

The Church at Thyatira — Strong Works, Fatal Tolerance

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Key Text: Revelation 2:18–29 (NASB 1995)

Supporting Texts: 1 Corinthians 1:10–13; 1 Corinthians 5:6–7; 1 Corinthians 15:33–34; Philippians 1:27; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Galatians 6:9; 2 Timothy 2:10–12; Revelation 22:16

Introduction

A Word About “Perfect Churches”

- People ask: “What does a perfect church look like?”
- In the New Testament, you don’t find a flawless congregation.
- A church is made of imperfect people, and imperfect people create problems.
- Even congregations with strengths can be weak where it matters most.

The Big Issue

- Revelation 2 shows a church that was doing many things right—yet was in danger.
 - Thyatira was praised for growth and service, but condemned for tolerating sin.
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Thesis

A congregation can have strong deeds, love, faith, and perseverance—yet be spiritually threatened if it tolerates sin. Christ demands both growth in good works and courage to confront corruption, calling His people to repent, hold fast, and overcome.

I. Christ Addresses the Church With Authority and Full Knowledge (Revelation 2:18–19)

A. The Speaker: The Son of God

Revelation 2:18 (NASB 1995)

“...The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this:”

- “Eyes like a flame” speaks of searching, penetrating knowledge.
- “Feet like burnished bronze” pictures firmness, purity, and judgment.
- This is not a casual memo. This is the Lord inspecting His church.

B. The Comforting Truth: Christ Knows What Is Good

Revelation 2:19 (NASB 1995)

“I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first.”

- Christ is present. He sees.
- He recognizes love, faith, service, perseverance.
- He also notes progress: later deeds greater than the first.

Application

- Churches should not stay stagnant.
- Growing in service and love is pleasing to Christ.

Galatians 6:9 (NASB 1995)

“Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.”

Philippians 1:27 (NASB 1995)

“Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ... standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.”

II. The Fatal Weakness: Tolerating Sin in the Congregation (Revelation 2:20–21)

A. The Charge: “You Tolerate...”

Revelation 2:20 (NASB 1995)

“But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray...”

- The problem is not that sinners exist (they always will).
- The problem is that the church **tolerated** influence that led believers astray.
- She “calls herself” a prophetess—claimed authority she did not truly have.

B. What She Produced

Revelation 2:20 (NASB 1995)

“...so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.”

- Immorality was being normalized.
- Idolatrous compromise was being excused.
- Sin was being made “not that bad.”

C. The Refusal to Repent

Revelation 2:21 (NASB 1995)

“I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality.”

- Mercy was offered.
- Repentance was refused.
- When a church refuses to confront unrepentant sin, sin spreads.

Warning

- Ignoring sin does not make it disappear.
- “Auto-correction” is not a biblical plan for holiness.

1 Corinthians 15:33–34 (NASB 1995)

33 *“Do not be deceived: ‘Bad company corrupts good morals.’”*

34 *“Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning...”*

III. Christ’s Judgment on the Unrepentant and the Warning to the Church (Revelation 2:22–23)

A. Judgment Is Certain

Revelation 2:22 (NASB 1995)

“Behold, I will throw her on a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds.”

- Even if a congregation refuses discipline, Christ does not ignore corruption.
- Judgment comes unless there is repentance.

B. The Sin Spreads and the Consequences Spread

Revelation 2:23 (NASB 1995)

“And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.”

- “Children” points to followers—those shaped by her teaching.
- Christ searches minds and hearts, not just outward appearance.
- The point: Christ will make an example so other churches fear God.

Rebuke

- A congregation can be active and loving—and still be guilty of cowardice.
- A church that tolerates sin risks becoming infected by it.

1 Corinthians 5:6–7 (NASB 1995)

6 “Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough?”

7 “Clean out the old leaven...”

