

The Seven Churches – Thyatira
Revelation 2:18-29
ABC 10/17/21

Most church historians say the worst thing that happened to the church during the 1st millennium was its being accepted as the religion of the Roman Empire by Constantine around 310 AD.¹ When that happened, the church began to seek the world's honor & pursue the power & prestige that went with it. Values were flipped, luxury was sought, morals grew lax, & believers began to compromise. As we come to Jesus's letter to the church in Thyatira, we find that a similar situation existed in this church. This is the longest of the 7 letters but it's written to the smallest of the 7 cities. The false teachings that were taking place in Thyatira were like those in Pergamum, but the situation was even worse. In Pergamum, the errors were present but not endorsed. In Thyatira, they were tolerated & accepted. In our text today, we'll be examining a message written to a church that's typical of today, a church that isn't committed to the truth of God's Word. Let's read it & then get into it. **Rev 2:18-29**

1. The Charge (18) is the same to all the churches. These letters are directed to the angel or messenger of the church.

2. The City (18) Thyatira was a minor town, located about 30 miles SE of Pergamum & halfway between Pergamum & Sardis along the main road traveling north & south. Pliny dismissed Thyatira with these words, *Thyatira & a few other unimportant communities.*² It had served as a military outpost, protecting Pergamum, though it was in a flat river valley without any natural defenses. The plan was that any attackers headed to Pergamum would be slowed by the soldiers at Thyatira, buying Pergamum time. It was merely a speed bump along the way & was frequently destroyed & rebuilt throughout history. In the few instances the city is mentioned in ancient literature, it's usually of its destruction. Things changed for Thyatira after it came under Roman control. The peace brought by Rome spared the city from constant attack & destruction. & its location along a major trade route & turned Thyatira into a boomtown for commercial industry. The city specialized

¹ James Montgomery Boice, *Seven Churches, Four Horsemen, One Lord: Lessons from the Apocalypse*, ed. Philip Graham Ryken, p 104

² Quoted by Dr W.A. Criswell, <https://wacriswell.com/sermons/1961/the-thyatiran-jezebel/>

in dyed fabrics, especially a purple dye developed from a root. Unlike the other cities of Asia Minor, Thyatira never developed into a religious center. Instead, it was dominated by trade guilds. There were guilds for dyers, tanners, bronze-smiths, potters, bakers, & every other trade.³ Finding a job or owning a business was next to impossible if you weren't part of a guild. It was said *if you wish to get ahead in this world, you must belong to a guild*.⁴ & each guild had a patron god & worshipped it with sinful feasts & rituals. Not belonging to a guild was equivalent to commercial suicide.⁵ This created a dilemma for any Christian who wanted to maintain his purity & his livelihood. While the city itself was relatively secular, the deviancy of paganism still infected & polluted the culture.⁶

3. The Church (18) As is the case with the churches at Smyrna & Pergamum, the Bible doesn't record the planting of this church. According to Acts 16:14, **A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God**, was converted under Paul's ministry at Philippi. Members of her household also came to saving faith. It's possible that Lydia & her household had something to do with starting this church. But more likely, it was founded as part of Paul's ministry at Ephesus because, as we've seen, Acts 19:10 says **all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord**. No matter how the church in Thyatira began, it's instantly apparent from this letter that they hadn't remained faithful to the truth or to Jesus' instructions to keep the church pure.

4. The Correspondent The author of this letter is Jesus, identified in vs 18 as **the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, & His feet are like burnished bronze**. 3 things are highlighted here.

A. He's called **the Son of God**. In chpt 1 John wrote that he **saw one like a son of man** (13), emphasizing not only Christ's humanity, but also His compassion & care for His people. Here Jesus refers to Himself as **the Son of God**, emphasizing His deity. To call oneself the **Son of God** was the same as claiming to be God Himself.

