

The Church at Pergamos: The Faltering Church (Part 1)

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[0:00] Revelation 2, starting with verse 12.

Revelation 2-3, letters to the churches.

Let me read, starting with verse 12-17. And to the angel of the church of Pergamos write, These things says he who has the sharp two-edged sword.

I know your works and where you dwell. That's like he said, I know where you live. And he does, doesn't he? Where Satan's throne is. Of course, I hope he doesn't say that about us.

And you hold fast to my name and did not deny my faith, even in the days in which Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was killed among you where Satan dwells.

[1:11] But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam. We've seen that already in one of our letters. Who taught Balak to put the stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.

Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. Which thing I hate? Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written, which no one knows except him who receives it.

All right, so, here's the third letter. And it is the letter to Pergamos, the church of Pergamos. And the church of Pergamos, we're going to call the faltering church.

The faltering church. Now, we're not going to get through all this letter tonight. There's quite a bit here to discuss. Even reading it, you discover some things there that you don't understand.

[2:29] Some references to things and such. Unless you've done a study on this letter before, some of these things, many of these things can be foreign. Now, we'll, I think, take a couple of Wednesdays on this.

We've got three points to share with you, and we'll get through one of them here tonight. Pergamos is the faltering church. Remember, Ephesus, the fallen church.

Smyrna, we finished up last week, the fearful church. And now Pergamos, the faltering church.

Now, as we shall see in this letter, this letter addressed to the church, that this church was drifting into worldliness.

Worldliness and carnality. Those are almost parallel thoughts or parallel concepts. Worldliness and carnality. Worldliness really in the sense of beginning to maybe focus too much on the things of the world and philosophies of the world and incarnality, of course, being what connects us to those worldly things, and that is our flesh.

And so focusing too much upon the flesh and allowing the flesh to have too much control. And the flesh always seeks, always craves the things of the world, the passions of the world, the ideologies of the world, and so forth.

[3:57] So this is the letters addressed to a church that was struggling with these things. And in a sense, at least, a group within the church were drifting toward these things, worldliness and carnality.

And this letter was addressed to a church, I think pretty clearly, that's like many churches today, that we would see today.

Even though these churches, as we've studied, I think in my introduction, maybe shared with you, did share with you, the kind of prophetic nature of each of these letters to the church, that they, in a sense, kind of prophetically describe the various ages of the church, from the early church all the

way to the last church that will be on this earth before Jesus comes.

But even though that's the case, we can find in each of the letters characteristics, struggles, problems, sins, tendencies, all these.

We can find characteristics of these in churches today. Very clearly. And that's something we can easily see from this church of Pergamos. All right, so, again, this letter was addressed to a church who's like many churches today, and I would even say like many individual Christians today, who seek to love God, seek to love God and to love the world at the same time.

[5:31] There's the problem. That's where this church was faltering. Love God, love the world at the same time. Can you do that? Well, you can try.

And I guess we could argue that to some measure we all do this. But the two can't go together. A good example, I think, from the Bible would be Lot.

And you remember Lot's Lot. Lot's situation. You know that story. Lot's situation. And isn't that what Lot desired? He desired the best of both worlds.

He desired this world, represented by Sodom and the pleasures of Sodom. And he also desired the world to come.

He was a believer in the one true God, Yahweh, and he desired heaven, the eternal reward. But you can't have both of them.

[6:33] Now, Lot tried it, didn't he? And we know how that worked out. Or how it didn't work out. And, I mean, in the first place, he compromised his faith, clearly.

And then he lost his wife. Very nearly lost his family. And God was gracious. And Abraham, really, in a sense, stood in the gap for Lot.

And God spared Lot and his family, but, of course, his wife didn't make it out alive, did she? All right, so there's a good example. One in both. You know, one foot in the world, one foot in heaven. And you can't have both those things. So, what does the Lord Jesus have to say to a church or an individual who is, like the church of Pergamos, drifting into carnality and worldliness through a love of the world or a desire to love the world and love God at the same time.

Let's see what he has to say. We'll get point number one here tonight. First one is this, his concern for the truth. That's the first thing that we want to glean from this letter.

[7:43] And we're not going to kind of take the letter in order. We'll kind of skip around, take a little bit, hear the deals with the truth, and then next week we'll kind of back up a little bit and go forward.

