

The Church at Pergamum

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Date: 12 June 2016

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 0 0] Good morning and a warm welcome to the service this morning. A special welcome to those who are visiting with us. It's good to see a number with us today and you're especially welcome this morning.

And if you're able to stay behind, there's tea and coffee at the end of the service. Please wait behind if you're able to. I don't actually have an information sheet in front of me this morning. There's not been one printed. But you've had ten minutes to survey what's been going round on the screen. Things are in the main usual for the course of the week.

There's the prayer meeting on Wednesday at half past seven. All are welcome. Road to Recovery, First Fruits are on Tuesday. Ladies Bible Study is on Monday. Things to note in particular from memory.

You have the AGM and the Congregational Meal. That's this coming Friday. The AGM and the Congregational Meal. This coming Friday.

[0 : 5 7] And we start at 6pm. And the details regarding that are on the screen and have been there. A word about the Congregational Meal and the AGM will be given by Gordon in just a second.

Thank you to all who helped yesterday. We had a great afternoon at Shillabos for a barbecue and various games. So thank you to those who came and all those who helped in any way to make that possible.

There will be a Holiday Club meeting after the service. The intention is that we'll have a Holiday Club meeting. Could all those who signed up for the Holiday Club please meet in the Community Centre on Wednesday at half past six?

I couldn't have been further off with that one, could I? Holiday Club meeting. Could all those who signed up for the Holiday Club please meet in the CC on Wednesday at half past six?

I think those who volunteered for food, there's a sheet over at the far end there. Please go and acquaint yourselves with that and there will be a provision for all this coming Friday.

[2 : 0 9] The service is next Wednesday. In the morning the service will be conducted by myself, God willing. And in the evening the service will be led by Rudy McLean. He was previously in the Leibaba Congregation in the Free Church.

And he now is ministering through CWI, Christian Witness to Israel. So he'll lead the evening service next Sunday at 6pm.

Morning service is as usual. I think these are all the information that I need to highlight at this stage. If there's anything else, shout and protest. Okay.

Let's unite our hearts and pray. Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you that you are our God and we thank you that through Christ we are your people.

And we thank you that we can trust you. And we thank you that the calling that you have placed upon our lives is a simple one. And it's a call that we would follow you. And so we pray that you would enable us to persevere in following you.

[3 : 1 8] Jesus told us, he warned the disciples, he warned us that when we seek to follow you, it will not always be smooth. It will not always be uncomplicated. Sometimes it will be difficult.

Sometimes it will be trying. Some days it will be joyful. And Lord, we know the mixture of that and our experiences day by day and week by week. Lord, we thank you that you are our God and you are the one who enables us when we seek to do your will, to overcome obstacles and to seek to discern your will.

We thank you for your provision in property thus far. And Lord, as we continue to acknowledge you and continue to seek your wisdom and your guidance, we pray that you would help us to follow.

And if in your will, you desire for us to be in the end and due course, we pray that you would lead us there. And meantime, we pray that we would know contentment and that we would know your presence and that we would know your peace and your joy.

Wherever we come together in the name of Christ. So help us, we pray, to follow as you lead in every detail of our lives.

[4 : 30] And we pray for your blessing and your help in all things that we would be glorifying to you. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

We're going to sing to begin. And this is a hymn which you sang often in the past, although we haven't sung it in recent days. It's not in either of the books, but it's on the screen.

Would you be free from the burden of sin? There's power in the blood of the Lamb. And that's a great thing to think about. I don't know how your week has been. I don't know how things have been in our experience.

But week by week as we come here, we're probably conscious of the times that we fall, the times that we fail, the times that we let God down. Our sin can weigh heavily on us.

And yet we have found that there is freedom and there is forgiveness and there is joy in being cleansed by the blood of the Lamb of God. That's Jesus.

[5 : 28] So we stand to sing just a moment. And we'll pray three words. And then we'll stand and worship God together. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

There is power, power, wonder-working power in the blood of the Lamb. There is power, power, wonder-working power in the precious blood of the Lamb.

Would you be free from your passion and pride? There is power in the blood, power in the blood. Come for our friends, in your company's time.

[7 : 09] There's wonderful blood in the blood. There is power, power, wonder-working power in the blood of the Lamb.

