we can be fully equipped for every good work, both now and in the ages to come.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. We, as I said, are in the latter portions of chapter 2 of the Revelation, singular.

Pick up in verse 24, after seeing the bad influence, presence, and coming fate of Jezebel and those who commit adultery with her, in verses 22 and 23, Jesus says, 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, the bathos, the darkness characterizes depth, I will put on you no other burden. I put on you no other burden. That is burden enough.

Notice other burden. This is enough of a burden to be resisting this influence of Satan, the presence of Satan, whether it is in Pergamos or Thyatira. In Thyatira, Satan dwells there.

His throne is there. And in Pergamos, just down the road from them, you have the presence of Jezebel who teaches and seduces people into immorality and adultery and tribulation and the depths of Satan. We keep seeing Satan coming up because he is the sworn enemy of the Lord Jesus Christ and all of those who are associated with him.

We can sometimes lose sight of the fact that while we are unlikely to be the target of Satan personally, he is not omnipresent, he is not omniscient, but certainly his influence, his schemes, his purposes, his intentions as implemented through the demonic underworld and the effect that he endeavors to have in larger structures, especially in rulership, in government. This is why we are exhorted to pray for those that have the rule over us because that is where Satan targets his efforts, is where he's got the leverage to affect a lot of people. I enjoyed, as I've said a few times in the past, I enjoyed being an instructor at the artillery school.

I could be a great artillery officer and perform wonderfully accurate missions, putting steel on targets, but if I can teach hundreds of lieutenants or hundreds of enlisted men to be great artillerymen, this multiplies the influence and that's why you want it to be a good influence across the world, throughout the army and the Marine Corps in that case. So doing a good job

at the artillery school has ramifications far beyond. In the same way, both for good and for ill, to have influence in strategic locations leverages you far beyond that moment.

So Satan may have his throne somewhere in Turkey, he may dwell there, he may have his synagogue there, he may have those who experience his depths there, but this has far-reaching implications and they reach us and we need to be prepared so that our shield of faith will quench the fiery darts of the wicked one. He's not there personally assaulting us with a mace or an axe, he's firing darts. Darts travel at a distance.

These are arrows, these are javelins, these are weapons with sharp points that fly at us from a distance, but they are just as deadly as other more proximate threats. So we want to pay attention here. We want to hear what the Spirit says to all of the churches, not the least of which is this one, longest letter.

To you I say, Jesus says, this is a peeve of mine over and over again. I heard it again last night. People attribute the material in the Revelation to John.

John had a concern. John wanted the people to understand. John wanted to recognize the threat of empire and John felt the need to say things.

This is not John. This is like saying, my computer wants to tell me what's in my email. My computer wants me to read this message.

My computer wants me to click this link and distract myself and go buy something I don't really need. It isn't the computer. The computer is just the means by which a message is coming from somewhere else.

This is the Lord Jesus speaking. Don't let anyone tell you that this is John talking. Seven times just in this section, Jesus says to the messenger of the church, you write what I am about to say.

These are the inspired, and I love my red letter edition of the Thompson chain reference Bible here, lets you know when Jesus is speaking, it's Jesus speaking. It's red ink. So Jesus says, now to you I say, that's emphatic.

It's there for a reason. To you I say, remember it is me, the glorified Lord Jesus with eyes like fire and feet like burnished brass. I am telling you this, both on the positive side, it is the integrity and the character of the Lord Jesus standing behind it.

It is his authority given to him by the father to grant what he grants and to exercise whatever judgments he renders. It's the Lord Jesus speaking. Can't emphasize it enough, because this is one of the main points of attack on the authenticity, the veracity, the inspiration of this particular book in the modern day.

You have to go to the past to find good commentaries on this book. The new ones without exception that I have seen are terrible, terrible. Usually you check a bad commentary and you

can find a few morsels of good ideas, not these.

They are, this bread is not just moldy, it is completely spoiled, rotten, and full of bugs. Jesus says, 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, Jezebel is working for Satan. These messages, these swayed, perverted, corrupted teachings are sourced in Satan.

It's a part of his strategy. I put on you no other burden. Hold fast what you have till I come.

So important for us to revisit and review what we have learned in scripture. You look at the list of Bible classes and say, wow, you know, we studied that 10 years ago. We can review, we can refresh, we can go back and check our notes or check the outlines or check the summaries or check the transcripts or listen at 1.5 times the speed to our previous studies or any others you can find that reinforce the good doctrinal truth, the biblical expressions of God's word and will and character that we have gotten in the past.

Jesus says, hold it fast, hold it tight. Don't let it slip. Don't let it fade.

Don't let it disintegrate. Don't let it be pushed aside by new and tantalizing doctrines, the winds of doctrines that blow the traditions of men that come in the infiltration of the social gospel and human ideas of righteousness, trying to redefine and reinterpret classic scriptural truths. Hold fast to what you have.

