

Series: Letters to the Churches  
Title: Works Given Christ's Church  
Text: Revelation 2: 18-29  
Date: March 20, 2014  
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Lord willing, this Sunday, I plan to preach from Ephesians 4: our constraint for endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace is our oneness with God in Christ and with each other in Christ.

Yet, false religion uses Ephesians 4 to encourage men and women to lay aside the truth of the gospel for the sake of keeping unity.

So, before we get to Ephesians 4, I thought it good for us to see that the Lord commanded just the opposite of the church at Thyatira.

**Title:** Works Given to Christ's Church

**Proposition:** In his letter to Thyatira, the Lord Jesus warns every local church, its pastor and people, to continue the works Christ has given us until the end.

## **I. FIRST, WE HAVE THE WAY CHRIST PRESENTS HIMSELF TO THE CHURCH—**

### **To the Preacher**

As with each letter to the seven churches, this letter is written unto the pastor—**Revelation 2: 18: unto the angel of the church at Thyatira write.** This is especially important to note because the problem at Thyatira was in regard to a false preacher. Christ's pastors are HIS ambassadors. As Paul said,

2 Corinthians 5: 20: Now then we are AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST, as though GOD DID BESEECH YOU BY US: we pray *you* IN CHRIST'S STEAD, be ye reconciled to God.

It is the responsibility of every Christ-sent preacher to speak God's word in truth. Christ sends his preacher for his people,

Ephesians 4: 14 That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, BY THE SLEIGHT OF MEN, *and* CUNNING CRAFTINESS, whereby THEY LIE IN WAIT TO DECEIVE; 15 But SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ:

This is the charge to all sent of Christ to preach in Christ's name:

Acts 20: 28: Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, OVER THE WHICH the HOLY GHOST HATH MADE YOU OVERSEERS, TO FEED the church OF GOD, which HE HATH PURCHASED WITH HIS OWN BLOOD. 29: For I know this, that after my departing shall GRIEVOUS WOLVES enter in among you, NOT SPARING THE FLOCK. 30: Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking PERVERSE THINGS, to DRAW AWAY DISCIPLES AFTER THEM.

### **The Son of God**

Notice, from the beginning of this letter, Christ reminds his pastor who sent us—"These things saith the Son of God". In each letter to the churches, the Lord presents himself as it best relates to the need of the

church. By this, Christ reminds us that HE is our one need and that HE is always able to meet our every need.

We know the church at Thyatira was facing a powerful problem because Christ presents himself in the most powerful way—**Revelation 2: 18: These things saith the Son of God.** The title “**Son of Man**” (1:13) means that Christ was a real man; the title “**Son of God**” means Jesus was really and completely God.

Christ Jesus is the GODMAN, Mediator. He is the Man who is also sovereign God—absolutely sovereign over all; the successful, triumphant Savior. Jesus Christ is successful in the work given him of the Father.

1. He successfully fulfills all that was written of him in the law and the prophets
2. He successfully put away all the sins of all the elect of God by himself
3. He successfully established perfect righteousness for each and every blood bought child
4. He successfully declared God just and the Justifier of all who believe on Christ Jesus.
5. He successfully bruised the serpents head and successfully delivers each elect from satan’s bondage in regeneration and conversion.
6. He shall successfully keep each one
7. He shall successfully present us faultless before the Father and none shall be lost!

Brethren, all of this is what is meant when we read: Isaiah 42: 4: He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

### **Eyes like a Flame of Fire**

Next, Christ gives us a characteristic about his eyes—**Revelation 2: 18: who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire.** Fire lights up the darkness. So Christ’s eyes see with perfect knowledge into the hidden places of the heart in every part of his church and among the sons of men. Christ knows the motives of all actions of all people.