There is power, power, wonder-working power in the precious blood of the Lamb. Would you be wiser, much wiser than so?

There's power in the blood, power in the blood. Since it's a loss, it's life getting low. There's wonderful blood, power in the blood.

There is power, power, wonder-working power in the blood of the Lamb.

There is power, power, wonder-working power in the blood. In the precious blood of the Lamb.

Would you do service for Jesus your King?

[8 : 16] There's power in the blood, power in the blood. Would you do service for Jesus your King? There is power, power, wonder-working power in the blood of the Lamb.

In the blood of the Lamb Let His power, power, wonder-marking In the precious blood of the Lamb Again, let's unite our hearts in here. Let's pray.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for the hymn that we have been singing And the words that we meditate upon as we sin. We thank you for the power that there is in the blood of the Lamb of God, Jesus, your Son.

We thank you, Father, for sending Him into this world to make us whiter than snow As we put our faith in Him. We recognize that there is no other way that we could be free of our sin But we thank you that in your love you sent your Son.

We thank you that Jesus came willingly to do the will of the Father And He went all the way to that cross To take our sin and our shame upon Himself In order that we could be forgiven.

[9 : 45] We thank you that the promise that you have given us Is that even in the simplicity and the quietness of this moment If we come and ask for forgiveness for our sin And ask to be washed in that blood of the Lamb We are assured that we will be forgiven and cleansed From all unrighteousness and made whiter than snow In the instant Because of all that has been done for us We thank you that Jesus lived He lived perfectly, sinlessly We thank you that He died sacrificially for us And we thank you that He rose and He lives And this day we remember With thanksgiving This is the first day of the week The day that we remember that Jesus rose from the dead And we thank you that the promise that we are given Is that all who trust in Him Will share in that resurrection life And that victory over sin And Satan and death and hell

And so we pray That you would give each one of us faith And increase our faith That we may fix our eyes upon Christ We pray for others around us in this community In this island Across these islands You meet as we do To worship you at this point in time We pray for the Church of Scotland We pray for the Free Presbyterian Church And the Episcopalians We pray for David MacDonald As he leads the service in Leverborough And Andrew Coggle in Scalpey And others that come to our minds Who lead services across this island We pray for Duncan Or Cesson Clark As he leads worship in U.S. today And we ask that you would bless him And speak through him As Lord we pray that we would hear your voice Also in this place We pray for those who are absent This morning Some who are preoccupied

With the responsibilities of life Those who desire to be here But who are unable to Because of these duties That they have to fulfil And we ask that you would bless them And enable them in their work To work as unto the Lord For your glory And we pray for those who are In hospital beds And those who are housebound Those who are struggling With the grief of those Lost And having passed from Time into eternity Lost from them That we thank you That when we are in Christ We may be separated In time But we are secure For eternity And so we pray for those Who grieve For loved ones Who are lost And those Who grieve For loved ones Who are still with them In time But who are going through Difficult times We ask that you would Comfort them And strengthen them And we pray especially For those in hospital

Thinking particularly Of Dunda Who's been there For so long now And we ask Lord That as they Continue to Minister to him And as they make Decisions Even this week About all that Needs to happen In this treatment We pray for wisdom For those who are Making decisions We pray that you would Increase his strength We pray Lord That you would heal him And that you would be A rock And a refuge In the strength Of all The family at this time And Lord Others who are recovering We bring them to you Others who are Still struggling In their homes We bring them to you Asking that you would Minister to them Where they are We ask Lord That you would Continue with us We pray your blessing Upon us as a fellowship We pray your blessing Upon us as a nation And we think of those In authority over us And pray for them As we've been called to Especially this weekend We remember the Queen

And we ask that you Would bless her Lord We thank you for her Diligence We thank you for her Christian witness On various occasions Increasingly so In past years And we pray That you would be Near to her And encourage her And speak through her Over these days We pray for wisdom At a time in our country Where there are Important decisions to make And Lord We look to you And pray that your will Would be done And Lord For those who Meet across the world Like we do But with increased Persecution We ask Lord For them Our brothers And sisters in Christ Who are suffering Who are under pressure As those we'll read of In your word today We pray that the Fragrance of Christ May be May be found Coming from And Lord That they would know Your presence And your peace In this day So hear our prayers And lead us