B. Jesus' eyes are described as **a flame of fire** (18). This description of Jesus is seen in Rev 1:14 & 19:12. Eyes often represent knowledge. God's eyes, represent His omniscience, His knowing all

³ William Ramsay, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia*, p 260

⁴ Boice, pp 104–105

⁵ William Barclay, ed., *The Revelation of John*, vol. 1, The Daily Study Bible Series, p 107

⁶ John MacArthur, *Christ's Call to Reform the Church: Timeless Demands from the Lord to His People*, pp 106–107

things (2 Chron 16:9; Prov 15:3; Jer 16:17; Mt 10:26; Heb 4:13). The fact that Jesus' eyes are spoken of, as a **flame of fire** is to emphasize His searching, revealing, infallible gaze that penetrates the depths of His church. The omniscient Lord of the church won't fail to recognize & deal with sin in His church.

C. The feet of Jesus are described as being like **burnished bronze**. This description was used of Jesus in Rev 1:15. This description pictures the point in the refinement process where the metal is still glowing. While there's some emphasis on purity, the greater emphasis seems to be on judgment. Kings in ancient times sat on elevated thrones & those being judged would be lower than the king's feet. The king's feet came to symbolize his authority. The red-hot, glowing feet of Jesus picture Him ready to exercise judgment. This terrifying description of Jesus must have created shock & fear when this letter was 1st read to the congregation. It came as a sobering realization to them, as it should to all of us, that Jesus will judge sin.

5. The Commendation What does this divine, all-seeing Judge see as He looks at this church? **19**
The commendation to this church was an encouraging one & these 4 **deeds** are probably meant to be paired. The 1st 2 are motives while the 2nd 2 are deeds. **Love** for others had produced **service & faith** in Christ had provided the **perseverance** in their commitment to Him. The meaning is something like this: *I know your deeds, that is, your love & faith, your service & patient endurance, & that you're now doing more than you did at 1st.*⁷ Jesus commends them for their **deeds**, highlighting 4 areas in which they were still growing.

A. The term for **love** here is *agape*, the sacrificial & unconditional love. Jesus was praising them because they were showing unconditional, sacrificial love for God, for one another, & for those outside the church. Would Jesus commend us for our love? Would He commend you for your love?

B. The word **faith** speaks primarily of a firm persuasion or conviction based upon hearing. It's used in the NT of belief in or trusting in God or Christ. It's described in Heb 11:1 as **the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen**. They're being applauded for their unwavering devotion in following Christ. As Christians we say our faith is in Christ. But our faith is often shaken

⁷ Kendall H. Easley, *Revelation*, vol. 12, Holman New Testament Commentary, p 40

by our circumstances or trials. Our faith may be tested when we lose our job, have poor health, or experience any kind of unfortunate circumstances. We're shaken because our **faith** is in ourselves, in our plans, or in our circumstances rather than in our God. Our **faith** should be built on nothing less than Jesus Himself. In whatever we face, we can trust God & know He'll strengthen us & pull us through for His glory. Where is your faith this morning? Is it in yourself, your circumstances, or in God?

C. The term for **service** can be translated *ministry* & speaks of a voluntary **service**. One of the out workings of **faith** & **love** is a dedication to serving. The Christians in Thyatira were committed to ministry. Are you committed to ministry? Are you committed to serving in the context of the church? I'm so grateful for all of you who serve in a variety of ways. Thank you & keep it up.

D. Perseverance pictures endurance with circumstances or trials. The believers in Thyatira faced tough times. In fact their very livelihood was often at stake for being a Christian. If you worked within a trade guild you were expected to participate in the festivities for that guild's god. Failure to do so could bring unemployment, ostracism, & persecution. Despite their circumstances, these believers maintained an endurance relying upon the Lord. How about you? I know some of you are facing trying times & difficult circumstances. Persevering in the faith is more than just getting through it. It's getting through it with a focus on bringing glory to God. It's relying on His strength to get you through. It's considering it all joy regardless of what you're facing. Would Christ commend you for your **perseverance**? Jesus commended the believers in Thyatira for demonstrating their **love** & **faith** through their **service** & **perseverance**. & these things were increasing. This means the church wasn't static but was moving forward. In Ephesus, the 1st works were better than the later ones, but here the last works are more abundant than the 1st. It's to this church that Jesus speaks some of His harshest words, as His all-seeing eyes pierce it & discern serious error. On the surface the Church at Thyatira was strong & flourishing. If a stranger went into it, he would be impressed with its energy & apparent steadfastness. For all that, there was something essential missing.

