

DATE: 6 AUG 2023 | SPEAKER: PASTOR BEN KC LEE
TOPIC: THE COMPROMISING CHURCH | SCRIPTURE: [REVELATION 2:12 – 3:6](#)

SPIRITUAL OBJECTIVES

At the end of the sermon discussion, cell members will:

1. Desire to repent of the areas in their lives where they have made compromises with sin or truth
2. Desire to live as overcomers who do not compromise doctrinally and morally

SERMON SUMMARY

In [Revelation 2:12 – 3:6](#), the letters to the churches of Pergamum, Sardis, and Thyatira, are God's warning to the Churches about the consequence of spiritual compromise. Spiritual compromise isn't choosing other gods to worship instead of Christ. It is trying to include other gods along with our worship of Christ. It is loving Jesus Christ and loving our favourite sin. God is warning the Church not to compromise with sin and truth, as there will be a coming judgment. He calls us to repent and be conquerors, to overcome the temptations of this world.

SERMON RECAP

[Revelation 2:12 – 3:6](#) is the centre of the message to the churches in the book of Revelation. This involves 3 churches and how they compromise decisions involving beliefs and lifestyles. These letters are practical instructions on how to be overcomers when the pressure to compromise rises. There are 3 messages to the churches:

1. **Covenant Warning** ([Revelation 2:12-15, 3:1-3](#))

Jesus warns the churches not to compromise on Truth. He accuses Pergamum and Sardis for different forms of compromise.

- Pergamum was enduring as they refused to deny Christ under pressure ([Revelation 2:13](#)). However, they also allowed idolatry and immorality to remain among them:
 - Doctrine of Balaam ([Revelation 2:14](#)) – They started with eating food sacrificed to idols and gradually slipped into spiritual idolatry.
 - Teaching of Nicolaitans ([Revelations 2:15](#)) – Licentiousness, doing whatever they want without consequences.
- This is similar to the Syncretism and permissiveness practiced in our context, which is the combined hybrid teaching of idolatry and immorality today.
- In the Church in Sardis, almost all had fallen asleep spiritually except for a small remnant. They were encouraged to kindle and revive any small bit of faith left ([Revelation 3:2-4](#)).

In Singapore, a red flag we should beware of is Christian Universalism, which is a popular syncretistic teaching that says that all faiths lead to God. However, this is not what the Bible teaches. Christian doctrine is exclusive and uncompromising ([James 4:4](#)). We need to be aware of syncretism and permissiveness. Let us stand firm on biblical truth without compromise. Be faithful to our covenant King.

2. **Coming Judgement** ([Revelation 2:20-23](#))

Jesus tells the church of Thyatira of the coming judgement. They were given time to correct the heresy by Jezebel but they refused to repent. They're guilty of idolatry and immorality because they listened to a self-appointed prophetess. They were also guilty of not disciplining this false prophetess. Jesus warns that He will come and deal with them. This sometimes refer to the Second Coming. Often, it refers to an earlier visit to a local church to remove its lampstand – Jesus will remove His Presence from the church.

Jesus holds out hope, comfort and the promise of eternal rewards to the individuals who are faithful to Him ([Revelation 2:24-29](#)). He gives the rest time to repent. If they refuse, He will come in swift judgement ([Revelation 2:22-23](#)). Jesus is watching his church “with eyes like blazing fire” ([Revelation 2:18](#))

A red flag to beware of is that churches and Christians are beginning to align with the values of culture (e.g., supporting same sex marriages). As a church, we are called to be holy. Never compromise with sin.

3. **Conquering Temptations** ([Revelation 2:16-17, 24-29, 3:5-6](#))

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” – The closing remarks of these letters tell us that Jesus expects a reply in the form of obedience.

Jesus is telling the Church in his day and churches today that the way forward is not seeking comfort or convenience. It is seeking the Kingdom of God above all else. It is this suffering that we are united with Christ and transformed into His image by denying ourselves, taking up our cross and following Him.

Be prepared to accept the consequences of not compromising, which will be unpleasant. The Lord wants us to overcome, to prepare for the pressure that is coming ([Revelation Chapters 4 – 22](#)). Satan's tactic against the church which is more effective than persecution, is to corrupt the church.

Many have fallen for “Balaam's error” and the “Nicolaitan heresy”. False prophets (“Jezebel's prophets”) cause many to float between two opinions. This compromise will ultimately lead to the great apostasy, where many will fall away from Jesus in the last days.

[Luke 21:34-36](#) warns us that if we compromise now (in easier times), we will surrender then (to the anti-Christ when the pressure is greater). But if we refuse to compromise today, it becomes easier to resist the anti-Christ in the future. Stand for righteousness in the face of pressure. Jesus desires to revive us than to see us fall under divine judgment.