This is why our endeavor is to have Bible class regularly, to consistently set aside the time. Today, we together are holding fast what we know and hoping to add to it, but don't balk at review. Don't balk at hearing something you've heard before.

That's how you hold it fast. That's how it stays fresh. I used to love the old television sets because you could talk about the cathode ray tube and how one single beam making one little dot scanned the entire screen so many times per second.

And the phosphorus in the coating of the front of that tube would glow because it was excited by this beam of electrons. And in order to keep a picture going to see David Brinkley or Walter Conkright or Perry Mason or whatever might be on your screen, Ed Sullivan, that beam had to come back and refresh the phosphor and paint a fresh pattern many times a second. And if you didn't refresh it, your screen would go dark.

It is the same with our soul. Even if it is a still picture, it still needs refreshing because we are fallible. We are made of dust and the grass withers and the flower fades.

We have to make an effort to keep these things fresh, to examine ourselves and see if we're in the faith. We have to know what the faith is and not let somebody tell us different. So important here, every word that comes from the lips of the Lord Jesus is significant, important, has been recorded in God's eternal word for a purpose.

Hold fast what you have until I come. I told you last time, this is the first indication. This is the first mention of the return of the Lord Jesus in these letters.

And it is going to occur in the remaining three after this. Jesus didn't talk about his coming to the church in Ephesus. He didn't talk about it to Smyrna.

He didn't talk about it to Pergamos. But here in Thyatira, the depths of Satan, as far away from God's throne in heaven as you can get, we have a reference to the Lord Jesus returning in the air in like manner as the disciples saw him go. Hold fast what you have until I come.

This is telling us the same type of thing that Jesus mentioned to Smyrna. You will have tribulation 10 days. Implied there is that the Lord Jesus himself is going to terminate that time of hardship and suffering and persecution himself.

At the end of the 10 days, he will cut it short. But it's not an explicit reference as it is here. But as with Smyrna, it gives you something to shoot for.

If you're undergoing something of a trial, it is wonderful to know that it will be over at some point. And you can wait and you can be patient because this will end. This will be concluded.

It's not going to be indefinite. It's not forever. It has a terminus ad quiam.

And so here, until I come, hold fast what you have. And he who overcomes and keeps my works until the end, keeps my works. Sometimes it just says, to he who overcomes.

You look at the church in Pergamos, it is to he that overcomes. If you look at the persecuted church in Smyrna, he who overcomes. You look at the church in Ephesus, to he who overcomes, I will give to eat from the tree of life.

Here, as with the rest of this letter, it is more fulsome. It is more detailed. To him who overcomes, and keeps my works until the end.

The end is when he comes. This for us, the end of our life is when he comes. The rapture is when he comes.

The end of the church age is when he comes. But notice, this is a judgment of works. Jesus begins each letter, I know your works.

He said it in verse 19 to this church. He said it in verse 13 to Pergamos. He said it in verse 9 to Smyrna.

He said it in verse 2 to Ephesus. I know your works. If you keep my works, Ephesus was exhorted, do the first works.

What you do matters. It isn't enough to have a good doctrinal grasp, to be correct in your understanding of various aspects of scriptural truth. Knowledge just puffs up.

Love is the implementation, the expression, the application of what we know. And this is the message of James, to which we will return when we've finished our initial burst into revelation here. And you know the message of James, you have faith, I have works, I will show you my faith by my works.

It's essential that there be an outflow from what we take in. If you eat food and don't exercise, obesity, which now afflicts over 70% of all Americans. And I would say there's every different combination in the spiritual realm.

Believers today, some are starving by not getting fed. Some are anorexic and bulimic. They either don't take in the word of God at all, or they take it in and then spit it back out, throw it back up.

Or those who do get teaching, in many cases, take it in and do nothing to work it out and are spiritually obese, fat and sassy. You say, I have everything I need. We'll see this in the Laodicean church.

And the true status is quite the opposite. But being blind, the blindness, blindness happened to Israel. The God of this world blinds the minds of those who are faithless, as we saw recently.

So important that our Bible class, understanding the insights that we gain, what the Holy Spirit reveals to us from the word of God, should make a difference. We should look and act differently. Hold fast to what you have and keep my works until the end.

This is what the Lord Jesus reflected in his own life. We are his body. We should be performing his works.

Our light should be shining. We should be reflecting love in the four spheres that we have studied. To him, I will give power over the nations.

You notice in both this letter and the previous, the presence of Satan, the influence of Satan, the teaching of Jezebel, the doctrine of Balaam, who taught the king, Balak, how to overcome Israel and to separate them from God's promises. God's promises are like God himself. They are irrevocable and inviolable, but many of them are conditioned upon faith and obedience.