6. The Condemnation is found in vss **20-23**.

Nowhere in Scripture is the church called to be *tolerant*. In fact, God intends His church to be known by its *intolerance*. He demands a church that won't tolerate false teaching & sin. Thyatira was failing in that. Jesus says, **You tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess**. Like Pergamum, the believers in Thyatira had grown lax in their doctrinal vigilance. Jesus rebukes them for their lack of commitment to truth. In the letter to Pergamum, Christ focused on the dangerous teaching; here he centers on the leader, the self-styled prophetess **Jezebel**.⁸ In the previous letter, Jesus warned against those who held to **the teaching of Balaam & the Nicolaitans** (14–15), but He didn't refer specifically to *that Balaam* or *that Nicolaitan*, as He speaks here of that **woman Jezebel**.⁹ The Old Testament Jezebel was an unspeakably vile woman, so much so that the Bible names marrying her as the most evil thing King Ahab did (1 Kgs 16:30–31). Through Jezebel's evil influence, Baal worship became widespread in Israel. Here in Thyatira, the church had compromised the truth & was tolerating false teaching within the church. The word for **tolerate** emphasizes a continuous action. The church didn't allow this false teaching just on an occasional basis but were continually allowing its presence within their midst. They failed to deal with the false teacher & with the problem of sin that developed from her teaching. There are...

A. 3 Questions we must ask in relation to this counterfeit teaching:

1) Who was this false teacher? Jesus calls her **the woman Jezebel**. We don't know who she actually was, but probably a prominent lady in the church. In the OT **Jezebel** practiced witchcraft (2 Kgs 9:22), worshipped idols (1 Kgs 16:32-33), supported false prophets (1 Kgs 18:19), & tried to kill God's prophets (1 Kgs 18:4). She was a ruthless liar & a cold-blooded murderer. This lady in Thyatira resembled that **Jezebel** somehow. Like Ahab's wife, she was Satan's agent to corrupt God's people.

2) What was her false teaching? Like her OT counterpart, this woman succeeded in leading Christ's bond-servants astray so they committed **acts of immorality** & idolatry. She was encouraging compromise, allowing her followers to participate in the sinful behaviors of the world & in the guild

⁸ Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation: vs by vs*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries, p 61

⁹ Boice, p 107

banquets devoted to their gods. A Christian couldn't practice a trade without connections in the guild. **Jezebel** would have taught that such participation was simply one's civic duty. It may well be that the teaching of Jezebel was that Christians didn't need to be exclusive in their worship of Jesus. There was no need for them to refuse to belong to a guild or go along with their sinful practices. If the Christian church as a whole had accepted that teaching, Christianity would have become nothing more than another religion of which the Roman Empire was so full. The claim of Christianity isn't that Jesus is one of the saviors nor even the chief of saviors; but that He's the only Savior.¹⁰

The things sacrificed to idols wasn't food sold in the market with a distant connection to its past slaying, but was food eaten in the presence & practice of idol worship. It was participation in the pagan festivals that included idol worship as central to sharing in the meal. Jezebel's reasoning could be that they could participate in these things if their hearts weren't really in it. Of course, that's not possible. Deliberating disobeying commands of God can't come from a heart honoring God. But that lie is still told today, like sin isn't a big deal or you can keep sinning because God will forgive you. As a 19th century German poet (Heinrich Heine) put it: *Of course God will forgive me; that is His job.*¹¹ When Paul argued it was OK to eat meat that was offered to idols, he didn't say it was right to do so in a pagan temple as part of a worship service (1 Cor 10:18-22). Some of the Christians may have adopted her teachings as a way to reconcile membership in a trade guild with membership in Christ's church.¹² Or it could be her teaching was related to the dualism of that day. This teaching said the spirit is good & flesh is evil. Since God is only interested in the spirit, it doesn't matter what one does with one's body. Thus, according to **Jezebel**, it didn't matter if Christians committed acts of immorality or feasted in pagan rituals. She may also have taken a twisted view of God's grace, arguing it didn't matter if Christians sinned, since God would graciously forgive them. But, God calls Christians to a higher standard: We're to be holy just as He is holy (Lev 19:2). Jesus didn't suffer & die to make it possible for you to live a worldly life with no

¹⁰ Barclay, p 108

¹¹ Quoted by Robert Rayburn, www.faithtacoma.org/revelation/2008-10-05-am

¹² Easley, p 48

consequences, to enjoy your sins & your salvation too. Christ died to make you holy; God's grace appeared to teach us to say "No!" to ungodliness & worldly passions & to live self-controlled, upright, & godly lives. Christ, Paul says, gave Himself for us to purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good (Titus 2:11-14). **Jezebel** disagreed & taught differently.

