

26th October, 2025

The paper-version Service



St Andrew's
Church



The Good
Shepherd
Four Marks
Responding to God's Love



To Begin: Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe, light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's Service.

Opening Prayer: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn:

To God be the glory, great things He
hath done,
so loved He the world that He gave us
His Son,
who yielded His life an atonement for
sin,
and opened the life-gate that all may
go in.

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
let the earth hear His voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father through Jesus the
Son,
and give Him the glory, great things He
hath done.

O perfect redemption, the purchase of
blood,
to every believer the promise of God;

the vilest offender who truly believes,
that moment from Jesus a pardon
receives.

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
let the earth hear His voice!

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
let the people rejoice...

Great things He hath taught us, great
things He hath done,
and great our rejoicing through Jesus
the Son;
but purer, and higher, and greater will
be
our wonder, our transport, when Jesus
we see.

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
let the people rejoice...

The Sermon by Rev Howard Wright

Read 26 Revelation 2:18-29 and John 2:1-11 – The Patient Bride

In our series from Revelation we're at the fourth of the letters, the letter to Thyatira. Thyatira was an ancient Greek city in modern-day Turkey, now the city of Akhisar. It is the smallest of all the cities addressed in the letters, but it was known for its commercial importance, particularly its production of bronze, pottery, and red and purple cloth and for its impressive temple to Apollo the pagan sun god.

Thyatira is mentioned in Acts as the city of Lydia of Thyatira, a seller of purple cloth, and one of the first European converts to Christianity.

Jesus is introduced as someone whose eyes burn brighter than Apollo's, symbolising his penetrating insight, and with feet of burnished bronze symbolising power and judgement.

As with all the letters, it begins with an 'I know...'. Jesus' penetrating eyes see all! The church is commended for its deeds of love and faith, service and perseverance, and for *'doing more than you did at first.'* But it is challenged about its tolerance of false teaching and immorality. Notice how this is the opposite of Ephesus. Ephesus could not bear evil, self-styled apostles, but had no love (Revelation 2:2, 4). Thyatira had love, but tolerated an evil, self-styled prophet.

The threat they faced was also an opposite to that at Pergamum. Pergamum face pressure from without – being squeezed into societies mould. Thyatira was being poisoned from within.

So what was the threat? ²⁰ *Nevertheless, I have this against you: you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols.*

Jezebel appears in the Old Testament at the end of 1 Kings and the beginning of 2 Kings. She the wife of King Ahab, whose name is synonymous with evil and Jezebel encouraged him and their children into all sorts of evil, and introduced the Israelites to Baal worship.

Jezebel is being used as a representation of teaching that leads us astray from faithfulness to God. Thyatira's love is commended, but for some this love had lost its centre and become soft. In its inclusivity it was tolerating 'new' ideas, regardless of the truth behind them and of the impact upon people, especially, the impact upon a person's relationship with God.

The truth of Christ and his Gospel has been compromised and become mixed with pagan ideas. They have begun to participate in the immorality and idol worship of their society for an easy life, without offending their contemporaries, and for their own pursuit of pleasure, wealth, and health.

The impact upon the church and its people was the same as we noted with the Ephesians, who in their loss of love, were like a bride walking down the aisle who's head is turned by some other man. Here for the people of the church of Thyatira their heads are turned by untruths which misdirect them and instead of walking straight down the aisle toward the one who truly loves them, their beloved, the groom, that is Jesus, they've turned aside to other fancies.

The church is warned that time has been given to repent. Revelation is chronologically the last of the books of the New Testament to be written, all four of the Gospels and all the Epistles – the apostles teaching were now in circulation. So, as we have the Bible today as the foundation of the teaching of Christ, so they did too. And this letter itself, serves as a final warning that the very things they pursue will turn and destroy them. Which in itself will serve as a tragic warning to all the churches.

What are we to do with this letter? In what way are we being challenged and encouraged?

Firstly we are encouraged to be like the Christians of Thyatira, and grow in love and faith, and service and patient endurance, with our latest works exceeding our previous.

Secondly, we are challenged to pay attention to what is taught and check it against the apostles' teaching, that is, the whole Bible. Read 2 Timothy 3:14-17 and Acts 17:11.

Thirdly, we are challenged not to be drawn into sin, knowing that Christ, our groom, sees all and acts with justice. There are consequences to our actions. That God is love does not mean no judgment because that would not be loving. Love includes justice!

And finally, we are called to hold on and to do God's will to the end, with the encouragement that we will rule with Christ, and receive Christ, the morning star, who far outshines the false and petty god Apollo who's temple stood over the city. (Read again verses 24-29)

19th Sunday after Trinity: *God, the giver of life, whose Holy Spirit wells up within your Church: by the Spirit's gifts equip us to live the gospel of Christ and make us eager to do your will, that we may share with the whole creation the joys of eternal life; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

The Lord's Prayer: *Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.*

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, St Andrews and The Good Shepherd, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

At the Church of the Good Shepherd:

- Tea and Chat and Bowls: November 19th at 2pm in Church Hall & Church.
- Coffee and Questions: November 26th at 10.30am in Church Hall.
- The Community Cupboard, 2:45pm every Thursday in Church.

For Further information:

This paper and all parish details are on the website at
<https://www.parishofmedsteadandfourmarks.co.uk>