



# “Returning to our First Love”

FMCIC WEEK OF PRAYER & FASTING 2025

REVELATION 2:12-17

## Church of Pergamum: Faithful but Flawed

JAN 26 – FEB 2, 2025

“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.” (NIV)*

In warmer parts of the world a house can become infested with termites and if not dealt with, will weaken its structure considerably and eventually destroy it. The house of the Lord can also get termites even though it is, otherwise, in great shape. That’s the problem that the Church of Pergamum had.

Jesus sent a message to them to commend them for their faithfulness, even under extreme pressure—from their culture. Though they lived in a city “*where Satan [had] his throne*” and one of the Christian believers there, was put to death, they did not renounce their faith in Jesus. Pretty impressive wouldn’t you say? However, Jesus had “*a few things against [them]*”. They had some termites that needed to be dealt with. There were some false teachers among them who “*hold to the teaching of Balaam*”. These people, like Balaam, loved the benefits/wages of fitting in with the cultural values of their day, but knew enough to stop short of disobeying a direct command of God. Balaam had been told by God to not curse the Israelites, so instead of doing that, he taught the king how to entice them to bring a curse upon themselves: “*entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and committing sexual immorality*”. In this way he was able to enjoy the benefits of the approval of king and culture and still not directly disobey God’s command himself.

This is a strong temptation for us today too. We know that the Bible teaches us that certain behaviours are sinful, and while we may not engage in them ourselves, nor abandon our orthodox beliefs, we may be tempted to allow others in our midst to teach that it is alright to engage in them, because it is “*their truth*”, and at the same time win us some approval from our society. It is true that some issues are “*disputable*” (Rom. 14:1), but we must acknowledge that there are some non-disputable issues that we cannot condone, nor can we condone others who do condone them. (The Nicolaitans took this liberalization of God’s standards one step further and taught that one needn’t be so strict about separation from the world in order to be a Christian). As Psalm 1:1 says: “*Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.*”

In chapter one of the Revelation, John is given an awesome vision of Jesus that revealed that “*out of His mouth came a sharp double-edged sword*”. In speaking to this church (and our church today) He says that we must repent of yielding to (or seriously entertaining) allowing such teachers and teaching in our midst or He Himself will fight against them with the sword of His mouth. Jesus gets the last word on what is truth and we need to agree with Him. During this week let us examine our hearts and Bibles to see if we are yielding to the temptation to adopt practices that allow us to gain the favour of our culture (and even family) and lose God’s. Let’s get rid of the termites.