

Pergamum Midweek Questions

What do the Israelites in Numbers 25 and the church of Pergamum in Revelation 2:12-17 share in common? Compromise which led to corruption. A tolerance of slavery in the form of sin.

Jesus' words to the church of Pergamum are heavy. He commends them for holding fast to His name, despite dwelling where Satan's throne is (in the capital city for emperor and pagan worship). He praises them for being faithful, even while their leader Antipas was persecuted and killed amongst them for his faith. They stood fast in their worship of Jesus above all other gods. However, Jesus points out that there are some in the church who have followed the ways of the Israelites in Numbers 25. They have indulged in sexual immorality. They have attended feasts and banquets to pagan gods, and willingly consumed food that was sacrificed to idols in worship. Jesus commands them to stop and repent, or the little yeast that is present will quickly work itself through the whole batch of dough.

The teachings for us are twofold: firstly, is there anything in our lives that we have compromised on? Unlike the church of Pergamum, we must be quick to guard against what of the city of Hong Kong is in us. If we allow the ways of the world to seep into us, if we permit ourselves to indulge in "pet sins", they will kill us before we kill them.

Secondly, it can be easy even for believers to boil our faith down to rules and restrictions, to mere "sin management". But let us confront the root of all our desires, and recognize that there is nothing but Jesus that can satisfy. To be tolerant towards sin is to be tolerant towards slavery, and God hates for His children to be slaves to sin.

1. What about this world do you find the hardest to resist when you are tired, stressed, or anxious? What does that say about your heart, and what of the world's idols you find yourself most easily drawn towards?
2. The church of Pergamum's proximity to false gods and emperor and idol worship made it difficult for them to stay steadfast. Do you find that to be the case for yourself in the city of Hong Kong? What about this city makes it hard for you to find true and full satisfaction in Jesus?
3. Jesus encouraged the church by telling them that He would give to the one who conquers some of the hidden manna, and a white stone with a new name written on it that no one knows except

the one who receives it. With these two things, Jesus is promising the hope of full satisfaction in Him, and true intimacy with Him.

Imagine for a second, if we truly found complete satisfaction in Jesus, what would look different in our lives?