



**General Theme: He who has an ear, Let Him Hear!**

**Mess. 04: The Rest in Thyatira: The Golden Line of God's Grace.**

**Scripture Reading: Rv 2:24 - 29**

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1. Church history teaches us with its successes and failures. We must consider everything it went through so we don't fall into the same mistakes, but value what the Lord is currently doing in our midst. Thus, we begin to know the path already trodden. It's not a very glorious story. There are almost 19 centuries of degradation and it all started when the church stopped giving due attention to the living speaking of God.

2. Since the Old Testament, God has spoken in many ways, through the prophets, but since the New Testament, the New Covenant through the coming of Christ, God has spoken to us through His Son, Jesus. Today, Jesus continues to speak through the channels He chooses, such as His apostles and prophets. Once Jesus had done the work of redemption on the cross and God resurrected Him, right on the day of Pentecost, Jesus began to speak through the church. His Speaking began through the apostle Peter and the eleven who were with him. Peter became God's channel, His mouthpiece, to speak the Word of God. Later, God raised up the apostle Paul, to reach the Gentiles, the nations. Through Paul, the God brought forth a marvelous revelation of His whole plan, His economy, namely, the salvation of man, in order to bring forth the church and fulfill His will. Finally, the Lord raised up the apostle John, so that at the end of the 1st century and beginning of the 2nd century, the church had the speaking of the Son through this channel. Unfortunately, after John, no other channel of God has arisen to speak for Him.

### **3 Jn 9-10; Ac 20:29-30**

3. **Why was there no one raised up by God after the departure of the apostle John?** I don't know for sure, but I can infer that by **John's time, the environment for listening to the prophetic word with reverent love had disappeared.** People began to seek positions, offices, ambitions in order to have popularity and followers in the church. So much so that when John sent his gospel teams to a region, Diotrephes, who liked to exercise pre-eminence in the church, was against it and did not receive those brothers. He condemned whoever received them. There was already an atmosphere of dispute for power and position in the church. This is not healthy at all and has brought about degradation. (3 John 9-10).

4. When Paul called the elders of Ephesus, passing through Miletus, he told them that among the brothers of the church would penetrate people who only aim at their own profit, interests, fame, their own work, popularity, family and glory, little concern with the flock of God. Though the flock go out into the world, they are not concerned, but want to cause division for their own sake. **Probably, when John passed away, there was no one left with a right heart for God to use as His channel and continue the prophetic speaking.**

5. **The word is God's government in the church.** The Bible reveals to us that the church is not a religious institution with a human government. The Church is the Body, of which Christ is the head and we are members of one another in this Body. It is a living, divine organism, not belonging to this earth. We have the life of God!

6. In practice, how does Christ govern His church, **in order to exercise His headship in our daily lives? It is by the word, the living speaking of God to the church brings about government from Him.**

7. When there is no government from God, men try to fill that void with human government, so as not to let the church drift and carry it forward. Thus, government by bishops arose. In the Bible, bishops are equal to elders, and it refers to the person who is more mature than the rest. Bishop, therefore, is the function of elders, which is one of supervision and not a superior category of people. However, **since there was no government of the Spirit, they needed to organize themselves and, for that, they invented this hierarchy.**

8. When the hierarchy appears, with a category superior to the others, then the work of the Nicolaitans appears. Nico refers to the one who dominates, who has become victorious and lay people are the common people. Nicolaitans are the ones who control the common people. Thus, clericalism, which does not exist in the Bible, arose in church history, which was divided into clergy and laity. The clergy take care of the government of the church and the laity just listen, obey and give so that the church can move forward. The absence of the prophetic word, and consequently the government of Christ and the Holy Spirit in the church, was the cause of degradation.

9. When the church was united with the world under Emperor Constantine, the power of the clergy increased even more. **Ecclesiastical power became political power. At that point, human ambition was finally satisfied and the church lost its holy nature.** At the time of the church in Thyatira, there was no more word or government from God. Who began to dictate the rules, according to Revelation 2:20, was Jezebel, who declares herself a prophet. The next thousand years were a dark period in church history. Until the Reformation, there was not the slightest government of God in the church.

10. **Christ's rule in the church will be resumed by the restoration of the Word.** God is raising up His church in Philadelphia. Proof of this is that He has restored prophetic speech among us. **This speaking brings only direction to the church, the headship of Christ and the Word of God, which is the government of the Spirit, does the work of God. We are experiencing unprecedented days.** The Lord wants to move quickly and conclude this age.