And you notice, we saw last time, that believers who are my servants, according to the Lord Jesus, are going to be cast into the bed of tribulation with Jezebel because they have disqualified themselves from deliverance and from the power to be overcomers. I will give power over the nations. Instead of being overpowered, instead of being seduced and led astray and powered away from everything that God has for his children and what the Lord Jesus has for the members of his body, instead of being influenced, this is telling the people that have the most sway on the internet, what do they call them? Influencers.

I don't want to be influenced by some nameless person off in their reconditioned garage or their mother's basement or wherever they're broadcasting from and podcasting from and

endeavoring to be influential when they have no bona fides. This is the problem with the internet. You don't have to be qualified for anything.

You just have to make enough noise that everybody looks at you and then you hold their attention by whatever means. That's why pornography is the largest industry on the internet by far and generates billions of dollars. This means somebody is digging out their wallet or their credit card and paying for this influence, being influenced.

You got to watch and limit exposure to very obvious sources of worldly demonic and satanic influence. Be careful. When I go into crowded areas, I secure my wallet.

I put it in my front pocket. I don't know if there is or if there isn't a thief, a pickpocket in the crowd, but if I put my billfold in my front pocket, he's going to have a much harder time separating it from me. Caution when in a threat environment.

We are all in a threat environment. Whatever your daily experience is, whoever you talk to, if you have a phone, if you have a television, you are in a threat environment. If you walk through a bookstore, if you go to the grocery store and see headlines or magazines, you are in a threat environment and we are commanded by the Lord Jesus to hold fast what we have until he comes.

If we overcome and keep his works until the end, notice holding fast to what we have is keeping his works, applying what we learned. What does that application look like? Just real quickly. We would all nod our heads in a sentence and say, absolutely.

Observe, interpret, apply. Got to put it into application. What does that look like? What are the works where what we have learned ought to make a difference? There are three basic areas, our thinking, our conversation, and what we do with our time and energy.

You can be sitting in a chair perfectly still and your mind can be racing, or you can be laying in bed in the middle of the night and your mind can be racing. The first and foremost place for application is our thought life. You remember our memory verse, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are noble, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, command, think on these things.

That's where the peace of God, that passes understanding, keeps our hearts and minds. We keep and hold fast what the Lord Jesus has given to us and we are kept. It's a two-way street, but we are commanded to discipline our thinking.

You want to know how to hold fast? You want to know how to be an overcomer? It starts with disciplined thinking, controlled thinking. Most people don't have the ability to control their thinking and they are easily influenced. They are swayed.

You turn on only one or two news channels and you are swayed and suddenly you have

opinions of people who gave you those opinions. We just saw an amusing piece of entertainment last night where the power of suggestion was used to maneuver someone into changing their password. They couldn't crack this guy's password and they needed to because he was a bad guy and they needed to get into his computer, but he had this unknowable password.

They maneuvered him into believing that he had to change his password and they had preconditioned him. I've talked about this before, this is a real human thing. They had put signs up from his old high school mascot that was the Badgers and they upscaled and upscheduled his class reunion and they got everybody to come to a class reunion.

The mascot was everywhere. There were signs and pictures and somebody dressed up like a team mascot as a Badger and so Badgers were everywhere. They had somebody walk by and say, go Badgers.

He was in the class of 85 and so there were 85s everywhere. When it comes time to change his password and he's got to do it in a hurry, what did he change it to? Badger 85. He said, how could you possibly know my password? How did you crack my password? Well, power of suggestion.

This is a real thing. That's a fictional story and an amusing one, but it is a real thing and it happens all the time. Advertisers go to stool and study this.

So, how do you hold fast? How do you overcome these three areas and both of the remaining two depend on the first. Discipline our thinking. Do we really pay attention? Do we stop and say, why am I letting my mind run on this? Why am I worrying? How am I not casting my cares on him because he cares for me? If I keep and hold fast what he's given me, he will keep me and hold me fast.

Pay attention to our thinking. This is rubber meets the road. Friction on the track.

Traction in our spiritual life is paying attention to what we think. A lot of this depends on input. So, if you want to control what you are thinking and take charge of it yourself, manage and curate what you let into the thinking warehouse.

What do we take in? The eyes are the gateway to the soul and it isn't by looking at them we see how soulish someone is. Our eyes are the gatekeepers. That's what lets stuff into our soul to be thought about.

Are we looking at the word of God? Are we reviewing the things that we have learned? Are we cycling the word of God which is alive and powerful? It is a cleansing and enabling and empowering agent. Wouldn't you love? Think about this. Just go with me on a little bit of an imaginary flight.