Hebrews 4:13: Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

### **Feet like Fine Brass**

Then the Lord tells us something about his feet—**Revelation 2:18: and his feet are like fine brass.** Christ’s actions in his church and in the world are like his eyes. Fine brass is pure—so Christ walks among his churches in holiness, He executes justice and righteousness for his redeemed ones in the earth. He purely performs that which is right and best for us. All his ways, all his works, and all his providential dealings toward his own are just and right.

Application: Brethren, knowing these things, we have full assurance that Christ shall keep the church he bought with his own blood. This is the greatest encouragement to every believer to cast all our care into Christ’s hands, to remain faithful to him unto the end, declaring his gospel in no uncertain terms.

**II. SECONDLY, CHRIST COMMENDS THE CHARACTER AND WORKS OF HIS TRUE CHURCH—Revelation 2: 19: I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.**

Application: The fact that Christ knows and commends these six things, teaches us that each believer should ask God for grace to continually maintain these things.

## **First, he says, “I Know thy Works”**

Works of faith are natural to believers—the expression of spiritual life. (James 2: 17, 26) Faith always 'worketh by love.' (Gal. 5:6; John 13:34-35; 1 Cor. 13:1-3; 1 John 4:20-5:1) Good works shall be worked by each believer because “God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Therefore, we shall. (Eph 2: 10) Good works are works which manifest we believe God is able—(Read Hebrews 11 to see some of these good works.)

**And Charity**—charity is love to God our Savior and love to his saints, our brethren. The new heart God puts in his child in the new birth is the heart of love:

1 John 5:1: Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

But without love in the heart all outward forms of godliness are fake:

1 Corinthians 13: 2: And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3: And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

In your studies, if you would like to read what charity does read 1 Cor 13. “Follow after charity.” (1 Cor 14: 1)

**And Service** or ministering—the Greek word is where we get our English word “deacon.” Chiefly, this respects service in spreading the gospel of Christ and him crucified. They sacrificed their money, time, and labor, so that others might hear the gospel of the grace of God (1 Thess. 1:8). This also respects service in the church so that the gospel may be preached. The pastor’s responsibility is to labor in the word and prayer; to preach the gospel in truth and in spirit, according to the scriptures. (Acts 6: 4) Faithful men and women in the church are to take care of all other things so the pastor can commit to those duties: prepare the meeting place, the building, the grounds, the seats, hymn books, so on; handle the offerings; watch for brethren in need so the church can meet those needs; prepare the elements for the Lord’s table; ladies deliver meals to those who are sick and so on. In short, whatever needs to be done for the advancement of the gospel and care of your brethren.

**Illustration:** The sister who clipped coupons for her brethren.

**And Faith**—It means conviction of the truth, reliance upon the Lord Jesus for all aspects of salvation; constancy in profession; dependability and fidelity to brethren. Faithfulness is the one thing God requires of his people. (1 Cor. 4:2).

**And Thy Patience**—Patience is perseverance with a peaceful, believing resignation in the heart to the will of God (Phil. 4:12; 1 Thess 1: 4; Rom 8: 25; 5: 3).

**And Christ commended them for growing in grace—Revelation 2: 19: and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.** Their last works were more than the first. It means they steadily grew in grace. As they grew older, they grew wiser; as they declined in physical strength, they grew in spiritual strength and devotion to Christ.

Application: Brethren, let us ever seek grace from God to maintain these good works and to grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ knows and commends these things in his saints. And follow

our Savior in this. Always express your thankfulness to God and to God's saints for their faithful service. Ingratitude expresses carnality. A "thank you" is always appropriate for those who serve for the edification of your soul; no matter the service.

### **III. THIRDLY, A FEW THINGS CHRIST HAD AGAINST THEM—Revelation 2: 20: Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee,...**

Application: Brethren, pay close attention to this. In every local church, as well as in every believer, there may be many positive things, yet need serious reproof. Such was the case in Thyatira. Notwithstanding, all of those good things for which Christ commended them, yet there were a few things he had against them. After reading of all those good things, it is amazing what these faithful saints were allowing to happen right before their eyes.