[14 : 49] By your spirit As we commit This time And each one of us To you And we pray this In Jesus name Amen Boys and girls Would you like to Come forward please How's everyone today You all got sore legs In the football yesterday No you don't have sore legs Have any of us Out there got sore legs In the football yesterday I can imagine There's one or two Now what have I got To show you this morning I've got something To show you this morning I actually I showed this To the big ones When you were in Sunday school Last Sunday morning So I was thinking I would tell you this But I didn't change my mind But I thought I would tell you this This week instead Can anybody tell me What's this It's Leafs Said Ailey Anyone else Still got a hand up It's definitely

Leafs Yeah What kind of Leafs do you think it is You know that's the right answer Because it's very Leafs love to know What do you think Alster Pardon Nettles Come and have a try Take a hand out You ready We'll do it on your face Will we It's not nettles Don't worry We'll do that for you But you stay out here Since you're here Stay out You can't actually tell Very well Because this looks like About a thousand Different Leafs This could be any number Leafs But Maybe If I give it a bit Of a squeeze And then I'll let you smell it You might know What it is Not that clue Come on Joel What do you think Mint leaves Mint leaves Mint leaves They've always got a chef In their ass here Mint leaves He says Holding his nose In horror and pain You're absolutely right It's mint leaves But the thing about Mint leaves Is they look like Every other leaf Until you squeeze them When you put them Under pressure When you squeeze them And you put them Under pressure It's a lovely smell That comes out Of the mint leaf And you know Right away This is a mint leaf It's not any other leaf

But it's a mint leaf One other thing To show you What's that Yeah Shower gel Shower gel It's not quite shower gel It's in the same family As shower gel Bethany Deodorant Deodorant Yes That's what it says It's called deodorant Or in our house

It's called boy spray How do you get the deodorant out What does deodorant do Grace Grace It makes the place smell Well I don't smell Any of it Do you?

No smell of this How are we going to get Some smell out of this? Come on John Roddy You just first Just first Bring your hands up How are we going to get Some smell out of this?

[18 : 26] Careful, Fatima How are we going to do it? No That's not No Try again You weren't expecting that Were you?

You've got to put You've got to push it down You've got to put pressure on it When you put pressure on it See You get a smell No Okay Sit down Sit down So For a mint leaf Right Listen Listen For a mint leaf To get the smell You've got to put it under pressure And then when you put the pressure on it You get a smell For deodorant To get the smell out of it You've got to put it under pressure And then we know right away There's a lovely smell That comes out of the can That comes out of the stuff This was ill-advised Wasn't it?

Right boys Over that way for a second You go over and sit beside the organ Because there's too much smell over here You head over there Let's sit And open this door Everyone quiet Okay?

This is actually the important part Listen In the Bible There's a church That we were reading about last week And they were called Smyrna And in the Bible There's a church That we're going to be reading about this week And they were called Pergamon And there are lots of people in the Bible That I can take you to Give me one example Stephen And you know These churches And that man When they were just walking about like normal And life was quite easy They probably couldn't really Look any different to anyone else But when they were under pressure And when people were bad to them And when people were nasty to them And when people said You belong to Jesus And we don't like him And we don't like you The way they reacted Showed that they were just like Jesus So when they were put under pressure Rather than getting wild And having a horrible smell coming out There was a lovely fragrance Of Christ Remember Stephen With Stephen They were throwing stones at him And throwing stones at him And saying We want you dead Because you belong to Jesus And Stephen didn't show any anger And he didn't show any badness But he showed them love And he said Even in this prayer Forgive them They don't even know what they're doing And so boys and girls Look learned right When sometimes We have a hard time in life And we always Have a hard time sometimes Then Remember The mint Remember The spray Remember These churches And remember When we feel like We're being squeezed

