



Dear ALIVE - Dear Church—Loyal Community
Sermon Discussion Questions – August 13, 2023

Scripture Passages:

Revelation 2:12–17 (NLT) ¹² “Write this letter to the angel of the church in Pergamum. This is the message from the one with the sharp two-edged sword: ¹³ “I know that you live in the city where Satan has his throne, yet you have remained loyal to me. You refused to deny me even when Antipas, my faithful witness, was martyred among you there in Satan’s city. ¹⁴ “But I have a few complaints against you. You tolerate some among you whose teaching is like that of Balaam, who showed Balak how to trip up the people of Israel. He taught them to sin by eating food offered to idols and by committing sexual sin. ¹⁵ In a similar way, you have some Nicolaitans among you who follow the same teaching. ¹⁶ Repent of your sin, or I will come to you suddenly and fight against them with the sword of my mouth. ¹⁷ “Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches. To everyone who is victorious I will give some of the manna that has been hidden away in heaven. And I will give to each one a white stone, and on the stone will be engraved a new name that no one understands except the one who receives it.

Acts 4:7 (NLT) ⁷ . . . “By what power, or in whose name, have you done this?”

Acts 4:10,12 (NLT) ¹⁰ . . . he was healed by the powerful name of Jesus . . . the man you crucified but whom God raised from the dead. . . ¹² There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.”

Hebrews 4:12 (NLT) ¹² For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.

Ephesians 6:17 (NLT) ¹⁷ Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Luke 24:25,27 (NLT) ²⁵ . . . You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures . . . ²⁷ Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

Luke 24:32 (NLT) ³² . . . “Didn’t our hearts burn within us as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?”

Luke 16:29–31 (NLT) ²⁹ “But Abraham said, ‘Moses and the prophets have warned them. Your brothers can read what they wrote.’ ³⁰ “The rich man replied, ‘No, Father Abraham! But if someone is sent to them from the dead, then they will repent of their sins and turn to God.’ ³¹ “But Abraham said, ‘If they won’t listen to Moses and the prophets, they won’t be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.’ ”

Colossians 1:15–20 (NLT) ¹⁵ Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, ¹⁶ for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can’t see— such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together. ¹⁸ Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything. ¹⁹ For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, ²⁰ and through him God reconciled everything to himself.

Warm Up:

This week’s message is called Loyal Community. What do you think of when you hear loyal community? Who do you think of when you picture your loyal community?

Discussion:

1. In his message, Pastor Tom mentioned that the theme in the letters we have read so far all have a theme of Christ’s supremacy. Why do you think that is? How have you seen this in the scripture?
2. Read Revelation 2:13. What does it mean to remain loyal to God?
3. Excerpt from Pastor Tom:
Today, we have religious diversity in our communities and I am grateful. We should be a tolerant society, which allows people to worship as they choose, and a society that allows all people to enjoy the same freedoms. But a problem is rising in our culture, as it was in Pergamum’s. We cannot grant the same level of credibility to all religions that are found in the claims of Christ. What does it mean to keep Jesus’ credibility above everything else?

4. In his message, Pastor Tom made this point: *When we are apologizing for the Word of God, Jesus is no longer supreme in our lives or in our churches.*
Why do you think apologizing causes Jesus to no longer be supreme in our lives and churches?
What does it mean to you to have Christ as the supreme ruler of your life?

5. Read 24:25,27 How does this passage help show the connection of the theme of Jesus all throughout scripture? Why do you think this shows the importance is scripture?

6. Excerpt from Pastor Tom:
So, I say to you: beware of everyone and everything that would ever make us waver on our convictions concerning the authority and the absolute sufficiency of Scripture. The erosion of confidence amongst believers, in the authority of the Scriptures to accomplish the purposes of God, is at pandemic level in our culture and once we have deconstructed our belief in the God found in scripture, we will be faced with the horror of being completely and utterly alone, with no true north.
How do you know what true north is? What can you do to maintain your belief in the God we find in scripture?

Next Steps:

Manna has to do with Jesus being the break of life, from Exodus to Revelation. But what of the name? Well, it would seem that you're going to get a new name in the new heaven and the new earth. God does not view the multitude of the redeemed as a mass of humanity. Jesus, who "calls his ... sheep by name," apparently has a promise for us. And that is that he's going to come to us individually, and he's going to slip a little stone into our hands, as it were, literally or metaphorically, and on that is our new name, distinguishing the personal relationship that we will enjoy for all of eternity with the Supreme Christ.

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What name do you think you will see on your white stone when Jesus gives it to you? What is the significance of that name? How can you walk this week with a reminder of that?