IV. The Call to the Faithful Remnant: Hold Fast Until Christ Comes (Revelation 2:24–25)

A. Not Everyone Was Corrupt

Revelation 2:24 (NASB 1995)

“But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching... I place no other burden on you.”

- Some remained clean.
- Christ does not crush the faithful with burdens meant for the rebellious.

B. The Command

Revelation 2:25 (NASB 1995)

“Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come.”

- Don’t abandon the truth because others compromise.
- Don’t leave the mission because others are careless.
- Hold fast—stay faithful—endure.

Encouragement

- The faithful remnant may be the very means God uses to correct and preserve a church.
- Christ’s instruction is not “run,” but “hold fast.”

V. The Reward for Overcomers: Reign With Christ and Receive the Morning Star (Revelation 2:26–29)

A. Authority Promised to the Overcomer

Revelation 2:26–27 (NASB 1995)

26 “He who overcomes... to him I will give authority over the nations;”

27 “and he shall rule them with a rod of iron...”

- Overcoming is not a feeling—it is endurance in obedience.
- Christ promises participation in His victory and reign.

2 Timothy 2:12 (NASB 1995)

“If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us.”

B. The Morning Star

Revelation 2:28 (NASB 1995)

“and I will give him the morning star.”

- Revelation identifies the Morning Star:

Revelation 22:16 (NASB 1995)

“I am... the bright morning star.”

- The ultimate gift is not status—it is Christ Himself and life with Him.

C. The Closing Call

Revelation 2:29 (NASB 1995)

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

Applications

1) Don't Be Deceived by a Strong Reputation

- Thyatira had deeds, love, service, perseverance—and still received a serious rebuke.
- A church can be “busy” and still be compromising.

2) Toleration Is Not Love

- Love does not help people stay in sin.
- Love warns, corrects, and calls to repentance.

3) Discipline Matters Because Souls Matter

- Unchecked sin spreads.
- Holiness protects the church and calls the sinner back.

4) Don't Meddle in God's Role—But Don't Ignore Christ's Warnings

- Christ is the one who inspects and judges His church.
- Our job is faithfulness: repentance where needed, and holding fast always.

5) Keep Growing

- Christ praised improvement: “greater than at first.”
- Don't coast on past victories. Excel still more.

Conclusion / Call to Action

Christ commended Thyatira for growth in good works, but condemned them for tolerating corrupt influence. The lesson is simple and sharp: a church must be both loving and clean, both active and holy. If we tolerate what Christ condemns, we invite judgment. If we hold fast and overcome, we receive Christ, His reign, and His reward.

Invitation

- If you are influencing others toward sin, repent now. Christ sees.
- If you are tolerating sin in your life or excusing it as “not that bad,” repent now.
- If you are a faithful Christian surrounded by compromise, do not quit—hold fast until He comes.
- If you are not a Christian: hear the gospel, believe in Christ, repent of sin, confess Jesus, and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins.

Slide Deck (10–15 Slides)

Slide 1 — What Does a “Perfect Church” Look Like?

Main Content:

- No flawless congregations in the New Testament
- Churches are made of imperfect people
- The goal: faithfulness, growth, holiness

Scripture (if applicable):

- Revelation 2 (context)

Design Intent:

- Background tone: light / neutral
- Emphasis: instructive
- Mood: serious, steady

Slide 2 — The Church at Thyatira

Main Content:

- Strong works
- Real love and service
- A dangerous blind spot

Scripture (if applicable):

- Revelation 2:18–19

Design Intent:

- Background tone: light
- Emphasis: overview
- Mood: focused, clear

Slide 3 — The Son of God Speaks

Main Content:

- Eyes like a flame of fire
- Feet like burnished bronze
- Christ inspects His church

Scripture (if applicable):

- Revelation 2:18

Design Intent:

- Background tone: neutral / light
- Emphasis: authority
- Mood: reverent, sobering

Slide 4 — Christ Sees the Good

Main Content:

- “I know your deeds”
- Love, faith, service, perseverance
- “Greater than at first”