In closing, Pastor Ben exhorted us to be overcomers and not compromisers – to hold on to the truth and never compromise with sin and Biblical boundaries. Overcomers do not compromise doctrinally and morally.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **Pastor Ben shared that “Spiritual compromise isn’t choosing other gods to worship instead of Christ. It is trying to include other gods along with our worship of Christ. It is loving Jesus Christ and loving our favourite sin.”**

Based on this statement on what spiritual compromise is, to what extent do you think you are in danger of spiritual compromise?

Leader’s Notes

This is a question for members to reflect on their spiritual condition, examine their lives, and whether they are already heading down the slippery slope of spiritual compromise.

Pastor Ben highlighted how some churches in Singapore have started teaching Christian Universalism, becoming permissive and aligning with the values of culture. Have we also unconsciously adopted the values of our culture?

Transition

Spiritual compromise can happen to any Christian at any age. Let us examine ourselves and the way we live and guard our hearts with all diligence against the world’s changing values.

2. **Are you a Pergamum, Sardis or Thyatira type of Christian?**

Leader’s Notes

Pergamum and Thyatira were churches that were inclusive and tolerated sin. The church of Sardis was made up of spiritually dead Christians. Leaders can ask members if they can identify with any of the 3 churches and reflect on whether there are specific areas in their lives where they have already made compromises (e.g., watching and consuming media content or entertainment that is unethical or unwholesome, tolerating sexual immorality or an ungodly relationship, etc.).

Additional resource: [Poisonous Tolerance – Desiring God](#)

Transition

Jesus warns that there will be judgement for those who continue to compromise and do not repent. Let us come before God and repent of the areas of our lives where we have compromised.

3. **How do we prepare to become overcomers who do not compromise doctrinally and morally?**

Leader’s Notes

The churches in Revelation are cautioned to remember what they have received and heard, keep it, and repent ([Revelation 2:16, 3:3](#)). For those who are sleeping, He calls us to “wake up, and strengthen what remains” ([Revelation 3:2](#)). God promises eternal rewards for those who overcome ([Revelation 2:17, 26-28, 3:5](#)). He exhorts us to hear what the Spirit is saying ([Revelation 2:17, 2:29, 3:6](#)).

Leaders can encourage members to start by obeying God’s voice as He speaks to them. The cell can also discuss practical ways to guard our hearts and minds against spiritual compromise (e.g., by monitoring our media intake, being accountable to a spiritual/godly community of believers, holding on to God’s word, standing up for righteousness in our spheres of influence, etc.)

Closing

Let us live our lives without compromise, holding on to God’s truth, embracing holiness and overcoming the temptations of this world.

WORKS

Consider dividing the group into micro-groups for a deeper time of sharing as well as praying for the following items:

1. Sermon Application

- Pray that God will reveal to us areas in our lives where we have compromised and give us the desire to repent
- Pray that God will help us live with no compromise, hold to the truth, and embrace holiness

2. RiverLife

- Pray for our church that as we conclude the 21 days of prayer and fasting, that our lives will be in a new normal based on the practices and breakthroughs experienced during the 21 days.

3. World

- Pray for good weather in Singapore during this hot season. Pray also that there will not be any haze.
- Continue to pray for the Russia-Ukraine war and the avoidance of using nuclear weapons.
- Pray for Singapore as we approach the presidential election – that a Godly president will be elected.
- Pray for the heatwave that is affecting many countries in Europe and Asia.
- Pray for Korea in the aftermath of the 2 stabbings.
- Continue to pray for Thailand as they elect a new Prime Minister.

4. Opportunities for Outreach

- Ask the Lord to bless us as we step out to reach a pre-believer.
- Ask the Lord to grant you opportunities to reach out to a non-believing loved one, friend, or colleague this week as we seek to mature in Christlikeness.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Digital Bulletin: rlc.sg/bulletin

