

DAY ONE

1. What thought from the study questions or group sharing was meaningful from last week's lesson?

Read Revelation 2:21-24

2. This week we continue to study the letter to the church in Thyatira. Though the virtuous works of this small Christian community were praised, they were also rebuked for tolerating the false prophetess, Jezebel. The Lord gave her time to repent but she refused (verse 21). According to verse 22 and the first sentence of verse 23, what will happen to Jezebel and her companions?

3. Two important truths that all the churches would come to know about Jesus were described in the second sentence of verse 23. Select one from below and explain what it means in your own words.

I am the searcher of hearts and minds

I will give each of you what your works deserve

4. The concept of God searching our hearts and minds has been written about frequently in scripture. Look up and record the relevant phrase from one of the following verses.

1 Samuel 16:7

Psalms 139:1

Romans 8:27

5. There was an encouraging message for those who did not follow false teachings and knew nothing of the "deep secrets of Satan" (verse 24). Jesus promised to place no further burdens on them. To what burdens do you think this might refer?

NOTE: The deep secrets of Satan was “a scathing reference to the perverse teaching of the Nicolaitans” *NABRE*

6. CONNECTION: Today we read that our Lord is the searcher of hearts and minds. God seeks and searches to know everything about us. Nothing escapes his notice; nothing can be hidden from him. He hears our thoughts and prayers---even the intent of our hearts. He knows every time we fall short of faithfulness and goodness, as well as every act of kindness. Is the idea of God’s searching, penetrating knowledge of you a source of comfort? How might it encourage prayer, obedience and growth? Share some thoughts with your group.

Read and record Jeremiah 17:10 and let thoughts of the Lord exploring your mind and testing your heart direct your prayers and actions today.

DAY TWO
Read Revelation 2:25-29

7a. As we begin today, the faithful Christians of the church in Thyatira were addressed. Select one of the phrases of cautionary advice given to them in verse 25 and explain what you think it means.

you must hold fast

to what you have

until I come.

b. Give an example from your life of something that you have, and how or why you “hold fast” to it.

8. As in the letters to the other churches, this one also ends with a promise of a final reward to the victor. According to verse 26, how was the victor described and what will he be given?

9. The power Jesus speaks of giving was mighty indeed. Complete the phrases below from verse 27 that describe this authority over the nations.

He will rule them

Like clay vessels

10. In verse 28 Jesus revealed that he received his authority from his Father. With that authority, what else from verse 28 will he give to the victor?

NOTE: The morning star is the last and brightest star (actually the planet Venus) to be seen in the morning and the first star to be seen at night, a title Jesus applies to himself. *Williamson*

11. The letter ends in verse 29 with the recurring command that whoever has ears ought to hear what the Spirit says. Look up one of the following verses from the gospels and record the phrase that reflects the same thought.

John 8:47

Luke 11:28

12. CONNECTION: In the final verses of the letter to the community of Thyatira, we read that one of the rewards for those who remain faithful and keep the ways of the Lord will be the morning star. The morning star derives its name from the fact that it appears before sunrise while it is still dark and is a sign of hope for the coming of a new day. Do you find messages from God in the heavens or in nature? What images in nature reflect or enhance your belief in the power and comfort of a loving Jesus? Share some thoughts with your group.

Read and record 2 Peter 1:19. Spend some prayer time today enjoying the beauty and wonder of nature.

DAY THREE

Read Revelation 3:1-3

13. Today's lesson begins the fifth letter written to the church in Sardis. How did Jesus describe himself to them in verse 1?

NOTE: This city, located about thirty miles southeast of Thyatira, was once the capital of Lydia, known for its wealth at the time of Croesus (6th century B.C.). Its citadel, reputed to be unassailable, was captured by surprise, first by Cyrus and later by Antiochus. The church is therefore warned to be on guard. *NABRE*

14a. This letter did not begin with words of praise but began, instead, with harsh words for this community. What was said to this church in verse 1?

b. Explain in your own words what you think the situation in the church in Sardis was.

15. The works of this church were found incomplete in the sight of God, and the letter offered some helpful guidance (verse 2 and the first sentence of verse 3). Select one or two directives from these verses below, and describe in your own words how they might have helped this church overcome the problems they faced.

Be watchful

strengthen what is left,

remember how you accepted and heard (the gospel)

keep it (obey)

repent

16a. What consequence will there be for the Christians in Sardis if they are not watchful (second sentence of verse 3)?

b. What do you think this means?

17. CONNECTION: Today we read about a threat to a faith community that did not come from persecution or idolatry. From the outside, the community appeared vibrant but inside it was spiritually dead and its works were incomplete. Does this sound like any community or organizations that you belong to? Does lethargy also apply to your own interest and participation in various organizations? Consider how being watchful, strengthening what you have, remembering your past acts, maintaining and protecting what is good or participating in acts of reconciliation might help you or your community. Share some thoughts with your group.

Write a prayer today for an organization that you believe in that needs an infusion of the Spirit.

DAY FOUR

Read Revelation 3:4-6

18. We continue today to study the letter to the community of Sardis. They had a few people who had not “soiled their garments.” What honor will they enjoy as a sign that they are worthy (verse 4)?