Scripture (if applicable):

- Revelation 2:19

Design Intent:

- Background tone: warm / light
- Emphasis: encouragement
- Mood: hopeful, motivating (not flashy)

Slide 5 — The Turning Point: “But I Have This Against You”

Main Content:

- Strengths don't erase sin
- Praise does not cancel rebuke

- Christ tells the truth
- **Scripture (if applicable):**
- Revelation 2:20 (first phrase)
- **Design Intent:**
- Background tone: light
- Emphasis: warning
- Mood: serious, direct

Slide 6 — The Sin: Toleration of Jezebel

Main Content:

- False authority: “calls herself”
- Leading servants astray
- Normalizing immorality and compromise
- **Scripture (if applicable):**
- Revelation 2:20
- **Design Intent:**
- Background tone: neutral
- Emphasis: corrective
- Mood: firm, pastoral

Slide 7 — Mercy Offered, Repentance Refused

Main Content:

- Christ gave time to repent
- She refused
- Unrepentant sin invites judgment
- **Scripture (if applicable):**
- Revelation 2:21
- **Design Intent:**

- Background tone: light
- Emphasis: urgent
- Mood: sobering, honest

Slide 8 — Sin Spreads When It's Tolerated

Main Content:

- Bad company corrupts good morals
- A little leaven leavens the whole lump
- Ignoring sin is not love

Scripture (if applicable):

- 1 Corinthians 15:33
- 1 Corinthians 5:6

Design Intent:

- Background tone: light
- Emphasis: practical
- Mood: instructive, warning

Slide 9 — Christ's Warning: Judgment Will Come

Main Content:

- "Great tribulation... unless they repent"
- Christ searches minds and hearts
- He repays according to deeds

Scripture (if applicable):

- Revelation 2:22–23

Design Intent:

- Background tone: neutral / light
- Emphasis: warning

- Mood: sober, weighty

Slide 10 — The Faithful Remnant Matters

Main Content:

- Not everyone was corrupt
- Christ speaks to “the rest”
- Faithful people can preserve a church

Scripture (if applicable):

- Revelation 2:24

Design Intent:

- Background tone: warm / light
- Emphasis: encouragement
- Mood: steady, strengthening

Slide 11 — The Command: Hold Fast

Main Content:

- Don't quit because others compromise
- Hold the truth
- Endure until Christ comes

Scripture (if applicable):

- Revelation 2:25

Design Intent:

- Background tone: light
- Emphasis: call to action
- Mood: resolute, encouraging

Slide 12 — The Reward: Authority With Christ

Main Content:

- Overcome and keep His deeds
- Authority promised
- Endurance leads to reigning with Him

Scripture (if applicable):

- Revelation 2:26–27
- 2 Timothy 2:12

Design Intent:

- Background tone: light / hopeful
- Emphasis: hope
- Mood: confident, reverent

Slide 13 — The Morning Star

Main Content:

- Christ gives the Morning Star
- The ultimate gift is Christ Himself
- Faithfulness leads to eternal fellowship

Scripture (if applicable):

- Revelation 2:28
- Revelation 22:16

Design Intent:

- Background tone: warm / light
- Emphasis: hope
- Mood: worshipful, uplifting

Slide 14 — Church Application Today

Main Content:

- Don't hide sin

- Don't excuse sin
- Grow in good works and guard holiness

Scripture (if applicable):

- Revelation 2:19–20 (reference)

Design Intent:

- Background tone: light / neutral
- Emphasis: practical
- Mood: firm, pastoral

Slide 15 — Invitation: Repent, Hold Fast, Obey the Gospel

Main Content:

- Repent of influence, tolerance, compromise
- Hold fast and overcome
- Obey the gospel of Christ

Scripture (if applicable):

- Revelation 2:25–29 (reference)

Design Intent:

- Background tone: light / hopeful
- Emphasis: urgent, gracious
- Mood: reverent, calling