

For September 25 to October 1

Candles #3: Pergamum

Getting Started

Tell a story of a time when you stood for what you believed even when it was difficult. Why did you do it? What was the result? Have you ever lost a friend because you wouldn't compromise? Were you right or wrong for not compromising? Explain.

Read the Text Together

Revelation 2:12-17

Discussion

How does Jesus describe Himself to the church of Pergamum? Is this a vision of Jesus that we normally employ, for example, have you ever seen a painting of Jesus like this? Why or why not? What does this imply about our concept of Jesus?

In **v. 13**, the church in Pergamum receives praise. Why? In **v. 14 and 15**, the church in Pergamum receives censure. Why?

So is the church in Pergamum good or bad? Explain your answer. What does your answer teach us about what we can reasonably expect from a church?

V. 14 mentions that some in Pergamum hold to the teachings of Balaam. Who was Balaam? What does the text say Balaam taught Balak to do? Do you think this is a symbolic or a literal description of what was happening in Pergamum? Why?

The Nicolaitans are mentioned in **v. 15**. Unlike Ephesus, the church that resisted the teachings of this group, Pergamum seems to have tolerated this heretical minority, along with the ones who hold the teachings of Balaam. What are the strengths and dangers of such tolerance? What is the apparent effect on the church in Pergamum? Do you think Jesus is glad they have been so tolerant? How do you feel about this?

What is the prescribed remedy in **v. 16**? What does Jesus say He will do if they don't act? What does Jesus' warning mean?

What is promised to the overcomers? Why do you feel this is what the church in Pergamum wants and needs most?

Wrap Up

How does a church find the right balance between tolerance of a variety of theological opinions and toleration of harmful heresy? What is the key to protecting against harmful heresies? Does Hebrews 4:12 shed any light on this question?

In what ways does the church in Ephesus resemble and differ from: 1) Present-day Christianity; 2) the Seventh-day Adventist Church; 3) the Forest Lake Church; 4) you personally?

Does Jesus need to use the double edged sword in your life? What does He need to do? Will you let Him?