

Sermon Series: “You’ve Got Mail!”—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—9/21/2008

Title: “Ministering Where Satan Dwells”

Text: Revelation 2: 12-17

Intro.: *Ills.: Compromise Quote*

Theme: When placed in the position of compromising our faith walk in Christ, we are to remember the faithfulness of the one who called us which in turn will sustain us in our own faithful commitment to Christ.

Guarding against backdoor attacks on your faith

- Consumed with overt Satanic attacks on our faith that we miss the clever “*death traps vs. 14*”
 1. The Church at Pergamum faced real challenges to faith and witness
 - a. Official Caesar-worship center—test of loyalty was to burn incense, bow, pledge fidelity to *Dea Roma*
 - b. Temples to Zeus (throne terrain— *Satan’s throne*), and Asclepias (Savior god—medical arts symbol—*serpent-12*)
 - c. Persecution which led to martyrdom – *Antipas* refused as stone carver to make image of false god (*13*)
 2. Christians today are put in incredibly compromising situations and threatened with loss of income/career
 - a. Recent allegations of sexual favors and unethical business dealing among top corporate oil officials
 - b. Work time demands which threaten family and participation at church while leaving no options
 3. Compromises we face *to go along to get along* but slowly ensnare us in conduct that brings guilt/doubt
 - a. **Ills. Destructive Compromise**
- Two cultural compromises common both to the ancient believers of Pergamum and to us
 1. Sexual/material enticements which are soft-sold to us under the guise of being “with it”
 - a. Jesus references Balaam scheme (*14*)(*Numb 25:1*) to get Israelites to destroy themselves by wine, women, song
 - b. Told “watching that R-rated movie” “visiting web sites” hurt no one but lead to destroyed family/marriage/self
 - c. *Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. 1 Cor. 6:18*
 2. Compromising your witness by being tricked into thinking that *free grace means cheap grace*
 - a. Nicolaitans (*15*) (same in Ephesus) taught that because of forgiveness no rules, all conduct was free to believers — not just gross immorality but extreme materialism and blending paganism with Christian
 - b. **Ills.: The pitch to compromise**
 - c. Living in a Postmodern world it is easy to put morality on a sliding scale of “what seems right to me”
 - d. *All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything. Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power. 1 Cor 6: 12, 14*
- Tough words to wake us up out of the sleep of spiritual death we have been lulled into
 1. Repent – wake up! Turn around! Do it now...immediately! – Jesus does not play around (*16*)
 2. Let the One whose Word is a two-edge sword (*Heb 4: 12*) do the surgery, now, to spare you from the cancer within
 3. *For this reason it says, "Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you." Ephes. 5:14*

Three promises to bolster your ‘standing strong’ (vs. 17)

- An inexhaustible sustenance (*hidden manna*)
 1. This reference in the letter to Pergamum was a reference back to Jesus’ words in John
 - a. *“I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die.” John 6: 48-50*
 2. For O.T. Israel manna was enough to carry them through the wilderness wandering of 40 years
 3. Is Jesus enough for you? His promise is that he will be all that you need
- A guilt-free existence (*white stone*)
 1. Some commentators believe this was one of the Urim and Thummim stones in the High Priest breastplate
 - a. *“You shall put in the breastpiece of judgment the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be over Aaron’s heart when he goes in before the Lord; and Aaron shall carry the judgment of the sons of Israel over his heart before the Lord continually. Exodus 28:30*
 2. White stone being the “yes” stone – *God’s good pleasure with believers who by faith in Jesus are acquitted*
 3. *For as many as are the promises of God, in Christ they are yes! 2 Cor. 1: 20*
 4. When you have nothing over which to bear guilt, you can confidently expect God’s blessing and live it out
- A powerfully new identity (*new name*)
 1. In Jesus becoming a whole new person (*If any person be in Christ, he is a new creation. 2 Cor. 5: 17*)
 2. A new person with a whole new eternal purpose that directs thoughts, words, actions (*in terms of eternity*)
 3. **Illus.: Do you hear the Mosquito tones?**

Compromise Quote

Compromise is simply changing the question to fit the answer. **Merrit Malloy, Things I Meant to Say to You When We Were Old**

Destructive Compromise

A New York family bought a ranch out West where they intended to raise cattle. Friends visited and asked if the ranch had a name. "Well," said the would-be cattlemen, "I wanted to name it the Bar-J. My wife favored Suzy-Q, one son liked the Flying-W, and the other wanted the Lazy-Y. So we're calling it the Bar-J-Suzy-Q-Flying-W-Lazy-Y." "But where are all your cattle?" the friends asked. "None survived the branding." **D.A.C. News.**

The pitch to compromise

"Now, you are a man of broader understanding. You know very well that a few grains of incense have in themselves no importance whatever. Is not Christ within your heart? Has He not saved you by His grace? That is the important thing. Keep Christ within your heart by all means. But do not forget that you are a social being. You are not a hermit living out in the desert. This is Pergamos! And life in Pergamos makes certain demands on its citizens. If you do not wish, therefore, to find yourself ostracized from the social life of your city and to suffer the disagreeable consequences which such a calamity would certainly have on your job, on your family, on your whole life, you cannot ignore the code of good manners of the citizens of Pergamos. Do come to the temple, be civilized. . . It is only to a pleasant social function that I invite you. **G.Z. Hadjiztoniou, *The postman of Patmos* (Grand rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1961), pp. 58-59**

Do Your Ears Hear the Mosquito Tone?

Have you heard about the cell phone ringtone that junior high and high school kids are using to keep teachers from discovering that they are using their cell phones in school? The pitch of this ringtone, called the "mosquito tone," is too high for people over 25 to hear. So the kids can still send and receive text messages during class without the teacher knowing. The mosquito tone was first developed in Great Britain to irritate teenagers who were loitering around convenience stores and keeping customers away by their loud and obnoxious behavior. . . Some kid simply figured out how to use that sound as his cell phone's ringtone and—*voilà*—kids are downloading it by the millions. How does the mosquito tone go undetected by adults older than 25? Inside our ears we have tiny microscopic hairs that move with the impulses of incoming sound waves, and those hair movements send electrical signals to our brain. As we age, those hairs get worn down, actually damaged, so our hearing becomes less sensitive. We first lose the ability to detect the sounds of high frequencies. People over 25 can't hear sounds above 16 kilohertz. (The highest note on a piano is 4 Khz; the mosquito tone is 17 Khz.). **Doug Newton, "Spiritual Ear Hair," *Light & Life* magazine (January/February 2008), p. 32**

Rev. 2:12-17

¹²"And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write:
The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this:

¹³I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

¹⁴But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit *acts of immorality*.

¹⁵So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

¹⁶Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.

¹⁷He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give *some* of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.' [NASB]