[22 : 04] We've got the chance To show people Not badness And not ugliness We hope that's not inside But we've got the chance To show them What would Jesus do In a playground When people are nasty to you Don't sock them back Think about What would Jesus do Show them Jesus Let them smell Jesus If you put that Through your life Let's pray Lord God Thank you for Your word And thank you That you teach us Sometimes the lessons Are hard for us to learn And sometimes When we're going through A hard time The last thing we want to do Is show people The love of Jesus But that's what You've called us to do And you've promised That when we want to You'll help us And so we ask That when we're having A hard time Maybe even this week Something will happen Help us to remember That when we're under pressure When we feel like We're being squeezed We pray That we would show people

What Jesus is like And we pray this In Jesus name Amen We're going to sing Now to God's praise And we'll sing From Mission Praise 746 746 746 In Mission Praise The words also Will be on the screen What a friend We have in Jesus All our sins And griefs to bear What a privilege To carry everything To God and care And when Jesus Is our friend He's the one Who comes out From us When we're struggling So we'll stand To sing this in a moment And remember As the wee ones Go out What are you to do We pray for them We're interested to hear This morning That although There's absolutely No organised Connection Between what we're doing In the church services And in the Sunday school We're interested to hear That they're studying

Marriage This morning The older ones anyway In church And that's what We come to this evening We come to that Dangerous passage This evening Wives submit to your husbands And husbands Love your wives So God is clearly Speaking to us We come to Revelation chapter 2 And we pray They'll speak to us Through this passage also Revelation chapter 2 Revelation chapter 2 Revelation 2 And we read the short passage From verses 12 To verse 17 We've been studying In

past weeks Through these letters From Jesus To his church Church Church in Ephesus Which was big And it was busy It looked perfect

From the outside But it had lost Its first love The church in Smyrna Which was small And poor And weak And under pressure And yet we see It's Christ's school Of commendation And then we come Thirdly To the church In Pergamum In verses 12 To verse 17 Of Revelation Chapter 2 It says in verse 12 To the angel Of the church In Pergamum Write These are the words Of him Who has the sharp Double-edged sword I know I know where you live Where Satan Has his throne Yet you remain True to my name You did not Renounce your faith In me Even in the days Of Antipas My faithful witness Who was put To death In your city Where Satan Lives Nevertheless I have a few Things against you You have people There who hold To the teaching Of Balaam Who taught Balaam To entice The Israelites To sin By eating food Sacrifice To idols And by committing Sexual immorality Likewise You have those Who hold To the teaching Of the Nicolaitans Repent therefore Otherwise I will soon Come to you And will fight Against them With the sword Of my mouth He who has an ear Let them hear What the spirit Says to the churches To him who overcomes I will give Some of the hidden man I will also Give him a white stone With a new name Written on it Known only to him Who receives it Amen And may God bless That reading of his word To us John McSween Now will lead us In prayer In Gag■■ A ■ To the question Is If we Ether To have I13

[27 : 07] Is God flood in country in country Karen Jordan yesterday today We'll call him, Ho we give him, and, we shall pay for this wise day, we will GitHub, and we will redeem the Habakkuk God.

We say only, and that all He shall bedead God Está. ...

The Battle of Ys Hass'dag, In a heavy soakakara, custodavg math, Asskal continues. Yes, In a day, For the battle, Asskal continues to fall aside.

One run away from guilty of ing■■ and medicines. In the battle was made of He's heading for fishing and high enough to go to US omit and come to US to King O bus riding fast He is a boss of nothing, but also ■ and well the they will welcome us today thanks to our master, we enjoy all our garden, Thank you.

Thank you.

[30 : 50] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[33 : 34] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. is done just as we come back to the passage in revelation let's pray for a moment our heavenly father we are conscious always when we come to your word that we need the inspiration the light of the holy spirit to shine to give us understanding and to apply this to our hearts and to our lives and so we pray that you would enable us to to know that very real sense of the holy spirit himself being our teacher speak into our lives we pray as we speak pray also that you would speak into the lives of the children as they meet in different places too meet with us we pray and we pray this in jesus name amen we're going to turn back then to the passage in revelation that we read together and revelation chapter 2 and that short portion from verses 12 through to verse 17 and by way of introduction i want to just think about introductions introductions are are things that we uh we all receive and we give in terms of our daily lives introductions are important and we can learn a lot even from just a few words of introduction for example the student arrives home student's been away for a term or two maybe a year or two and uh this young girl student she's been away she comes back and she comes to church for the first time and she has a dashing young man beside her and so over coffee you have a chat and and you say um how are you getting on and who's your friend and she said well this is my friend he's bartholomew we've been friends now for a couple years we're good friends and you kind of listen just to a few words of introduction and you think i'm gonna have to buy a hat soon or maybe there's a conversation you see a pal that you you go way back with but you haven't seen him for a while he got married a year or so ago and you're walking along the street in inverness and you see him in