3) What was the impact of her false teaching? The tragic result of allowing this woman's false doctrine was that many in the church had been led astray. Some of them were true believers, His **bond-servants** (20). They'd been deceived by her. Jesus says there's a serious penalty for those who lead Christians into sin. It's so serious that He said being drowned would be a better option (Mt 18:6-7).

This obviously hadn't been Jesus' 1st dealing with this false prophetess. He'd previously counseled her to repent (21). We don't know the circumstances under which she'd been given time **to repent of her immorality** but possibly from John himself. Like her OT counterpart who hardened her heart in the presence of Elijah, she was **unwilling**. She didn't want to repent. As a result, Christ moves on to highlight the...

B. Punishment that was coming to the church in Thyatira, broken into 3 groups:

1) There will be a punishment for **Jezebel**. Even though God is full of mercy & had given her time to repent, she's refused. Because of that, Jesus declared, **I will throw her on a bed of sickness**. The words *of sickness* are italicized because they aren't part of the original text. In light of Jezebel's refusal to repent, it's likely the **bed** refers to death & hell. She threw herself at pagan gods & lay on a bed of debauchery. Therefore, she'd taste the bitter fruits of her folly.

2) There will also be a punishment for those deceived by **Jezebel**. Divine judgment was about to fall not only on her, but also on those **who commit adultery with her** according to vs 22. The reference of **those who commit adultery** with her identifies those who've been deceived by her teaching. Jesus threatens to cast them **into great tribulation**. This isn't the tribulation of Rev 4-19 but a time of great distress or trouble. Since these were the sinning Christians who'd believed her lies, Jesus doesn't threaten to send them to hell as He did **Jezebel**. He simply promises to bring them severe chastening unless they repent. They still had a chance to get right with God. This is

always the case with divine justice in Scripture. Even the most intense punishment, like the Babylonian exile, always had, as part of its purpose, the opportunity to repent & get right with God.

3) There will also be a punishment for the children of Jezebel (23). This is a reference to her spiritual children, not biological children. These wouldn't be true believers deceived by **Jezebel**, but professing believers who, like Jezebel, adopted this false doctrine & taught it in the church. What was their punishment? Christ declares, **I will kill her children with pestilence**. This is an emphatic way of emphasizing death. It literally reads, *I will kill them with death!* The spiritual descendants of Jezebel will face the same judgment as Jezebel. The severe judgment promised to her & her followers reveals Jesus' passion for a doctrinally & behaviorally pure church. The result of this divine judgment would be the glory of the Lord. Jesus would receive glory when He judged Jezebel & her followers. When His judgment takes place **all the churches would know** He's the One who **searches the minds & hearts** of them all (23). They'd know He indeed was God & won't tolerate evil in His church. Put simply, the Lord was going to make an example out of Thyatira.¹³ If He allowed error & sin in one church, then other churches would conclude it's not that big of a deal & confronting error & promoting holiness isn't important.

Jesus then includes a word of comfort for the true believers in Thyatira saying, **I will give to each one of you according to your deeds** (23). Those who were true believers would be comforted knowing their deeds revealed their faith & demonstrated their true character. Of course, following God means breaking with the world & breaking with the world often means losing the economic & other favors the world brings. The story goes that one day a Christian complained to Tertullian of his need to make a living. *After all, I must live*, he said. Tertullian simply replied, *Must you?*¹⁴ Following God & His truth is more important than even physical life. But God does reward according to our deeds. As you hear this, please don't think of your works as what earns your way into heaven because Jesus never taught that. The only way you or I can get into heaven is by receiving what

¹³ MacArthur, p 116

¹⁴ Boice, p 111.

