

WEEK 2



A SAVIOR WHO DOESN'T GIVE UP

REVELATION 2:18–3:22

OPENING PRAYER:

Holy and merciful Father, it has been your plan all along to involve mankind in building your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. It is through your church that you will accomplish your task. Thank you that these report cards to the ancient churches still speak to us today. Guide us in applying the warnings and commendations to our faith journey so that we can be all you call us to be. Quicken our church leaders to be on guard against the forces that can compromise the purity of our church. Give us eyes to see and ears to hear. We pray this in the name of the Savior of the church, Jesus Christ. Amen.

KEY VERSE:

“Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.” (Revelation 3:19–20)

INTRODUCTION:

Jesus accepts us where we are, but he refuses to leave us there. His report cards to the last of the seven churches of the Revelation exemplify this truth. Jesus reveals truth for the churches, areas in which they are compromised in their faith. This report card series begins with Jesus commending them for what they have done well. Next he reveals the issues that need to be addressed and changed. Finally, he encourages them with the rewards for those who overcome. Notice there seems to be a remnant who always overcome. Jesus doesn't forget them.

OPENING QUESTIONS:

1. As you read through these various churches, which ones do you identify with?
2. Do you think there is a ranking of sinfulness, with one sin being greater than another?
3. Notice that each overcomer is rewarded. What does this say to you about God's justice?

VIDEO:

A Savior Who Doesn't Give Up

VIDEO NOTES:

The last four churches are a mixed bag. Thyatira is doing more than it did at first for the kingdom of God, but there is a major problem, and Jesus will not let it slide. They are tolerating Jezebel, a prophetess who is leading the people into sexual immorality and idolatry. It seems the Lord has tried to reach her, but she is not willing. Jesus seems to be drawing a line in the sand for those who are under her influence to step away or they will experience the same suffering. Notice the purpose of the suffering is for the people to turn to repentance.

Sardis is the next church, and it is dead. The world and the church itself think it is alive. What had they done to receive such condemnation? They were walking in disobedience. They had drifted away from the message of Jesus. The message to this church teaches us to always take stock of where we are in our faith journey and where we are as a church.

The gold star goes to the church in Philadelphia. Amidst persecution from so-called Jews, they have held firm. I love that Jesus knows they were tired and that the trials they had been enduring were difficult. Yet he is their strength. He paints a picture of how they will be redeemed to give them encouragement. They are pillars for all churches to admire and follow.

Laodicea is the church most like churches in our world today. They are wealthy and influential but lukewarm. This is abhorrent to Jesus. He wants all of his people to have a passion for him. He gave his all for the church, and he desires nothing less than our all for him. However, he has not given up on them. He is knocking at the door to their hearts for entry. All they need to do is open the door and Jesus will be with them at the table of communion.



Read Revelation 2:18–3:22.

SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS:

1. Sexual immorality and idolatry seem to pop up again and again in these verses. How do you think it coincides with idolatry?
2. The rewards for these churches are as follows: authority over the nations, the morning star, a permanent name in the book of life, acknowledgment before God, a pillar and permanent place in the temple of God, and the right to sit with Jesus on his throne. What do you think these things mean?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

1. Lukewarmness or ho-hum attitudes towards Jesus seem to be abhorrent to him. How do we guard against this attitude?
2. In today's culture, how do we stand firm for the truth of Jesus? How important is Christian community in achieving this?
3. Each of us may have fallen into the clutches of one or more of these pitfalls. What do you notice about each church that turns and repents?

CLOSING PRAYER:

We thank you, Father, that you love us where we are but refuse to leave us there. Like any good father, you are there to discipline, guide, protect and love us to wholeness and fullness of life. We open the doors of our hearts to receive your love and your discipline. Ignite the Holy Spirit in each of us to convict us where we are straying. May we hear your voice affirming our path as we strive to be all you have called us to be. To the glory of you and your Son, Jesus. Amen.