the distance and you you head towards him and he has a lady standing alongside him who's maybe a generation removed from him 20 years above him and uh you know his wife you know that's not his wife and so you want to greet him before you can even say hello he stops you in his traps and he says this is henrietta she's my mother-in-law and you know in just these few words of introduction not only is it an introduction but it's a plea it's an instruction please don't say anything that's going to incriminate me before my mother-in-law so just we can learn a lot from just a few brief words of introduction today with this passage before us i want to look at four introductions as we look at this letter that jesus passes on to his universal church we'll think about four introductions i think um this is a letter uh which i think i've said already was written around about the year 1895 it's a letter from jesus through john to the church in pergamum and yet it's a letter that remains just as relevant to the pergamites as it is to us here in north harris on a

sunday morning 2016 so four introductions to governor thoughts going through this and the first introduction to note is this introduction to jesus the letter is from jesus and john is the one who introduces jesus through the text here to the church in pergamum but jesus is the one who's told john what to write so jesus has articulated the introduction that he wants john to give and when we look at the words of introduction it's a remarkable one this is a an unsettling introduction for those in that church look at verse 12 these are the words of him jesus who has the sharp double-edged sword it's always good to think back into the context where that was first heard can you imagine being in a congregation something like this and we're aware that letters from jesus have come through john to various churches and there's one church one letter that has our name on it and so the congregation sits down and they congregate and you can imagine the tension building as they wait for this letter to be presented and to be read what's he going to say what's jesus going to say to us as a church they've heard about ephesus they've heard about little smirny what's jesus going to say to us in pergamum and the hush across the place and then you hear that line coming out shattering the silence these are the words of him who has the sharp double-edged sword the sword is something which in biblical terms speaks about authority and so jesus is identifying himself as the one who has all authority we know that from matthew 28 jesus says to the disciples all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me and so jesus is stating his claim his rightful claim to that position of authority to address his church and the sword also speaks about discipline which must have been an unnerving thought to pass through the minds of the congregation my bible's got a wee note that says here the christ's reference to the sharp two-edged sword proceeding from his mouth forewarns that the church's failure to discipline false teachers will prompt him to intervene directly so there's an arresting seriousness about this introduction that we're given to christ and i think that's actually something that we need to take on board this morning here in this day and this age because we live in an age today where the gentleness and the love and the mercy and the grace of jesus is very much emphasized and it should be because jesus is the one who is full of grace he is the one who is merciful he's the one who is abounding in mercy and love he's the one who is so gentle and tender in the way that he deals with us especially when we're broken he's the one who is the friend

[44 : 51] what a friend we have in jesus he's the friend who sticks closer than any brother and we're very ready to accept that in this day and this age but are we as ready to accept the fact that jesus is the one who has all authority and he's absolute lord and he's king and he is judge and although he is our friend who sticks closer than a brother he's never made and so we never get to approach him thoughtlessly or flippantly or irreverently he is lord of lords he is king of kings he is still the one who has the sharp double-edged sword he is still the one who not only has piercing insight into these churches but he has piercing insight into and he has absolute jurisdiction over your life and mine so as we think about this introduction to christ let's remember to bow before him let's remember to take him seriously let's be in awe before him let's reverently and humbly listen to him as he addresses us not only as a congregation but as individuals as part of a congregation as part of his universal church so we have these few words of introduction to Jesus and secondly we have these few words of introduction to Satan and Satan is the one who never wants to have an introduction