So, don't be concerned if I skip some parts of the letter that you have a question about. We'll get to it. The first thing we want to see is what it says about the truth. The Lord's concern for the truth.

Now, maybe at this time it would be, I think, helpful to note that in each of the letters, I'm not going to go through all the letters with this, but the two we've looked at and now this third.

With each of these three letters there is a key word that I think would help describe the primary point, the theme of the letter. For the church at Ephesus, the letter to Ephesus, that word would be love.

And they had lost their first love, remember. So the issue was love. And the letter of Smyrna, I think we could say works is the key word there.

[8:47] And out here, Pergamos, the key word is truth. We really believe, even though he kind of deals with several other kind of issues, all of them really are tied to what the church at Pergamos was doing with the truth.

Sound doctrine. The truth of God's Word. So, love, works, and truth. Now, the point being, there must be a balance of love, works, and truth in the church.

There must be a balance. You have to be in concert with one another. Not so much in the measure of each. You know, how much love, how much truth, how much works, and the balancing as to its measure.

Though that's important. But what I'm talking about is the focus, our focus on these three things.

Our priority. For example, just like the church at Pergamos, some churches today, by extension, our culture today, wants to make love the most important thing.

To the marginalizing of truth. I wanted to use the word minimalizing, but the dictionary says there's no such word. So, I've heard it.

[10:05] But you know what I'm talking about. I want to focus on love, make that the main thing. And truth, well, it's kind of relegated to second or third or fourth place. Something lesser important of importance.

Do you see that in our culture today? I mean, even in our Christian, quote, Christian culture, church culture, that love is the key, truth is important, but it's not more important than love.

And that's what a lot of American churches are doing today. They say, let's just set our doctrinal differences aside and start accepting one another. Now, that sounds pretty good, doesn't it?

Unless, what they mean by setting aside our doctrinal differences, what they mean, if what they mean is to say that's not important, that doctrine is not important, or that there must be some compromise and we've got to somehow meet in the middle.

You know, you give a little and I give a little and, you know, we meet in the middle. If that's what they mean, then that's not correct. Truth is what it is. And sometimes it does divide.

[11 : 13] But this is kind of a mentality. That's putting love as the focus and marginalizing truth. So let's just set our doctrinal differences aside, start accepting one another.

Doctrine's not important. Not really that important. And that's what many say. Now, this does not come from the Word of God, of course. You'll find anything in Scripture that would encourage anyone to compromise truth in order to get along with people or in order to come together and cooperate and so forth.

You know, that's the philosophy of man. And it's kind of represented by this popular bumper sticker. Have you ever, any of you have seen this bumper sticker? Have you? Yes, sir.

I saw one just the other day, as a matter of fact. And, of course, Sherry and I, we were, we took a little trip, what, Monday, I guess, after we got Jonathan off to youth camp and it's just Sherry and me and we don't know what to do with one another.

And so we, we went on a little excursion and where did we go? Went to Jinx and went downtown where all the antique stores are and such.

[12 : 27] And it was kind of fun, although we found out Monday's not the day to go because most of them are closed. Anyway, we were walking along and there's a car and it has that bumper sticker on there and Sherry says, what is that?

What does that say? We had to look at it a while to see the word there. And it's the word co-exist.

Alright, you've seen it before. And this is, this epitomizes what our culture desires all of us to do.

And it's not just to get along with one another and love one another. It is a, a kind of leveling out the playing field in a sense or equalizing all the various religions and, and, and, and, and focus on life.

And so, I don't know if you knew what each of those symbols represented, so I thought I'd give it to you. Of course, some of them are very obvious. The crescent moon represents Islam, of course.

The peace signs are a little bit maybe vague. In fact, I consulted a couple of sources and I have two different answers, but basically, of course, the peace sign does represent pacifism, but it is a, a pagan symbol.

[13 : 52] The, what looks like an E with a couple of signs, that's kind of a mathematical equation, and it, it, it's got the male sign, female sign, and some say it represents homosexuality, but, generally speaking, it just is a symbol for atheism, being a scientific equation.