- 1. Revive Us, Lord. Sermon Series.** In the book of Revelation, Jesus wrote letters to 7 churches. He commends them for what they have done well, addresses their current state, gives them each a warning and an encouragement for those who would heed His words. As we embark on 21 Days of Prayer & Fasting, this sermon series will move us to examine the state of our hearts and the spiritual condition of our church. As we hear what God is saying to us, may we return to the ways and will of God for us individually, and as a church. Lord, awaken us to the urgency of the times and the reality of your return!
 - 16 Jul: Facing Revival
 - 23 Jul: The Revelation of Christ
 - 30 Jul: The Lukewarm Church
 - 6 Aug: The Compromising Church
 - 13 Aug: The Church in Persecution
- 2. RiverLife Mission Trips.** Come serve with us on a Mission Trip this year-end!
 - **Trip 1: 28 Sep-2 Oct (Thu-Mon) Medical Mission to Sarangani, Philippines** We're in need of medical doctors and nurses to serve with us on this trip. Registration closes on Tue, 8 Aug.
 - **Trip 2: 1-6 Nov (Wed-Mon) Province Wide Revival Conference in Pangasinan, North Philippines** Registration closes on Tue, 15 Aug.
 - **Trip 3: 7-11 Dec (Thu-Mon) Christmas Celebrations with B'laan Tribe in Sarangani, Philippines** Registration closes on Fri, 1 Sep.
 - Sign up for a trip at rlc.sg/missions-go or visit our Missions Booth in the Atrium on Sun, 6 Aug.
- 3. Marriage Retreat.** We had a powerful time with 27 married couples in March as we piloted our first Marriage Retreat. It was a powerful time of learning, rejuvenation, healing and restoration for our couples. No couple left unimpacted. We would like to encourage married couples to join us at this retreat and experience God's hand on your marriage.
 - For more information, download the eBrochure here: rlc.sg/mrBrochure
 - Highlights from previous retreat: <https://youtu.be/csHrCtBsuWg>
 - Link to signup: rlc.sg/mr
- 4. Cultivating Emotional & Mental Wellness Seminar. Sun, 13 Aug | 11am-1pm Grace Chapel (Level 1)**
 - This seminar will:
 - Help individuals who are struggling with emotional or mental wellness
 - Educate and equip caregivers of those who are struggling with emotional or mental wellness
 - **Speaker: Dr Danny Ng**, a clinical psychologist in private practice and the President of the Singapore chapter of Renovaré (USA) offering resources for Christian Spiritual Formation for spiritual growth. He is the founder of Family Connexion, a Christian ministry whose focus lies in promoting a greater bonding and deepening of relationships between people, especially within the family.
 - Register at rlc.sg/counems

CHURCH CALENDAR

1. Church Calendar Highlights

- *Quarter 3*
 - 32nd Anniversary Weekend: 26-27 Aug
 - Bible Equipping – Leviticus: 15 & 17, 22 & 24 Sep
 - Cells Prayer Night #2: 29 Sep
- *Quarter 4*
 - Equipping Series: 17 & 19, 24 & 26 Nov
 - Christmas Outreach: Dec
 - Cells Prayer Night #3: 29 Dec

2. **YA Gatherings (For Young Adults in their 20s). First Saturday Every Month, 5pm-8.30pm Victory Chapel (Level 1).** The YA Gathering is a space where young adults can get together to connect and build community. This gathering is made up of two components – Community Conversations & Communal Dinner – both with a focus on relationship building and life conversations. If you are currently in a cell, register your attendance with your cell leader. If you are currently not in a cell, do register online: rlc.sg/YAgathering-apr-reg.

3. RiverLife Prayer Meetings.

- *RLC Prayer Room.* Tue, 8-9.30pm, Victory Chapel. (Online: rlc.sg/rpr-watch)
- *Wed Night Prayer Meeting.* Wed, 8pm – 9.30pm, Victory Chapel.

CHURCH MINISTRIES & OPPORTUNITIES

1. **9M Ministry.** The 9M Ministry provides prayer support for expectant mothers on their 9-month journey of pregnancy. Sisters-in-Christ who are fellow RiverLifers are assigned as Prayer Buddies to walk alongside mums who sign up to receive prayer support.
 - Receive Prayer Support: rlc.sg/9m
 - Provide Prayer Support: rlc.sg/serve
2. **Global Hunger Fund.** This fund will go towards RLC's mission partners to help their local churches and communities gain access to food amid soaring costs. Refer to the Digital Bulletin for more details.
3. **Missions Microsite.** Discover how you can go, give and pray for the nations. Let's make a difference in the nations together! For more information, visit rlc.sg/missions.
4. **RiverLife Cares Opportunities.** Signup: <http://rlc.sg/serve-rlcar>.
5. **Prayer Ministry.** If you require prayer ministry for any issues you face (eg. fear, worry, etc), you can sign up for RLC's RTF ministry: <https://bit.ly/rlcrtf>

RESOURCES & CONNECTING WITH US

1. **Bible Reading Plan.** The church has provided 3 undated Bible Reading plans that will serve as a resource for those who wish to follow a Bible Reading plan. Link: rlc.sg/brp
 - 2 Year Chronological Bible Reading Plan.
 - 3 Year Bible Reading Schedule (Alternating readings between Old and New Testament passages)

- Redemptive Historical Bible Reading Plan (At your own pace, focusing on the redemption story)
2. **RiverLife Podcast.** The RiverLife Podcast allows you to listen to RiverLife content anytime, anywhere! The link to go to is rlc.sg/podcast or simply search **'The RiverLife Podcast'** on Spotify.
 3. **Spiritual Growth Resources.** We have put together a curated list of recommended resources for the RiverLife family. These resources (books, articles, podcasts and videos) are recommendations for the various spiritual growth stages as you seek to grow deeper in the River of God this year. You can access them at rlc.sg/resource. This list will be continually populated throughout the year.
 4. **Testimony.** If you have a testimony to share, you can write to us at stories@riverlife.org.sg to share with us your testimony as an encouragement to others.
 5. **Stay Connected with RLC.** Follow us to stay updated on latest church news and happenings.
 - **WhatsApp Broadcast:** Text 'Subscribe' to 8923 1939
 - **Telegram Channel:** t.me/RiverLifeChurch
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