

Going and Growing! (Part 2)

Revelation 2:18-19

Thought for the Day: A spiritually healthy Christian is actively serving the Lord and growing in Christlike character and conduct.

The church in Thyatira was a going and growing church—it was actively serving the Lord and many of the members were growing in Christlike character and conduct. But appearances can be misleading!

I. The Greeting (2:18)

A. The Addressee

18 And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write:

B. The Speaker

...The words of the Son of God...

- Two titles were frequently used to describe Jesus in the Gospels:
 - Both titles emphasize that Jesus Christ is God in human flesh.
 - Son of Man – Emphasizes His humanity. (Cp. 1:17)
 - Jesus fully identified with us in our humanity. He is therefore qualified to serve as our Great High Priest before God. (Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:14-16)
 - Son of God – Emphasizes His deity.
 - Jesus had to be fully human in order to die on the cross for our sins; He had to be fully God in order for His death to be sufficient to pay for our sins.

...who has eyes like a flame of fire...

- Jesus knows everything there is to know about us—all our thoughts, words, and deeds—nothing escapes His attention! (Revelation 1:14; Hebrews 4:13)
- It is the Lord's declared intention that all our words and deeds are going to be evaluated and rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ. (Matt. 12:36; 2 Cor. 5:9-10; Rev. 2:23)

...and whose feet are like burnished bronze.

- In light of the message of verses 20-23, the people needed to be reminded of the Lord's holy, righteous, and just character; His power and authority to execute judgment.

II. The Commendation (2:19)

19 I know your works...

- "Is it possible to have a growing and maturing church and yet be compromising with sin? Judging from [the Lord's remarks in these verses], that is a real possibility. Appearances may deceive us, but God looks on the heart." (*Hocking, World Leader, p. 69*)
- Are we more concerned about outward appearances, or inward realities? Are we more concerned about what people see on the outside, or what God sees on the inside?

...your love...

- Thyatira is the only church of the seven that was commended for its love.

- The first and greatest commandment – love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. The second is like it – love our neighbor as ourselves.
 - Love is the fulfillment of the Law (James).
 - Jesus – “A new commandment I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”
 - The church in Ephesus was condemned because the believers there had forsaken their first love.
 - The believers in Thyatira apparently loved the Lord and one another, yet they were still compromising with sin!
 - Love is not enough; we must also pursue holiness!
- “God’s love does not mean we tolerate sin. In the name of ‘love’ many sinful practices are allowed in today’s churches. No one wants to confront, rebuke, or discipline believers. We are told we have no right to tell people how to live their lives. Some say it is an invasion of privacy and legally wrong to be concerned about the lifestyles of people who attend our churches. We have lost sight of what Jesus thinks of the church, and have substituted our own insufficient and powerless viewpoints.” (*Hocking, World Leader, p. 70*)

...and faith...

- Like Christ, Paul commended the believers in Thessalonica for their works, their faith, and their love. (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3)
- Faith, love and hope are the biblical motives for God-honoring service.
- The believers in Thyatira were serving the Lord and one another because of their love for the Lord and their commitment to the Christian faith.

...and service...

- The believers in Thyatira were actively involved in sacrificial ministry to others.
- The word translated service “indicates voluntary service focused on the needs of people... The church in Thyatira had a proper motivation (love) that resulted in effective ministry.” (*Hocking, ibid, p. 70*)

...and patient endurance...

- “Bearing up under a heavy load.” They were dealing with trials, tribulations, and persecution, yet they were bearing up under the load.
- Jeremiah 12:5 (*NLT*) – “If racing against mere men makes you tired, how will you race against horses? If you stumble and fall on open ground, what will you do in the thickets near the Jordan?”
- How are you responding to the current crisis? If you’re not pleased with how you’ve been responding, you’d better take steps *now* to prepare for even greater trials to come.

...and that your latter works exceed the first.

- Are you growing in your Christian life? Are you seeing transformation in your character? Is your conduct becoming more Christlike? Is your faith getting stronger? Are you growing in your understanding and application of the Word of God? How’s your prayer life—is it getting stronger? Are you serving the Lord in tangible ways?

Are you Going and Growing or Parked and taking a Nap?