Jesus already worked to earn for us by His perfect life & sacrificial death. If we trust Him, then His life is counted as our righteousness & His death is counted as our complete payment for sin. In that way, we can only be saved by Christ's work, by His good deeds & His atoning death, & not by any of our works at all. But when Jesus is trusted as Lord & Savior, then He does make us new creatures in Him by His Holy Spirit as 2 Cor 5:17 says. We're saved by grace through faith for good works (Eph 2:8-10). It's those good works that prove we are His.

There's an interesting reference to **the deep things of Satan** in vs 24. This might mean the false teacher had been arguing that in order to conquer Satan a Christian had to learn how he thinks & what he does by participating in the world's sins. But it's more likely that her teachings were presented as **the depths of God** (1 Cor 2:10), but were actually **the deep things of Satan**. That's important to remember because no matter how modern or plausible an effort to compromise with the world's standards may be, such teaching is always from Satan, & the end of those who follow it will be the same as his end. The Smyrna church faced hostility from the **synagogue of Satan** (2:9). The Pergamum church existed at the site of Satan's **throne** (2:13). But the church at Thyatira had plunged headlong into the very depths of Satan's **deep things**.¹⁵ Here's the way John Stott explains this:

*If it is God's purpose to make us holy, Satan is resolved to frustrate it. He is seeking ceaselessly both to entice individual Christian believers into sin, & to insinuate evil into the churches. Where he cannot muzzle the church's witness by persecution from without, he resorts to the subtler assault of pollution from within.... If the devil cannot conquer the church by the application of political pressure or the propagation of intellectual heresy, he will try the insinuation of moral evil. Such at least was the dragon's foul strategy in Thyatira.*¹⁶

God isn't imposing some spiritual burden or holier-than-thou lifestyle on the believer. He doesn't ask that you do more than what Scripture teaches.

7. The Counsel (24-25) Jesus calls the readers to realize He is the One **who searches the minds & hearts** (23), undoubtedly connected to the **eyes like a flame of fire** (18). This is reminiscent of Jer 17:10: **I the Lord search the heart, I test the mind**. Jesus knows exactly how we feel, what we think, & what we do. **24-25**

¹⁵ John F. MacArthur Jr., *Revelation 1–11*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary, p 95

¹⁶ John R. W. Stott, *What Christ Thinks of the Church: Insights from Revelation 2–3*, pp 71–72

Nothing can be hidden from Him, so all the churches & the people of those churches need to examine themselves carefully & stop rationalizing their sins (1 Cor 11:28). Jesus had told the false teachers to repent & they chose not to. Now He offers counsel, comfort, & encouragement to the believers in the church. There were some who didn't hold to the evil teachings & hadn't adopted **the deep things of Satan** that were being taught. There always are. God always has His remnant & their task is simply to hold on until Jesus comes (25). Jesus says He won't **lay any other burden** on them. This is a reference to the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15. The issue there had been to what extent Jewish laws should be placed on Gentile converts & the decision was to impose no other burden on them than to **abstain from things sacrificed to idols & from blood & from things strangled & from fornication** (29). This was the issue at Thyatira & Jesus' judgment was the same. The answer to the world's seductions isn't a new set of regulations but simply a continuation in what we've been given. Live free in Christ, but don't compromise with the idolatry or sexual immorality of the surrounding culture. They're to simply **hold fast until** Jesus comes. This promise of the risen Lord doesn't guarantee His return during their lifetime. It means He'll return someday. Every generation of believers may be the one that experiences His return. Throughout the NT, Christians are urged to remain faithful to the truths & standards of the gospel. There's no need to look for some new teaching or revelation. **Hold fast** is a strong word, emphasizing the urgency of the situation & it's to be a continuous action. Christ tells them to **hold fast** to the truth & withstand the corrupting influences around them. They must continue to resist the lies of Satan & the wicked influence of his false teachers. Jesus didn't want them to become overconfident or think they had an easy road ahead. This was an urgent command that they **hold fast** to the truth until His coming. This counsel applies to us as well. There's much false teaching in many churches today but we're to urgently hold fast to the truth of God's Word until He comes. I hope you're holding fast to the truth & not being driven & tossed by every wind of doctrine. We're to have right doctrine & right practice. Until the return of Christ, believers must both teach the truths of God & oppose those who fail to do so.¹⁷

¹⁷ Osborne, p 65

8. The Challenge (26-29) Overcomers are the true believers in Christ & the challenge in each of these letters is a promise given them by their Lord. Jesus closes this one with the call to listen carefully or face serious judgment. **26-28**