The star of David, of course, is Judaism, and, and then the I there is a little interesting. The, the little symbol up above, they say, is the Wiccan tentangle, pentangle, excuse me, and it represents, of course, paganism, and then the yin yang represents Taoism, Confucianism, Eastern religion, and then, you know, last but not least, although they put it last, because I guess they had to have a T, all right, and who, who would they pick for the T, but, of course, the cross, which is the shape of a T, and that represents Christianity.

Now, what's wrong with this, this whole concept? I mean, we could maybe analyze this and come up with some positive conclusion about it.

Of course, we do need to get along with one another, and in America, from our very conception, there's been the freedom of religion, and I think we still need to maintain that, and still do have that, except if you're a Christian, and then, you know, somehow, we don't deserve the same freedom as other religions.

But besides that kind of argument, what's wrong with this whole idea? What's that? Relativism? All right. It's good for you, it's good for me, it doesn't matter who's right, who's wrong, and it's wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong, and there's truth.

[15 : 45] Yeah. Of course, we know from our perspective, not perspective, but from our biblical worldview, which is validated by the Holy Spirit in our hearts, that Christianity is the only, quote, religion that really makes any kind of difference, not only in this life, but eternally, and none of these others really have an answer for the sin problem and the eternal issue.

But yeah, relativism, it equates all religions. That's probably the most problematic feature of this whole concept.

it equates them so that none is better than another or worse than another. There are all many different ways and they're all right.

You just pick the one and that works for you fine and so forth. But this, and I put this in here because this, I think, helps to conceptualize the problem that was going on at Pergamos and a problem that is going on a lot of churches and our culture today.

That, you know, let's just love one another. All right? Just get along and love one another and forget about doctrine, truth.

[17 : 13] Yeah, it's relative anyway. And so, there's what some do. On the other hand, some want to make, go just the opposite, make truth the most important thing and marginalize love.

Marginalizing of love. And so, when you do that, you don't have the proper balance with that, then, you know, we become harsh, cold, dogmatic, just for the sake of dogmatism, unloving, un-caring, un-accepting, legalistic.

So, you know, both extremes are wrong and you have a problem. And so, you know, you don't want dry, dead orthodoxy.

You know, truth without any kind of love and compassion is maybe not just as wrong because, you know, compromising truth just throws everything out.

But love is something we need mixed with our truth. I heard about a man, in fact, I was going to tell you a little story, and you may have heard this before, but it seems this fellow was walking across the bridge and he noticed another guy who was right at the edge of the bridge and he was about to jump off, take his life amid suicide.

[18 : 45] And so, you know, this fellow cared about him and he said, maybe I can just strike up a conversation and talk to the guy and he said, dear fellow, are you a Christian? He wanted to kind of approach it on a spiritual basis.

And to his surprise, the fellow said, yes, I am a Christian. He said, you are. Are you an evangelical Christian? And he said, well, yes, I am.

I'm an evangelical. Well, so am I. Are you a Baptist? And he said, yes, I'm a Baptist. No, a Southern Baptist?

Yes, I'm a Southern Baptist. Well, so am I. Are you a conservative Southern Baptist? Yes, I am. Conservative Bible-believing Southern Baptist Christian.

Are you a pre-tribulation rapturist? And he said, no, I'm a post-tribulation. Die, heretic. You see, sometimes, you know, we have truth up there and love is relegated to something of a lesser degree.

[19 : 57] And as a matter of fact, those who are strong dogmatic in their theologies and doctrine sometimes only love those whose doctrine is the same as theirs and not show any kind of compassion or any kind of civility or grace at all.

All right, so those are the two sides and represents the problem that I think the Lord is addressing here. Jesus identifies, then, two general truths in this letter to Pergamos.

and you should know that he commends them for their stand on one of these truths, but he condemns them for losing sight of the other truth.

So he commends and condemns as he addresses the two truths that he is most concerned about there at the Church of Pergamos. All right, truth number one is the truth about who Christ is.

That's a very simple truth. And these are two very broad truths, basic truths. And the first one, and really you could argue the most important one in regard to Christianity is who Christ is.

[21 : 20] The person of Christ, who Christ is. Verse 13, I know your works and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is, and we'll deal with that next time, just what that means. And you hold fast to my name.

Now, that's the key phrase here, hold fast to my name. Did not deny my faith, even in the days in which this faithful martyr was killed, and so forth.

All right, so the key phrase here is you hold fast my name. And would you agree that Christianity is Christ, isn't it?