Let's think about the fruit of the tree of life. Imagine if God had not set a cherub at the gate of

the garden and forbidden man to reach out his hand and take from the fruit of that tree. Imagine that to partake of that fruit is to have a magic substance that when it enters this current human body that we have, cures everything.

Whatever is the matter with you, whatever injuries you have suffered, whatever organs are starting to fail, whatever systems, however much cholesterol has built up in your bloodstream, however much plaque has developed in your brain, whatever rotator cuffs you have torn, whatever cartilage in your joints has worn down, you partake of this fruit. It gets into you and you are healed as though the Lord Jesus had reached out and touched you and said, your faith has made you whole. Right? How many people would be rushing and clamoring and stepping on each other to get that fruit? Well, the word of God is alive and powerful.

It is able to transform us by the renewing of our minds. This body, however much you prop it up and condition it and pamper it and try to preserve it, is going to fail. It is going to die.

It is going to go into the ground. Even if you're in the rapture generation, you're not going up in this body. This body cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

Flesh and blood can't inherit it. By the way, if you want to do kind of a fun study for yourself, you can compare two passages. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom.

When Jesus stands resurrected in the upper room, he says, a spirit does not have flesh and bone as you see that I have, because his blood is a separate issue. Life in the flesh is in the blood. I don't have time to go down that road.

But to hold fast, to do what Jesus says here, we have to pay close attention to what we think. That determines what we say and what we do. And what we think can be influenced by what we take in.

There are books on this. I read one and it scared me to death. The notion that we have free will when we are actually being nudged and given predilections and other prompts that make us choose things that aren't really a product of our free will.

What are we taking in? What do I listen to? What do I read? What do I watch? If you want to obey the command of the Lord Jesus, that's where it begins. Intake. Garbage in, garbage out.

So, what is going to happen now? He who overcomes and keeps my works unto the end, to him I will give power over the nations. Why? Why is this the promise in Thyatira? If you are able to recognize the ingenious subtleties, the deceptions, the appeals, the fallacies of the false teaching of Jezebel, who appeals to the priorient nature, to the fallen nature via seduction. This is the crafty harlot back in Proverbs chapters two through 10 especially.

We saw this in detail. Wisdom is one lady crying out publicly, openly in the streets. Come to me and receive life.

The crafty harlot is peeking around the corner saying, come with me to my house, baby. That's an old song that, what's his name? His aunt used to sing. I'll think of her name in a minute.

He's an actor, George Clooney and Rosemary Clooney sang a song about come with me to my house and we'll have a good time. That's the crafty harlot. Who do we listen to? Who do we follow? So if you succeed in recognizing that threat and in fending it off, and if you instead hold fast to what you have, that is the solid, truthful teaching of the word of God, the will of God, the example of God, the character of God, the beauty of all of that distilled and fulfilled in Christ, you are an overcomer and you are qualified to exercise delegated authority from the Lord Jesus.

You can delegate authority. You cannot delegate responsibility, but authority to rule. We see this in other places.

I will grant to sit with me on my throne. Here, power over the nations. In the millennial kingdom, there are still nations outside, beyond the peaceable kingdom, beyond Zion, beyond Jerusalem and the fulfilled promises to the 12 tribes in the land that God promised to Abraham.

There will be nations and they will be kept under control. We can essentially be part of the rod of iron that the Lord Jesus wields to keep those potters vessels from forming into something that can carry bad water. He'll shatter them.

He will make them useless and incapable of functioning in an evil way with his rod of iron. Grant, Jesus says, power over the nations. He shall rule them with a rod of iron.

They shall be dashed in pieces like the potter's vessels, as I also have received from my father. We participate with the Lord Jesus in a blessing and a function that was conferred upon him by God the Father himself. In other words, we are body of Christ now.

We can continue to function in that way in the millennial kingdom and perhaps beyond. To be active participants in implementing what the Lord Jesus is doing, to be his agents, his servants in a meaningful and valuable sense, what an opportunity. But to qualify for that, we have to learn how to think, how to parse, how to analyze, how to perceive what is good and what is not, to look past the top layer, to think ahead more than one ply as you would in chess.

What are the implications? What are the ramifications? What does this actually represent? What does it partake of? Curating our thinking qualifies us for service and function that requires sound thinking and sound application in the ages to come. This is our practice time. This is where we demonstrate what we can do so that we can be of use to the master.

We can serve with him for a thousand years of governance on this earth, power over the nations. And verse 28, I will give him the morning star. I've reserved the second session to talk about the morning star and launch us into Sardis.

So that's what we will see when we come back. But if you want to be an overcomer, if you want

to respond to the Lord Jesus imperative to hold fast what we have, thinking is the key. There is a gate in, there's a gate out, which is the mouth.

There's a gate out, which is our actions. But the thoughts and intents of the hearts are where it happens. We'll pause here and take our break.