



REALITY

Faithful in Place

Revelation 2:12-17

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Revelation 2:12-17

To the angel of the church in Pergamum write: These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword. I know where you live—where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, not even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city—where Satan lives. Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality. Likewise, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.

- 1.** Jesus knows where we live.
- 2.** Jesus calls us to be faithful where we live.
- 3.** Jesus gives us what we need to be faithful.

1. Jesus knows where we live.

“Places are important from a theological and spiritual perspective because it is part of our reality. Reality and contextuality demands a theology of place, which can be defined as an appreciation for the theological significance of specific geographic locations.”

- Cornelius Niemandt, *Rooted in Christ, Grounded in Neighborhoods*

“God, people, and place cannot be separated.”

- John Inge, *A Christian Theology of Place*

Revelation 2:13

I know where you live—where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, not even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city—where Satan lives.

Revelation 2:14

Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality.

“Eating food sacrificed to idols refers to eating meals in idol temples...The pagan feasts held in Asia Minor, honoring the emperor and other deities, featured indulgence in both idolatry, and immorality, and citizens were expected to participate...Refusal to participate in such activities could result in economic and social ostracism. Therefore, there

was much pressure to compromise...Christians would no doubt have suffered financially from sticking with their principles.”

- GK Beale, *Revelation: A Shorter Commentary*

2. Jesus calls us to be faithful where we live.

“Our sense of wholeness is not just the sense of completeness in ourselves, but also is the sense of belonging to others and to our place.”

- Wendel Berry, *The Art of Commonplace*

“First we shape our buildings and then our buildings shape us.”

- Winston Churchill

“A person can make himself happy, or miserable, regardless of what is actually happening ‘outside,’ just by changing the contents of consciousness.”

- Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*

Revelation 2:16

Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

3. Jesus gives us what we need to be faithful.

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Revelation 2:17

To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.