The overcomer here is the one **who keeps My deeds to the end**. The only way to overcome is to maintain a firm grasp on Jesus' words (25) & works (26). True belief must lead to right living. Remember also that in each of these letters the promises given by Jesus to His own has to do with some aspect of eternal life. To the Ephesian overcomers the symbol was eating from the **tree of life** (7); for the Smyrnans, it was receiving a **crown of life** (10); to the ones in Pergamum it was receiving **hidden manna** & a **white stone** possibly looking forward to the marriage supper of the Lamb (17). For the Thyatirans there's an indication of what overcomers will be doing as they enjoy eternal life.¹⁸

A. There's a promise of Christ's power, the power that the overcomers would rule over the nations in the Millennium Kingdom (Rev 20). This (26b-27a) is a paraphrase of Ps 2:8-9, a passage understood to be pointing to the Messiah. This is the only place in the NT where it's applied to the saints rather than to the Messiah. The psalm states, **I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance**. That's replaced here with the idea of Christians' authority over the nations.¹⁹ Believers will be sharing the privilege granted to Jesus (Ps 2:7-9). He delegates His authority to believers during the millennial kingdom. Believers in Christ will have the immense privilege of reigning with Christ (Lk 22:29-30, 1 Cor 6:2, Rev 5:10; 20:4-6). The **rod of iron** (27) isn't a ruling scepter but a shepherd's club. A literal translation is *shepherd them with a rod of iron*. It refers to an iron-tipped club a shepherd used to protect the sheep. In Rev 12:5 & 19:15 it's Christ the Warrior who has the iron rod. Here it's stated the saints will have the rod as well (17:14; 19:14). The Father granted Jesus the authority to rule the nations because of His willing death for the nations (Phil 2:6-11). Christ, in turn, shares that ruling authority with those who overcome.²⁰

¹⁸ Easley, p 42

¹⁹ Osborne, p 66

²⁰ Easley, p 42

B. There's also a promise of Christ's presence. Overcomers are promised **the morning star** (2:28). This phrase is found only in one other place in the NT, Rev 22:16, which says, **I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root & the offspring of David, the bright morning star.** Jesus is **the morning star**. He promises to give Himself to His faithful followers. In essence, He's promising His presence. What a blessing that awaits believers in glory. We'll be given Christ's power to rule over the nations along with His presence to enjoy, worship, & honor in the process. This is a promise of our future relationship with Him, when we'll know Him fully, intimately, & thoroughly in the glory of His kingdom. Eagerly anticipating that blessed day, Paul wrote, **For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully** (1 Cor 13:12). Overcomers will receive both the kingdom & the King.

As a final note, Christ closes in His usual fashion with a reminder that all churches can learn from the lessons in this letter. He closes this letter with His repeated charge to the wider audience. **29** The church needs to hear His words to Thyatira & tremble. We need to know that God won't be mocked & He won't withhold His judgment indefinitely. He'll punish those who tolerate & toy with sin, infecting His church with worldly corruption. But to those who **stand firm** & remain faithful, to those who remain uncorrupted by the world, He promises the fullness of Christ as they reign with Him.²¹

What can we learn from this letter? 3 important truths stand out. 1st, it reveals the seriousness of tolerating sin & that God will judge unrepentant sin in the church. 2nd, a pattern of obedience marks true Christians. & 3rd, God's gracious promise to His own is that, in spite of struggles with sin & error in churches, they'll experience all the fullness of Christ as they reign with Him in His kingdom. Those churches, like Thyatira, who fail to heed the message will receive divine judgment; those who do listen & obey will receive divine blessing.

God demands that His church exemplify a deep, abiding love (unlike Ephesus) & a deep commitment to biblical & doctrinal truth (unlike Pergamum & Thyatira). Failure to exemplify either one will bring His displeasure upon the church. However, when both are at the heart of a church,

²¹ MacArthur, p 119

it's already successful, whatever its size & influence, because by doing so it pleases God. A truly biblical church will be faithful to Christ both in terms of love (1 Pt 1:22) & in holding to His truth. For God to be pleased with our church, we must be equally strong in both areas.²²

²² Osborne, pp 67–68