#### **Jezebel Religion**

They suffered a false teacher to teach false doctrine and seduce his weak saints—**Revelation 2: 20:...because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.**

**Note:** The seducers were not the true members of Christ's church. They merely wore Christ's name. But it was "Christ's servants" they were seducing.

How do false preachers seduce by their false gospel? Christ compares this woman, to Ahab's wicked wife, Jezebel. Jezebel encouraged believers to unite with others, whose doctrine was false, as men urge others to do in the name of keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. For example at Jezebel's table there were children of Israel, and prophets of Baal, and prophets of the groves, all together. (1 Kings 18: 19) Yet, she preached no toleration, she even cut off, God's true prophets and people who opposed her by preaching God's word. (1 Kings 18: 4)

Application: This is the false religion of our day. Enemies lay aside the truth of Christ, uniting together, in the name of keeping the unity of Christ. While, in the name of cutting off "hate-mongers", they cut off Christ's true preachers, and people, who oppose them by simply declaring God's word in truth. (Rev 17: 4-6) Enemies become friends in order to cut off Christ and his people as did Pilate and Herod in their rejection of Christ. Luke 23:12: And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.

Also note: Jezebel—false religion—teaches what they call "deep things of God." But Christ calls it in **Revelation 2: 24: the depths of Satan.**

Application: A good rule is whatever draws your focus away from Christ are not the depths of the mystery of Christ, but the depths of Satan. But why did Christ reprove them for this? If we allow false preachers to preach lies in this place or we embrace them as believers, we partake of their evil deeds.

2 John 1: 10: If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: 11: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

**Note:** The offense is worse than even the fact that they allowed a woman to preach, which scripture forbids. The offense is their toleration of a false gospel. For by simply tolerating—not speaking out against her—they made the weaker saints think her false gospel was true, thereby making them more susceptible to seduction by her lies.

Brethren, I try to preach the gospel in a positive way. Lies are best exposed by the truth. But Christ teaches us here that faithful preaching must expose liars and their lies. That stated, let me say this plainly: most so-called Christian religion in our day is a religion of works, contrary to the gospel of God's free and sovereign grace. Most religious leaders and their churches are unified in their message. They teach salvation by works, by man's free will. We are not in agreement with them in any regard. Why?

## Two Opposing Messages

Two opposing messages cannot both be true. Salvation began by God the Father choosing whom he would in Christ in eternity. (Eph 1: 3-6) Therefore the message that teaches that man's choice determines who shall be saved is a lie not to be tolerated or embraced by a believer. Redemption is by Christ bearing and putting away the sins of a particular people, satisfying justice by his death, justifying his people through faith in Christ. Therefore the message that teaches that Christ bore all men's sins but only made salvation possible, based on the sinner exercising his free will, is a lie not to be tolerated or embraced by a believer. Regeneration and conversion is by the Holy Spirit's irresistible grace, by creating a new man within a dead sinner, by granting faith and repentance, making us willing in the day of God's power. Therefore the message that teaches sinners "how to be born again" or that regeneration and conversion is by man's will or man's power is a lie not to be tolerated or embraced by a believer.

The only thing more dangerous than the clear preaching of free will, works religion is when they claim to be preaching God's sovereign grace. I warn you again that our enemy today is not like the enemy of our father's day. Our enemy is falsehood so subtle—"if it were possible they would deceive the very elect." (2 Thess. 2:7-12; Matt. 7:15).

The scriptures are crystal clear: salvation by grace and salvation by works are mutually exclusive—both cannot be true.

Romans 11: 5: Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6: And if by grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

## IV. FOURTHLY, LET'S LEARN FROM HOW CHRIST DEALS WITH FALSE PREACHERS AND THOSE WHO JOIN WITH THEM.

### Space to Repent

Christ reproves false preachers then gives them space to repent—**Revelation 2: 21: And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.** Here he speaks of the false preacher.

Application: As we have opportunity, speak the truth to a false preacher. Then give them space to repent.