Christianity is Christ. If you take Christ out of Christianity, you not only destroy the word itself, but you destroy the truth about it, what it really is.

Christianity is Christ. The bare minimum of Christian theology has everything to do with the person and work of Christ. It has everything to do with Jesus of Nazareth being the Son of God.

[22 : 24] This is the basic Christian theology. Jesus of Nazareth, and I say it that way, write it that way because we're not talking about just any Jesus. There were a lot of people named Jesus.

Back in biblical times, there are people still today named Jesus. But Jesus of Nazareth, the one that was born in Nazareth, he's the Son of God.

The incarnation. That's a basic truth of Christianity. Also, Jesus of Nazareth died on the cross to save sinners. It's very simple, isn't it? Basic gospel, really.

The fundamentals of the faith. Jesus is the Son of God. He died upon the cross to save sinners.

That's the atonement. And Jesus of Nazareth rose again from the grave on the third day.

That's the resurrection. And wouldn't you agree? That's the bare minimum of Christian theology. And if you want to call yourself a Christian, you must believe those three things.

[23 : 32] Now, there are the things that you must believe. It's not an exhaustive list of all of what we might call the fundamentals of the faith or the core doctrines of the faith.

But if you want to call yourself a Christian, you must believe these three things and you must act upon these truths in faith. Because if Jesus is the divine Lord, then I must submit to him as Lord. And if Jesus is the divine Savior, the one and only Savior, then I must trust him as Savior.

Christianity is Christ. Now, here's an easy four-step method for recognizing a cult.

I think I've shared some of this. I don't know. at various times, but here it is. Four-step method to recognizing a cult.

Number one, addition. Addition. Do they add to the Word of God? You just analyze a certain sect or religious group or faith-based type of ministry or whatever and analyze what they believe and number one, do they add to the Word of God?

[25 : 01] Addition. That's how you identify a cult. Do they add to the Word of God? Let's just take, for example, the Jehovah's Witnesses. Do they add to the Word of God?

They've got their own Bible, their own translation, and many things have been added to it and changed in order to line up with their theology.

Mormons, clearly. And so, just look at that particular sect and analyze, do they add to the Word of God? Second, subtraction.

Oh, and by the way, let me back up. Not something you need to write down, but you know, the Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons, those are easy to identify. But there are some, even, that call themselves, would number them among Christianity, the whole kind of part of Pentecostalism and the prophetic, what they call the prophetic movement, where they, where God speaks directly to them, gives them a new word, and this is what God has said, and it's new revelation.

That's adding to the Word of God, and that's a cult. I don't care if they call themselves Christians. All right, but then the second one is subtraction. Do they subtract from the person of Christ?

[26 : 25] And this is key to the issue here that we're discussing that was going along at Pergamos. Do they subtract from the person of Christ? That is, making him anything less than sovereign God.

All right? If a religion makes him a created being of any kind, or a lesser God, or one of many gods, or half God, half man, or just man, and then maybe later he became God, any version of that subtracts from the biblical teachings of the person of Christ.

That's what all cults do. They add to the Word of God, they subtract from the person of Christ. And the third is multiplication. Do they multiply the number of requirements for salvation?

If they do, it's a cult. And that would then add to your list of cults many more than you may have had to begin with. When you start to look at even some who would, again, number themselves and want to be considered mainline Christianity, if they add any kind of works, if they add adherence to church doctrine in order to be saved, the observance of ordinances like baptism, if baptism is added, required for salvation, that's a cult.

All right, you can just fill in the blank who I might be talking about there. That's a cult. You see, the Church of Christ is a cult. Do they multiply ways to salvation?

[28 : 14] Or membership in a particular church, if a certain group says you must be a member of this church, this religion, then that is by definition a cult.

Because it's not just simply we think we're the best one or the right one. What they're saying is if you're not a member of this church, you're not saved. That's adding to the requirements of salvation.

What is the requirement of salvation? By grace through faith. By grace through faith. And not of works.

Any kind of works. And then the fourth one, division. So you've got addition, subtraction, multiplication, division. You're identifying a cult. Division, do they divide loyalty between cult leader or leaders and God?

Now think about that. If a group, a religious group, whatever they may call themselves, however you might identify, even if they call themselves Christian, if they require or there's a tendency to promote allegiance to a leader and not Christ or God, then that's division, that's a cult.