#### **Ex 19:4-5**

11. From the beginning, the word brings about the government of God. Among the pagan peoples, God chose a people through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and brought them out of Egypt, on Mount Sinai He spoke about the purpose of having brought them to Himself. Having approximately 2 million people of all ages, with their belongings, walking through the desert was not easy. Miraculously, God brought these people out of Egypt, as if riding on an eagle's wing.

12. God wants to be close to His people and He wants His people to be close to Him (Ex. 19: 4). The idea that man had of false gods at that time was one of great fear. If they displeased them, they would be punished. God does not want that relationship, but an intimate relationship. **If until today, you have the idea of a punishing God, get it out of your head.** God wants you to be intimate with Him. God's way of drawing us close to Him is through His speaking. God's speaking makes us His peculiar property among all peoples. **The Word makes us intimate with God, makes us know His heart and makes Him rule over us.**

#### **Dt 6:1-7**

13. **What is the way to be governed by God, to love our Lord with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our strength?** When we were newly converted, the Lord was everything to us, but later on, the emotional toll of human life and day-to-day occupations end up cooling us down. **We need to love the word of the Lord and inculcate it in our hearts. We need to ruminate, repeat, talk to each other, do the immersion, so that the word is engraved in our heart. In this way we will maintain our first love for the Lord. Let's love Him like the first day until He returns.**

14. Thus, the Lord will rule our life. Our marriage will be in order. **Our work and everything we do will prosper if we take the path of diligently listening to His voice and keeping His word in simplicity and obedience.**

#### **Dt 11:8-15, 25-29; Ps 127:2**

15. The word of God that we receive and keep makes us strong. Possessing the good land is a struggle of kingdoms and we need to be strengthened by the word of the Lord. That's why the Lord

gave us the battle cries, the immersion in the word. Teenagers and youth are jumping because they need to be strengthened to enter the good land.

16. In the world you have to work hard to get some result, but in the good land you depend on God. How will it depend on God's blessing? **If you are faithful to the Word, if you love it and take it into your heart, you will receive the blessing.** The rains that fall in this land accumulate in the mountains and then drain through the valleys, where there is the current of the rivers to water the entire land. In Egypt there was a plain and it took a lot of effort to pump the water to water the land. But the good land, which is Christ in us, is cared for by the Lord.

17. Many brothers work a lot. Nevertheless, they are always present in church services and in the work of the Lord. They experience the reality of Psalm 127:2. **Many do not have time for the Lord, because they work a lot, take care of their families, etc. But as you serve the Lord, you will experience what He will give you while you sleep.** God gives rain at the right time. This is a huge boon. The businesses and jobs of those who serve the Lord first are blessed. If you serve the Lord, love Him first, and immerse yourself in His word, rest assured that He will make your business prosper. Taste the Lord in this! (v. 15). Today we are taking the earth for the Lord by preaching the gospel, rescuing people (vs. 24-25).

18. **Even in the face of all we've heard, the choice is still ours (v. 26). Choose Blessing! We choose the blessing when we diligently hear the word of the Lord and keep it. Reverently loving the word of the Lord, inculcating it in our hearts, immersing ourselves in the word and having it always among us, is the path of blessing.** In the traditional church life of the past, our contact with the word was only for two or three hours a week in meetings. **Today, in our private life, we can immerse ourselves in the word and have it present with us at all times.** You can take the word in daily immersion in the various moments of your day and pray to the Lord until you engrave it in your heart. In this way you choose the blessing (v. 27).

19. We think that choosing the curse is choosing sin, the world, drugs, prostitution, etc. But, according to this word, the curse is not keeping the commandments of the Lord. **If you do not diligently listen to the voice of the Lord and engrave the word in your heart, you will directly choose the curse in your life. There will be no Word for your guidance and to get your life in order.** You will easily deviate from the word and from the Lord. Through other voices, negative words will come and you will start having problems with those who are following positively in the blessing of the Lord and will follow other gods. (v. 28).

20. When they were about to possess the land of Canaan, God led the people before the two mountains: Gerizim and Ebal. Each one should choose. **Everyone has freedom of choice, but everyone must bear the consequences of their choice.** If you choose Mount Gerizim, you will be blessed. If you choose Mount Ebal, the consequences will be entirely your responsibility. It will destroy your life, your marriage, your children and grandchildren. You have to choose right (v. 29).