Satan is the one who always wants to fly under the radar he always wants to conceal himself he never wants to be seen so even the fact that we are doing this just now alarms and disturbs him I was watching a program a week or two back just saw five minutes of it it was a program about CCTV and there was this man who was in a room and there was CCTV all over the place and his

job was just to survey all these screens in this city somewhere in England and the cameras were in speaking to the man and interviewing him and he was just surveying all these screens all the time and then he spots this man and he's walking along and he's obviously aware of the camera and he's turning away from him and he stops and he says we're going to follow him so they followed down to the next screen and the next screen and every time he seemed to be aware of the cameras and always trying to turn away and hide his identity from them and so the man with the CCTV radio to a police officer and the police officer intercepted the man searched him and sure enough he had pockets full of stuff that he'd stolen from a shop up the road he didn't want to be seen because he was up to no good we will find that there are police scouring CCTV footage of fans and the euros just now they'll all have hoods up and masks on they don't want to be seen because they're up to no good and here in this letter in this city Jesus as it were he turns the camera onto Satan the one who wants to be concealed the one who wants to remain hidden and twice in verse 13 Jesus it's as if he zooms in on him to expose the fact that Satan is real and Satan has a throne in that city now why does Jesus do that why does

Jesus give an introduction to Satan well it's simply because he wants them and he wants us to be alert to him and his sophisticated and destructive ways one commentator John Scott says this he says we need to read our minds of the medieval caricature of Satan dispensing with the horns the hooves and the tail we are left with the biblical portrait of a spiritual being highly intelligent immensely powerful and utterly unscrupulous that's Satan not the horn and the tails and the pitchfork the caricature that's not him this is Satan and Jesus wants them and he wants us to be alert to him now we might say well isn't

Satan defeated isn't that what we're singing about with the cross the power that's in the blood well yes he is defeated but he is still active he is still destructive same in commentator Stott says at the cross Jesus met and conquered all the powers of evil at the cross Jesus met and conquered all the powers of evil but despite their overthrow the powers of darkness have not yet conceded their defeat they continue to contest every inch of their territory they are in the team is down 18 now so you look at the game and it's absolutely physically impossible for the team that has zero goals to ever win the match they are defeated but the final whistle hasn't blown yet and very often what we find is that if a team is utterly defeated in the last few minutes of the match such is their frustration they are actually dangerous and destructive because all they want to do is destroy and harm and that's a picture of Satan he is defeated ultimately but he is destructive and he is active presently he's up to know who and so

[52 : 23] Jesus turns the camera on him and says watch him be alert to him he is at work in this city paragon says Jesus and you know he's at work in this village and he's at work in every village and every town and every city and every individual life he is at work he is attacking he is always seeking to turn us away from Christ and away from the salvation and the life that only Jesus can give so we must be alert to Satan that's why we're introduced to him so we have this introduction to Christ we have this introduction to Satan thirdly we have this introduction to the place of Pergamum now we know from verse 13 this was the place where Satan was enthroned that's the context so if this is the place that Satan is enthroned we start to think well what's it going to look like we might have in our minds this crass devilish dark ugly city and yet that's not at all the picture that we have at

Pergamum as we look at the history books this was a very sophisticated city this was a city of culture and sport and education this is the kind of city that you would expect to find in a holiday grocery city breaks five days Pergamum wonderful take in the arts head to the theatre take in a few sports games savour it all it's kind of feature city in these travel programs that's the picture that we have from history of Pergamum and yet Satan has a grip on it and you know there's a lesson there for you and I to take on board Satan is most effective when he persuades us to take good things and elevate them to the position that they become god things

Satan still tactically he takes things like sport he takes things like education he takes things like art and culture he takes things like the government and the emperor as it was in Pergamum and he elevates them to the place that is reserved for Christ and Christ alone and so that's what we've got to watch in our lives me first where Satan is active he's taking things that are not bad in themselves but they're just precious to me and he starts to elevate them and elevate them and elevate them until I start to love them more than Christ and he takes them until they have more and more importance until I'm placing them never consciously but subconsciously in that place where they

