**Revelation 2:18-29**

Introduction

I. In the messages to the 7 churches (ch. 2-3) Jesus speaks like a groom to his bride.

A. At times we see his tender side come out

B. At times we see his severe side come out

II. Any healthy marriage carries with it a tender side but also a complete intolerance of other lovers.

The Passage

I. Jesus reminds them of who he is (v. 18)

A. Son of God (the eternal son who entered history, died, and rose as king)

B. eyes like blazing fire (he sees all)

C. Feet like burnished bronze (his foundation is sure and his kingdom will never end)

II. Jesus affirms what they are doing well (v. 19)

III. Jesus corrects what they’re not doing well (v. 20):

A. Who is this “Jezebel”?

1. Probably a person or group of people playing a similar role as the OT character Jezebel

2. Queen Jezebel was a foreigner who introduced idolatry into Israel’s life (1 Kings 16:30-32, 21:25-26). She encouraged Israel to live a life of spiritual compromise where they felt comfortable worshiping Yahweh and the other gods of the surrounding nations.

3. This person or group of people in Thyatira were doing the same thing in their day.

B. Sexual immorality and food sacrificed to idols

1. There were many trade guilds in Thyatira, and as members of the guild, Christians were often a part of guild meetings in which a patron god was worshipped and sacrificed to, and in which there was much revelry and sexual immorality

2. There was a huge pressure put on Christians to participate in these occasions in order to maintain economic and social success

C. Jezebel had a teaching (v. 20, v. 24) that permitted Christians to participate in these immoral events. Essentially, she said it was fine to follow Jesus and to participate in these immoral activities.

IV. The spirit of Jezebel today

A. Current statistics on sex in the church

1. 61% of Christians say they would have sex before marriage. 56% say it's appropriate to move in with someone after dating for a time between six months and two years

2. -50% of all Christian men and 20% of all Christian women say they are addicted to pornography.

3. 50% of pastors had viewed porn in last year, 37% say it is a current struggle

4. And Christians regularly watch movies and shows with explicit sexual content

B. John Piper: “Sex is not a spectator’s sport.”

C. What’s the teaching behind this compromised life?

1. Pray a prayer and go to heaven. What happens after that is gravy.

2. Raise the legalism card whenever someone starts taking concrete, and specific actions against the sin in their life

3. The Bible’s teaching:

a. Titus 2:11-14: God’s grace teaches us to say no to ungodliness

b. 1 Corinthians 6:18-19: Our bodies are not our own; they belong to God

V. Jesus’ call to the church

A. To those in bed with Jezebel (v. 21-23)

1. notice the mercy: he has given them time to repent and still wants repentance, not judgment

2. Strong words of judgment if they don’t repent

3. Purpose in judgment is not just for them, but for all the churches (v. 23)

= That they might realize he sees everything and rewards or punishes accordingly

4. Jesus is not calling us to a life of perfection but of repentance

a. But repentance must have with it definitive resolve and action to fight sin in our lives (1 Timothy 4:7: Train yourself for godliness)

b. Example: get into an accountability or recovery group, put accountability software on your computer and phone, reach out to a trusted friend for support, etc.

c. if your strategy is: “I’ll pray about it, and feel bad after I do it,” that’s not really repentance, that’s just wishful thinking

B. To those faithful (v. 24-25)

= Hold on and keep goin

Conclusion

I. Jesus, our groom, does not want to share us with any other lovers. He does not want us living a “both/and” existence, so he speaks strongly to bring us to an either/or choice.

II. The goal is not simply to say “no” to sin but rather to say unreservedly YES to Christ

C.S. Lewis: “We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.”

**Discussion Questions**

1. What stood out to you most from Sunday’s passage and message?

2. As you consider the statistics mentioned on Sunday regarding sex in the church (e.g. premarital sex among Christians, addiction to porn among Christians, etc.), what struck you about those statistics, if anything?

3. Someone once said, “sex is not a spectator’s sport.” Consider the idea that God never designed sex to be watched, but only to be participated in between husband and wife. How has Sunday’s passage changed your thoughts on your own viewing habits, if at all?

4. Consider again Titus 2:11-14: “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. 12 It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.” And also consider 1 Timothy 4:7: “train yourselves for godliness.” How does your own view of God’s grace impact your fight against sin and your active pursuit of purity and wholeness? For example, does your view of God’s grace teach you to say “no” to worldly passions? Do you see yourself as in training for righteousness (like an athlete trains for a sport)?

5. Consider Jesus’ words in verse 23: “I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.” How do you square the idea that we’re saved by grace alone with the idea that Jesus will repay people according to their deeds (with either judgment or salvation)?

6. Consider the C.S. Lewis quote given on Sunday: “We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.” How can you say yes to better, more substantial and eternal desires in the coming weeks?