

Group/Individual Study

Series - Dear Church: Letter to the church of Pergamum

REFLECT on the message heard on Sunday, 10/21

To Confused Christians

Discuss: Jesus acknowledges the difficulty the Christians in Pergamum are facing. He knows they are living in a rather eclectic spiritual environment. It's dark. And they have been suffering. They have been held on, even to the point of death. Yet even for them there is something Jesus wants to correct. Some of them have become followers of a cult-like teacher who insists they can compromise with their culture to the point of sexual immorality.

1. Why do you think such teaching would be attractive to people in a situation like theirs?
2. Are there times when suffering can actually weaken your resolve to resist temptation? Why? Have you ever seen this to be true in your own life?
3. The teachings of the Nicolaitans are obscure, but according to early Christian sources, they taught a form of "dualism" that states that what we do in the physical world does not impact our spiritual lives. Do you ever see people following a version of this today? How so?
4. It's important to note that Jesus does not criticize these Christians for living in Pergamum, or for doing business with pagans, or for knowing pagans as friends. In the video Rene said, "The problem was not that the church was in Pergamum, but that there was too much Pergamum in the church." How does this apply to us today? What practical steps can you take to try to be shaped more by Christ than by culture?
5. One of the lessons about Pergamum is that theology matters. How you think about God and the world --- what you believe, the people you listen to --- really does change your behavior. How have you seen your own beliefs about God impact your behavior?
6. What has been the core of your faith that has brought you back when you go astray, or kept you on the right track?
7. Are there any lessons from Jesus' words to Pergamum that you feel are particularly relevant to your life?