### Just Judgment

But Christ never tolerates those who will not repent from preaching a false gospel nor does he tolerate those who join with false preachers—**Revelation 2: 22: Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her, into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. 23: And I will kill her children with death;**

Application: Brethren, has Christ not done this in our day? The false religion of unity, at the expense of the truth, is the very cause of the great tribulation we see in our day. Do you question if mainstream religion has spoken the truth of Christ over the past 100 years in this country? To answer that question, just ask why do

we live in Sodom today? Why do men believe such delusions while holding God, his scriptures and his people in such contempt?

### **The Answer**

Christ answers those questions. He tells us why he sends just reprobation against liars and those who follow them—**Revelation 2: 23:...and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.**

The answer to those questions I just asked is because God knows the heart: of those in false religion and those in true religion. And whether it be sinners who will not repent from their works of preaching and promoting a false gospel or it be those who believe on Christ and hold forth the gospel, God gives unto every one according to our works.

If their works were preaching Christ in spirit and in truth, works of faith motivated by the love of Christ in the heart then Christ would not pour out this great tribulation and kill her children with the death of reprobation. But...

2 Thessalonians 2: 10:...because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11: And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Who makes the difference between you who believe and those who will not repent who end in reprobation?

2 Thessalonians 2: 13: But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: 14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

How do we continue faithful to Christ and the gospel?

2 Thessalonians 2: 16 : Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given *us* everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, 17 Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

### **V. LASTLY, LET'S HEAR CHRIST'S COMMAND AND PROMISE TO HIS TRUE PEOPLE— Revelation 2: 24: But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira,**

Here Christ speaks to his true church. The true church was at fault. Christ reproved them for their tolerance of a false preacher and a false gospel.

### **No False Doctrine**

Yet the true church did not hold their false doctrine...**Revelation 2: 24:...as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak;**

If we were all preaching the same message then Christ would not have here made this distinction between his true people and the Jezebel of false religion. God's true people hold not the doctrine of Jezebel, with her deep teaching of Satan, but we hold to Christ and his gospel.

## The Works Christ Gives Us

Therefore, Christ says, **Revelation 2: 24: I will put upon you none other burden. 25: But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.**

Application: Be sure to get this. Our burden, our responsibility, our works, as the church of the Lord Jesus, as the pillar and ground of THE truth, is two-fold:

One, when Christ says, “I will put upon you none other burden.” He refers to his reproof for them not to suffer false preaching and the seducing of his weak saints by them. Christ commands us to speak against all liars and all lies, renouncing all false religion to all who will hear us.

Two, when Christ says, “But that which ye have already hold fast till I come” he refers to us holding fast to Christ and the truth of the gospel. We renounce false preachers and their gospel by declaring and holding fast to Christ, the truth of the gospel, resting in Christ through faith till Christ returns.

These works given us by Christ are the church’s responsibility in this earth until the end.

### A Sure Promise

Christ gives a sure promise to all who keep these works of Christ till the end—**Revelation 2: 26: And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 27: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.**

What is this power and rod by which every believer shall rule the nations? Christ says it is the same rod which Christ received of his Father. It is found in John 12:48: He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. 49: For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

The same way that Noah condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness which is by faith (Heb 11: 7), so every believer shall condemn the world, right along with Christ’s apostles. It is by the same rod—the gospel—by which Christ’s apostles shall judge the world.

Mathew 19: 28: And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

And here is what Christ shall give those who continue faithfully until the end believing and declaring Christ by his gospel.

Matthew 19: 29: And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

So it is in our text. Christ says he shall give us Christ our Life and eternal life with him. This is what Christ promises he shall give to each of us who continue to the end holding fast our gospel and resting in Christ—**Revelation 2: 28: And I will give him the morning star.** (Rev 22: 16; Lu 1: 78; 2 Pet 1: 9)

These are the works given Christ’s church. **Revelation 2: 29: He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.**

**Amen!**