have a greater priority and grasp on my time and my money and my talents than Christ does and so that's what Satan was up to in Pergamum and some of the Christians there fell to that tactic as we'll see in just a minute but there was others who verse 13 remained true to the name of Jesus and they suffered most acutely because of him one example verse 13 is Antipas he was under pressure to renounce Christ and yet he wouldn't I did a wee bit of digging into Antipas not too much but just a wee bit of digging into what was the story behind Antipas and although we could speculate the bottom line is we don't really know many commentators think he was one who was called to pay homage to the emperor and say Caesar is lord but when he was put under pressure like Shadrach Misha and Abednego and Daniel Antipas said no I wouldn't do it and he was killed because of his steadfastness some people think that was the story behind Antipas some people think Antipas was actually a great athlete and he was one of the heroes of that city absolute athletic prowess and yet when he found Christ and he was put in a situation where to take part in some of the games would have compromised his witness he said I wouldn't do it and he was killed because of him the bottom line is we don't know but what we do know is that Antipas was a faithful witness who was put to death in your city says Jesus where Satan lives so to be a Christian in the city of Pergamum was difficult to remain faithful as a witness to Christ in that place was going to be costly and yet [58 : 19] Jesus knew everything that we were going through and Jesus says to them in verse 13 I know where you live who thought about the comfort that must have been to hear Jesus saying if you were a Christian sitting in that congregation feeling the pressure of faithfulness to Christ in a hostile place how much of a comfort it must have been to hear Jesus say I know where you live sometimes we're away from home maybe at university or away in work for a period and maybe times of homesickness and then you meet somebody and they're from Harris and they start speaking and say oh I know

Harris I know where you live and we start to speak about the place and all these areas that you go in frequent and do you know this one and do you know that one and do you know this person and that family and do you remember this situation and instantly you have that connection because they know where you live and how Jesus must have encouraged them by saying I know where you live I know that city Pergamon I know where it is on the map I know the pressure you're under I know about Antipas remember Jesus mentioned Antipas his name they were grieving they were struggling with the loss of Antipas in such gruesome circumstances likely and yet Jesus says I know Pergamon I know your brother Antipas I know about that situation I know how you must be sore for I know where you live and still today

Jesus says to us when we're struggling and sometimes we come under attack when we feel sometimes like there's a troop mobilised against us when it becomes costly to remain true to the name and the word of Christ Jesus says I know where you live I haven't forgotten you I haven't overlooked you I have eyes on you so be encouraged and keep faithful so there's an introduction to the city of Pergamon we have this introduction to the authority of Christ we have the introduction to Satan and his destructive ways and finally we have this introduction to the church in Pergamon because the letter was specifically written to the church there's four very brief things I want to say about the church the first is this was a real church wasn't a fake church wasn't a pretend church wasn't a pseudo church it was a real church of Christ and they were verse 13 seeking to remain through to the name of Jesus so this church one it was real two it was a church where there was rot that had begun the thing about rot whether it's in our teeth or it's in a wooden roof or a floor or whatever rot never stays stationary we don't address it immediately it spreads and it creeps and it destroys and that's what Jesus saw he saw that there was rot in this real church and that's why he addresses them in verse 14 he says nevertheless

I have a few things against you you have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam who taught Balaam to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans and I haven't got time to go into the details of this but if you want to do some homework and read fully about the story of Balaam and Balaam numbers 22 to 25 is where you'll find them full but the very abridged version of the story is that Balaam was the king of Moab and Balaam wanted to attack God's people and seek to maximise destruction and so what Balaam does Balaam does sorry is he hires this guy called Balaam who you could say he was like a freelance prophet for the money and so he hires

Balaam to curse God's people but that attack fails and so King Balaam is infuriated the actual story is quite comedic he hires him he says I want you to curse God's people and anytime he goes to curse God's people he blesses God's people and this goes on and goes on and the king is infuriated he's paid money for the curse and all he's getting is blessing so rather than persisting in attacking from the outside King Balaam decides he will attack from the inside and he sends in Moabite women to try and seduce the men and to try and steer them using whatever means possible into idol worship and essentially cut a long story short that approach succeeds so approach from the outside overt they recognize it fails approach from the inside idol immorality and their success that's numbers 22 to 25 and what we see in numbers 22 to 25 is actually repeating itself in

[65 : 05] Perdom because as this church comes under attack from the outside that attack is thwarted and Antipas we see his testimony underlines that but now it seems that there are those who have come into the church and it seems from what's underlined here that they were trying to dilute the gospel of Jesus Christ they were trying through the teaching of Balak and Nicolaitans to lead people into sexual sin and idolatry and all the while steer them away from the truth of the gospel and Christ and it was only a few that's clear from the text most were trying to be faithful there's only a few who were at this trying to steer people away from Christ and his word and the church decided they weren't going to discipline just keep the peace let's just not rock the boat and so there was a toleration of this rot that was creeping in but Jesus looks in and says well you will tolerate