[29:39] Do they divide families? Nearly all cults. Well, I guess I could say if it's a cult, they do this. They divide families.

Jesus commended this church then for holding fast in the name of Jesus and not denying his faith. So he commended them for their adherence, they had the truth of the person of Christ.

There's a second truth that cannot be compromised, and truth number two is the truth about righteousness. Or you ought to add the word holiness.

We're not talking about righteousness in the sense of what is imputed to us when we're saved, which is the righteousness of Christ.

We're not talking about our positional righteousness or holiness. We're talking about practical, how we live, the things we do, and so forth.

[30:51] And so Jesus condemns this church for not following after this truth. Verse 14, but I have a few things against you because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak, and he gives us a little bit of information about that story that you can go back and read in Numbers 22 to 24.

So there's a little snippet here about that story from the Old Testament. Balak taught Balaam, or rather Balaam taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality.

Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans or Laetans, which thing I hate.

So there's a comparison here. Or equating really of Balaam, which is Old Testament, and Nicolaitans who were a group within this church.

And apparently a group that also was involved in some of the other churches as well because they've already been mentioned in, I think it was the, I don't remember which letter it was.

I think it was Ephesus. Might have been. Anyway. All right, now, what's this all about? What Jesus, really, in a sense, it's a play on words. You say he's doing this to make a point because the word Balaam, which is Hebrew, and Nicolaitans, which is a Greek word, they have the same meaning.

[32:31] And they mean a conquer, to conquer, or to conquer people. All right, so what is Jesus saying? He's saying, very simply, that what you are allowing the Nicolaitans to do in your church is exactly what your forefathers allowed Balaam to do to the nation.

And if you know anything about the story, you would remember. Let me just kind of walk through the story, tell you the story, remind you about it. Balaam was prophet, prophet of Yahweh, a bonafide prophet.

And so he knew the truth. He also had been given, because he was a prophet, given the insight, special insight into the future of Israel. All Old Testament prophets had foresight, because God had given that to them.

But Balaam had a couple of fatal lusts, very common lusts, wealth and women. That was his problem.

And so here's Balak, who was he? He was king of Moab. You might remember the story. And he, in a sense, bribed Balaam to curse Israel.

[33:42] That's how he wanted to defeat Israel. Well, let's just get the prophet of the Lord and curse them. Alright, so Balaam agreed, didn't he? And yet every time he opened his mouth, what came out?

Blessing instead of cursing. You know, he was just providentially, divinely hindered from actually cursing them. It's an interesting story. But he would open his mouth, he would curse them, and it would just make Balak all upset.

You know, I thought you were cursing. Well, every time I open my mouth, I bless them. Did that stop Balaam? No. Because he was greedy and motivated by greed.

And so Balaam came up with another plan. You get a little glimpse of it here in this letter in Revelation. And his plan was, he said to the king, if you can't curse them, then corrupt them. That was his plan. That was his second plan. And that one worked. And God allowed that to work. And we can debate a little bit or maybe wonder why God would allow this, but he did.

[34 : 48] But this was his plan. And so because Balaam, prophet of the Lord, he knew the character of God, he certainly wasn't obeying God, wasn't living for him, all right, the major problems there, but he didn't know the character of God.

And so that's why he knew this would work. He knew if he could corrupt the people of Israel, then God would have to correct them, would have to judge them, and indeed he did.

And so he knew, and this was his plan, that when God corrected them, and in those days, in the Old Testament, every time he corrected God's people, a lot of them lost their lives.

And that happened here too. So here's Balaam's plan. We just corrupt them, and then God will judge them, and there'll be less of them, and then also there'll be less of a threat to you Moabites. That was his plan. And so here's what they did. They sent in beautiful Moabite women, girls, to seduce the Israelite men. And it worked.

[35 : 57] It worked. And not only was there then immorality going on, but they were also then seduced into participating into the idolatry and immorality of the Moabite pagan worship.

That was their plan, and his plan, it worked, and that provoked God to anger. Alright, so this is what Jesus is saying to the church at Pergamos. What Balaam was to Israel, what he did there, the Nicolaitans are doing right here in the church of Pergamos.