19. Discuss why dressing in or using certain colors had symbolic meaning for ancient people. Give a recent example from your life of how that is also true today.

20a. The victor will also be dressed in white. Complete the phrases below that further describe his rewards from verse 5.

I will never erase his name

But will acknowledge his name

b. Names had great symbolic importance in scripture. Share a few thoughts about why your name is important to you.

21a. The book of life is a recurring concept in Holy Scripture. Look up and record one of the following verses.

Psalm 56:9

Malachi 3:16

Philippians 4:3

b. What does the phrase “book of life” mean to you today?

22. The letter concludes in verse 6 with the recurring reminder to hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Comment on how hearing the word of God spoken to you versus reading it might affect you differently.

23. CONNECTION: Today we read that in the troubled faith community of Sardis, there were a few worthy people. With their example, hope persisted that this community would continue. They were promised that they would walk with Jesus dressed in white as a reward for their faithfulness. What do you think it means to walk with God?

Have you experienced this in your life or known others who have? How might it help you grow in your relationship with him and others? How does a Christian maintain such a walk? Share some thoughts with your group.

In Genesis 5:18-24, we read about the life of Enoch who walked with God for 365 years before God took him. In your prayer time today, try to take a walk with God.

DAY FIVE

Read Revelation 3:7-10

24. In today's readings, we begin the sixth letter to the faithful church at Philadelphia. In verse 7 Jesus described himself using symbolic language relating to a door. Complete the phrases from that verse below.

The holy one, the true

who opens

who closes

NOTE: Philadelphia, modern Alasehir, was located about thirty miles southeast of Sardis. It was founded to be an "open door" for Greek culture and was destroyed by an earthquake in A.D. 17. It was rebuilt by money from the Emperor Tiberius and renamed Neo-Caesarea, which may explain the allusions to "name" in Revelation 3:12. *NABRE*

25. What might be the meaning of this description? Look up one of the verses below that relate to doors and write your comment.

Isaiah 22:22

Matthew 7:7-8

Acts 14:27

Comment:

26a. Jesus greeted the faithful of this community by saying that he knew of their works (verse 8). Record the blessing he gave them from the end of the first sentence of that verse.

b. Though he recognized that they had limited strength, for what acts of faithfulness did he praise this community (second sentence of verse 8)?

27. According to verse 9, this church was faced with the same evil as the city of Smyrna, the assembly of Satan. What will happen to these people who claim to be Jews but are lying (end of verse 9)?

28. In verse 10 Jesus praised the church of Philadelphia for keeping his message of endurance. He promised them a reward for their faithfulness. In your own words, can you explain what one of the following phrases might refer to from this verse?

I will keep you safe

in the time of trial that is going to come to the whole world

to test the inhabitants of the earth

29. CONNECTION: Today we read that the church of Philadelphia had limited strength. It was perhaps small or had few resources. Yet it was praised and encouraged by Jesus for keeping his word and not denying his name. They had little power but remained strong in their love and faithfulness to the Lord. Recall a time recently when you felt weak but through the intercession of prayer or a holy advisor, the power of Jesus made you strong. Record some thoughts to share.

In Proverbs 13:20 we read that when we walk with the wise, we become wise. Write a prayer today about something that makes you feel unsure, asking the Lord for strength and wisdom.

DAY SIX

Read Revelation 3:11-13

30a. In today's readings, Jesus continued to speak to the members of the community in Philadelphia. According to the first sentence of verse 11, what statement did he make about himself?

b. What did he encourage his readers to do (second sentence of verse 11)?

31. What was promised to victors and how long would it last according to the first sentence of verse 12?

32. What will Jesus inscribe on those who are made pillars of the temple (second sentence of verse 12)?

33. The victorious Christians of Philadelphia will become pillars in the temple of God for eternity. What do you think this means? (see also [Galatians 2:9](#))

b. We also refer to prominent members or supporters of our own communities as "pillars." Share one example of a "pillar" from your community and how he or she has influenced your faith.

34. In verse 13 the letter concludes with the recurring phrase that, "Whoever has ears ought to hear what the Spirit says to the churches." Sometimes in our lives, our ministry to others is to listen or pay attention to what we hear. Can you give a recent example when you served another with active listening?

35. CONNECTION: The community of Philadelphia, though small, excelled in faithfulness, and today we read that they would be rewarded. One of the privileged ways we relate to and serve Christ is through community. Most of us need a group of faith-filled people to challenge, support and sustain us during life's struggles, joys and daily routines. We learn what love, service and worship are by interacting with and learning from others. List a few of the faith communities of which you are a member. From this list, can you share a recent example of why community has been essential to your faith experience?

We know that where we gather together in Christ's name, he is in our midst (Matthew 18:20). In your prayer time today, reflect with gratitude for the communities that provide support in your life guided by the loving hand of Jesus. .

Read pages 27-29 in the *New Collegeville Commentary, The Book of Revelation* by Catherine A. Cory. The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study acknowledges that scripture quotations in this study are from the New American Bible, Revised Edition (NABRE) © 2010, 1991, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC. All Rights Reserved. Used by permission.

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