## MESSAGE 04

21. We are addressing the church in Thyatira, before Sardis, so that we can understand the background of the Protestant Reformation in the Middle Ages (Dark Ages). Even after this period, the church in Thyatira was plunged into dense darkness amid much ignorance regarding the word of God and superstition created by Jezebel, who declares herself a prophetess, deceiving the people, who lived in this darkness, under the government of this "prophecy". Even in the midst of this scenario God speaks: **"But I say to you, the rest of Thyatira, to as many as do not have this doctrine and who have not known, as they say, the deep things of Satan: I will not throw another burden on you"** (Rev 2:24).

22. **God always preserved a people, even if they were few, like a golden line that never ended, but was always preserved by the grace of God. Although often weak, it was always present.**

23. The Albigenses lived in Albi, a town in the Languedoc region of southern France. A very prosperous region, where grapes, wine and olive oil were produced. There, for a long time, they tried to live a normal Christian life without much influence from the church in Thyatira and without the teachings of Jezebel. Across the valley, on the eastern side of the Alps, were the Waldensians.

24. In short, there was a great persecution of Pope Innocent III that decimated the Albigensians. The papacy was seen by them as the one who destroyed people's souls and prevented all progress in the field of arts and education of the people, because for the Roman hierarchy to have the submission of the lay people, it had to keep it in ignorance, superstition and slavery. They were

undisturbed for long years, they were peaceful, hardworking and prosperous. And the priests of the Roman hierarchy were despised for their moral corruption, for their exploitation of orphans and widows, for dishonesty, deceit, gluttony and drunkenness.

25. In the year 1209, the Pope summons a crusade of 300 thousand rude and ignorant warriors, against the true Christians, promising the forgiveness of debts, the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. The gigantic army, thirsting for blood and spoils, marched through lands of vineyards and olive groves, burning and destroying everything across the beautiful region of Languedoc.

26. History tells of the crusades, which grew out of pilgrimages to the holy land (where Jesus died). Jerusalem at that time had been taken by Arabs. The pope decided to gather an army "in the name of God", on whose uniform there was a cross (hence the name of the campaigns to liberate the holy land: the crusades). People risked their lives in this war, fighting in an unknown land was practically suicide, however, they fought because of the papal indulgence, for the forgiveness of their sins. After a terrible, criminal, debt-filled life, the great opportunity to receive forgiveness for everything and go to heaven was granted through the authority of the pope.

27. Later on, **this same army was summoned by the pope to persecute Christians, whom they called heretics. The Waldenses and Albigenses were considered heretics, because they read the Bible and followed the way of God.** It was endless cruelty. Tortured, burned alive and other atrocities. Their lands were ravaged and taken over by these armies.

28. The war in Languedoc was the first experience of persecution on a large scale by the Pope, to maintain his supremacy by force of arms, acting against the true followers of Christ, those who recognized His divinity and the authority of God's Word.

29. Those who escaped the sword, fell into the hands of the inquisitors, installed for the utter extermination of the "heretics. The period of the Albigenses and Waldenses was 300 years before the Reformation. The Lord needed this time to mature and wait for papermaking and the printing press to be invented.

30. Pedro Valdo deserves a special mention. He was born in the year 1140 in Lyon, France. Around the year 1160, the practices of idolatry and the doctrine of transubstantiation (the teaching that when the priest took the host and pronounced the so-called words of consecration, the bread actually became the flesh of Jesus) bothered him, and alarmed by the intensity of the perversion and corruption introduced into the church, together with the dominating influence of the papacy over the souls of the people, he began to experience the true conversion of his soul to God.

31. He was a rich clothes merchant from Lyons and was a learned person. He probably used his team of street vendors to spread the word of God, who were the first colporteurs. The word colporteur comes from the French "colporteur", being "col" (neck) and "porter" (to carry), indicating that they carried copies of the Scriptures in pouches hung by straps around their necks.

32. **Pedro Valdo was saved because he had contact with the Word.** It was impossible for the common people to have access to the word, which was in Latin and accessible only to the clergy. For clergy, the dogmas and sacraments of the Church of Rome were more important than the word itself. Therefore, even the priests themselves did not read or understand the Bible.

33. **His great contribution to the true gospel:** between the years 1170 and 1180 he **commissioned the translation of the Gospels and some other books of Scripture into the language of the people**, Franco-Provencal, for the Scripture in those days was completely sealed, only existed in Latin.