And we could define it this way. The Nicolaitans were turning the grace of God into a license to sin. That was the problem. So, you know, they're saved, they have the grace of God, and because of that, you know, they're in.

And so, I can just live any way I want to. That's what they were convincing some of the people at Pergamos to do. Now, Jesus called it the doctrine of the Nicolaitans.

[37 : 14] That was their doctrine, which he said, I hate, I hate this doctrine. A doctrine that takes the grace of God and turns it into a license to just sin.

Just live any way I want to, because, you know, I'm saved. Saved by grace, and so I can live any way I want to. And so, that's what the people in the church were doing there, and there are a lot of people in the church today doing the same thing.

Paul wrote to the Galatians in Galatians 5:1, he said, stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Now, he's talking about not going back to a legalistic adherence to rules and laws and so forth in order to be saved.

That's what he's talking about, but there are a lot of people today who take that and want to tell us that liberty about which Paul was writing there is a liberty to sin.

[38 : 22] It's a liberty to live any way you want to. And so, the reasoning kind of goes like this, Jesus Christ redeemed us from the law, right? Saved us from the law, and therefore, we're no longer under the law.

This was their reasoning. We're not under the law, we're under grace. And is that true? It is true. But then they continue this line of reasoning by saying, when we continue to sin, alright, now we're under grace, and we sin, when we continue to sin, that's a good thing, because then God's grace grows in our lives.

And, you know, and forgiveness is just a wonderful thing, and it's sin that makes grace grow, abound. Remember, sin abounds, where sin abounds, grace, doth more abound.

But Paul said, that doesn't mean that we should sin more so that grace abounds, that God forbid.

But this is the line of reasoning that many have. And so, you know, there are various different versions of it and degrees of it that people say, well, you know, it's alright to look as long as I don't touch.

Ever heard anybody say something such silly thing as that? Or, he's just sowing his wild oats. Yeah, praying for crop failure.

[39 : 48] Right. Yeah, I've got an experience of sowing your wild oats on Monday through Saturday and praying for crop failure on Sunday or something.

It's Adrian Rogers. Or, how about this? When we're all human, you know, just human, can't help ourselves, you know, just sinners saved by grace. You know, that's true, isn't it?

But have you ever heard anybody use that to justify sinful behavior? We're just all sinners saved by grace.

But see, it's a twisting of a theology and it's a twisting it to the point of denying any desire of God upon our lives to live holy lives, to live righteously.

Not to be saved, but because we are saved. To actually consider that we're to pursue holiness in our lives for Christ.

[40 : 53] And, you know, this is just a subject that's not really dealt with much today. I mean, there's a lot said about love and fellowship and forgiveness and grace and liberty, but not a whole lot said about God's demand for holiness, to live righteous lives.

But he did say, be ye holy, for I am holy. All right, so let me just sum this up, this first point. Christian faith is about those two things.

The truth concerning the person and work of Christ, better get that right, and the truth concerning a life of righteousness and holiness. So basically, we are in this world today to do two things.

To exalt Christ and to promote righteousness. You can really boil it all down. There are a lot of things that pertain to each of those two things.

All right, the exalting of the Lord Jesus Christ in your life. He's Lord. He's Master. He's Creator. He's the Savior. And we're to exalt Him with our lips, with our lives, in the things we do, and so forth.

[42 : 21] So these are the two things we're to do in this world. Exalt Jesus Christ and promote righteousness. How do we promote it? Well, by living it. And, you know, thankfully still in this country, we can promote righteousness through our citizenship in how we vote and who we vote for.

We can promote righteousness, of course, through our involvement through the Lord's Church. So these two things, although again, both of these things entail a number of things, a myriad of things, but everything fits under those two categories, the exaltation of Jesus Christ and the promotion of righteousness in our lives and in our world.

What's the opposite? The opposite would be to deny Jesus Christ. And that would also, entail a number of things, a number of ways to deny Jesus Christ.

You don't have to, it doesn't just have to be, you know, when someone asks you, do you know Jesus? And like Peter said, no, I don't even know the guy. I mean, that's blatant, that's obvious, but we can deny Jesus Christ in many, many other ways.

And then the other opposite would be to live in sin and for sin, but it's sin. To let our lives be guided and controlled by sin.

[43 : 48] We're not promoting righteousness. We're living for sin.