I will not he would not tolerate this false teaching in this church the rot had to stop and so he calls them to repent a real church a real church where rot had begun and very simply Jesus call is a call to repentance verse 16 repent otherwise I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth and I just find it amazing that 2000 years later and many thousands of miles separated from patterns this is as relevant today as it was in the day of this first pen because as a church and as individuals let's look at our own hearts not look around us don't look in us we come under these same attacks don't we these temptations to compromise these temptations to allow material things and other people to take the place of Christ we come under these same attacks to allow sexual temptation to get the better of us and so when we see it whether it's in our hearts in our lives or within the church what are we to do well it's crystal clear we're to repent we are not to allow that rot to creep one more inch we are to repent before Christ himself has to come with that sword of discipline so a real church where rot had come in

Christ calls them repent and if they will repent finally we see that there is a reward and there's two aspects to the reward it will take me one minute so don't worry to him who overcomes verse 17 Jesus says I will give some of the hidden manor for those who will trust Christ it's a promise of satisfaction the hidden manor takes us back to Exodus 16 John 6 the hidden manor is Jesus it's Christ who promises himself to those who will repent and believe in him and he is the one who can satisfy us in the way that no idol ever can he's the one who can satisfy us in the way that no immoral craven ever can why is

Jesus hidden why is he the hidden manor well just look around you and think about how many people you and I know who have souls today that are parched and are hungry and are struggling and are sore and yet Christ is of no interest to them as of yet he is hidden we're to pray for them because none but Christ can satisfy no other name for me and that's the reward that's promised those who will come to him that he will give them himself they will find satisfaction in him and finally they will find security in him verse 17

I will also give him a white stone with a new name on it known only to him who receives it the church in Pergman knew the sore reality of what it was to be barred from various aspects of life and society they knew what it was to be to use the term black bald you know what it means to be black bald you're black bald and you're struck out they were outcasts and strangers if they didn't compromise they were left with absolutely no worldly security and state and yet Jesus looked down and Jesus saw that and Jesus says I know where you live Jesus sees how when there were those who remained faithful to him they suffered they were humiliated they were isolated because of his namesake and

[71 : 40] Jesus says to them well then they give you the black ball I will give you the white stone the white stone was like a ticket you wanted to access a theatre or a show you didn't have a ticket you had a white stone handed over the white stone you were out in the courtroom the white stone

was known as the white stone of acquittal as the jury sat either a black ball went down a black stone or a white stone and so Jesus was saying to the faithful they may cast their vote against you they may condemn you they may strike you out but I will put my vote with you so the reward for the faithful was security in Christ and satisfaction in Christ will this be you're the one he hears an ear let him hear what the spirit says to the churches we'll pray heavenly father we pray that you would take your word and you would apply it to our lives and you would give us understanding and that you would speak in Jesus name amen we're we're going to close by saying another hymn which we haven't sung for a long time

I understand it's not in the books but it'll be on stream in just a moment it's a hymn that speaks about Jehovah St. Kenry which means the Lord our righteousness I once was a stranger to grace and to God and yet we find that in Christ we are righteous we are secure we are satisfied we'll start to sing in a moment we are our once was a stranger to grace and to God I knew not my danger and felt not my

Lord for rams open pasture or glass on the tree she know what said can what's broken to me when we hear some glory my life from on high that legal fear should be I travel to die no man needs no safety itself could I see Jehovah said can you my Savior must be my terrors so punished before the sea came my guilty fears vanished with hope as I came to drink up the fountain by healing and flee Jehovah said can you there's no face to be Jehovah said can you I treasure of course Jehovah said can you I have been lost if these hands are broken I love and I heal I hate who I am grud I rest can achieve in treading the body the shadow of hell this heart shall rally my paul to regret for why from the demon my God said to me

Jehovah said bear you I guess thou shall be and now we pray in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit we rest upon and remain with us all both now and forevermore Amen