

Compromising with the Culture!

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The danger of compromising with spiritual matters is not always seen or realized, but the danger is real because eternal interests are at stake. Many in the Bible compromised on their faith in God and paid a serious price.

Satan makes it *easy* to compromise because of the *culture* we live in—culture means values, principles, beliefs, society, or way of life. The devil has many *following the crowd* even though the crowd is acting outside the will of God.

The church of Ephesus is complimented—Revelation 2:2 “*I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil.*” Jesus also points to a *compromise* on their part Revelation 2:4 “*Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.*”

Have we left our first love for God and our first commitment to obey His Word by our compromising on some issue? If so—5 “*Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.*”

Jesus writes to Smyrna, Revelation 2:10 “*Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, (do not compromise) and I will give thee a crown of life.*” We need to heed and listen 11 “*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.*”

Persecution can result in compromise on faith matters. Although Smyrna was seriously persecuted, they persisted in their faith and trust in Jesus. A Christian believer in Smyrna would face persecution—but anything *they* were going through and anything *we* are going through, Jesus says Revelation 2:9 “*I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty.*” We may be *persecuted* but we have to be *persistent* in our faith in God.

Any temptation faced is 1 Corinthians 10:13 “*Common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer [allow] you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*”

Satan wanted to destroy the first century church—but he did *not* succeed. Jesus commissioned His disciples just before ascending into Heaven, —Mark 16:15 “*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*”

Then Saul of Tarsus began persecuting the church—traveling from city to city to arrest and imprison believers in Jesus. Acts 8:1 “*There was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.*”

This persecution just helped spread the Gospel of Christ. Acts 8:4 “*They that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.*” The devil then launched his evil plan B by infiltrating the church at Pergamum.

Matthew 13:24 “*The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field [Jesus explained]: 25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. 26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. 27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?*”

28 *He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? 29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.*”

False teaching and distorted grace messages are more prevalent and worse today than ever. Jesus warned about *compromising*—Matthew 24:4 “*Take heed that no man deceive you. 5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.*” Today’s *culture* compels us to *Take heed!*

Revelation 2:12 “*And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; 13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.*”

Cities today have iconic structures that identify them—the Golden Gate Bridge; the Empire State Building—and Pergamum had an altar to Zeus—regarded as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. There were many other false gods in Pergamum as emperor worship was a common practice among many—what a *compromise that is!*

Pergamum was Revelation 2:13 “*Where Satan’s throne is.*” There were more *tares* than *wheat* in the city—as just about any city today. One U.S. city has a saying: *Whatever happens there, stays there*—meaning that people can visit the city to commit any sin or wickedness they want—and no one will know. It is a reminder of Numbers 32:23 “*Be sure your sin will find you out*”—God already knows!

Pergamum did, however, have *some* believers who served God faithfully. Jesus *knew* who they were and commended them for remaining true to their faith and said—Revelation 2:13 “*Thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith.*”

Anyone can be in a really spiritually dark place—especially today. We are surrounded by unbelievers who have no time for God, no time for Jesus, and no religious beliefs of any type. There are those who *say* they are believers but are not. The apostle says that some are 2 Timothy 3:5 “*Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*”

Jesus knows what we are going through; He knows of the pressures and challenges we face. He says Revelation 2:13 “*I know where you live*”—in the midst of rebellious people, unbelievers, wickedness, immorality, and alternative lifestyles everywhere—things that are an abomination to God. Romans 1:18 “*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.*”

We know little about Antipas other than he was a martyr for Jesus because he refused to worship Caesar and refused to say *Kurios Kaiser*, or *Caesar is Lord*—which would have saved his life. However, like the three Hebrews, if God said *No*, Antipas would also. By saying two words he could have saved his life—our words matter.

Matthew 12:36 “*But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. 37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*” Antipas would be justified by his words because they meant he would remain faithful to God, and he would not deny his faith in Christ. Matthew 10:33 “*Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.*”

There are many through the ages who took the same stand of faith in Christ as Antipas took—individual believers who would not deny the Name of Jesus nor compromise their faith in Him. A young student, in 1999, was asked at gun-point if she believed in Jesus—when she answered *Yes*, it cost her her life.

This student’s favorite Bible verses—Philippians 3:10-11 “*I long to know Christ and the power which is in His resurrection, and to share in His sufferings and die even as He died; 11 in the hope that I may attain to the resurrection from among the dead.*”

Her faith in Jesus is a powerful *witness* and poignant *reminder* to never deny our faith in the atoning sacrifice of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ—regardless of the persecution, the risk, or the danger we are facing.

Some in Pergamum were faithful, but Jesus added; Revelation 2:14 “*I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold [tolerate] the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. 15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.*”

The false teaching of the Nicolaitans was compromising the church of Pergamum—and this is still prevalent today. It is the doctrine that we can live anyway we want and still be saved. Romans 6:1 “*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*”

Jesus commended the Ephesian church but added Revelation 2:4 “*Nevertheless I have somewhat against, because thou hast left thy first love. 5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will*

come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”

The members of that church had followed Jesus in faith, but that *first love* for Him did not make them right in their *present* spiritual state. There would be serious consequences for compromising their stand of faith—they would have to repent, or their church would not *be* a church. Revelation 2:16 “*Repent [Pergamum]; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.*”

The danger of compromise is *this*—a *small compromise* can quickly lead to a *serious mistake*, and later lead us further into *grievous sins* that would seriously jeopardize our eternal salvation. Romans 11:21 “*For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. 22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.*”

The people Jesus was writing to may have *once been saved* but were not *always saved*—they now needed to repent to Romans 11:21 “*Continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.*” Repenting of sins, then, is not a one-time confession that never needs repeating—but it is a continuing to make *corrections* when God shows us wrong decisions or attitudes we have.

Revelation 2:17 “*Let all who have ears give heed to what the Spirit is saying to the Churches. He who overcomes—to him I will give some of the hidden Manna, and a white stone; and—written upon the stone and known only to him who receives it—a new name*”—and a new *attitude of no compromising*—when God says *No!*—we have to also!



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