34. When their sellers went out into the streets to sell clothes, they hid inside their clothes the bag with the copies of the Scriptures, made by the copyists from the commissioned translation. And they followed the example of the Lord Jesus, they were sent out two by two. Upon realizing that a customer was open to the Word of God, the salesperson would pull out a copy of the word and read it with them, the person would be saved and gain the Lord.

35. This aroused the wrath of the pope, as the holy Scriptures in the language of the people was a deadly weapon against the ignorance and superstition in which the people were held for their manipulation. An interdict was issued against Valdo and his followers, by the Archbishop of Lyons, however, they replied that it would not be fair to listen to men and not to God (Acts 4: 18-19). Thus, they were excommunicated and exposed as heretics. **The church had the authority to forgive sins or send them to hell by excommunicating a person. There was great fear of this, but Pedro Valdo knew the Word.**

36. Valdo lived the rest of his days on the run. He crossed the mountains towards Bohemia, the land of John Huss, a forerunner of the Reformation. He died around the year 1200. For three centuries, the Waldensians were persecuted. Due to the refusal of the sacraments and dogmas in

the Roman hierarchy and the struggle for access to the Word of the lay people, **they kept alive the golden line of God's grace until the reformation.**

37. **What is the difference between the early colporteurs, the Waldensians, and the colporteurs of today?** Pedro Valdo's great contribution was to realize that people at the time of the church in Thyatira were kept in total ignorance of the Word of God. The Scriptures were in Latin and the clergy themselves did not read them. The people were manipulated at the papacy's convenience, and kept under superstition and in complete blindness. Valdo hired a partial translation of the Scripture in the language of the people, Franco-Provençal, and used his street vendors to go out with copies kept in a bag around their neck (colporteur) to spread the Word of God. With the light of the Word, people were saved and delivered from darkness. And it produced a golden line of life down through the centuries to the reformation, and eventually the restoration of the church in Philadelphia.

38. **Today's colporteurs work with books that help people receive the revelation of the Word to understand the Bible, for the purpose of preaching the gospel of the kingdom. The gospel of the kingdom is that Christ is the head of the church and governs the lives of the members of the Body.** It is not enough to receive the gospel of grace and be saved by becoming a child of God by faith in Jesus. From the day you believed in Jesus, Christ must rule his life. The vast majority of Christians today do not worry about this, they think that after believing in Jesus they will go to heaven and that is all. No! The purpose of saving us by faith in Christ is to lead us to live a Christ-governed Christian life. I don't mean living a life under religious rules, but living with His word dwelling richly in our hearts.

39. **Many Christians have the Bible in their hands, but how many live the reality of the gospel of the kingdom? They have no revelation and do not understand what the Bible says. Our colporteurs today, no longer need to carry the hidden Bible, they need to carry the revelation of the Word.** Today, thanks to God, people have access to the printed Bible, but without revelation there is no proper understanding of the Word.

#### **Ne 8:1-12; Pr 29:18 (KJU)**

40. At the time of Jerusalem's restoration, the people had been scattered throughout Babylon during the captivity. God had promised that a Gentile king, Cyrus, would issue a decree to summon the people for restoration of the temple by Zerubbabel and Joshua and later restoration of the city by Nehemiah. However, those who returned were a minority. Most stayed in Babylonian captivity, living their culture. **We are a little flock. There are not many of us, but we are like these people who have returned, who pay the price to do God's will.**

41. When Ezra read the book of the Law of God, there were some who explained so that they would understand what they read (vv. 7-8). **Today, the Lord is sending colporteurs to people so they can understand what they read in the Bible.** Colporteurs send portions to people who have nothing. Without the revelation of the Lord there is no government of Christ. (Pr 29:18, KJU).

42. Although in our current society there is wide access to the Scriptures, nevertheless, there is a need for the revelation of the Word to understand what is read. Therefore, **not only colporteurs, but the whole church needs to participate in this.** Maybe you say you don't have colporteur experience, however, **you can also help your friends and your colleagues. Pass them a book and you'll have that experience.** Many brothers, after having some experiences with colporteurs, are acquiring boxes of books to sow the gospel of the kingdom. Teenagers are helping their teachers and colleagues. The Lord will bless the people we meet.

#### **Jn 5:16-18, 39-40**

43. Many people have the Scriptures in their hands and are looking over how they should live, but they don't want to come to the Lord Jesus to get revelation and really know what God wants. No more living a religious life, fearing God as the punisher. He wants to supply us with His grace, reality, light and love so that you can live according to the government of God. Many are students of the Word, but have no revelation. We need to bring the gospel of the kingdom to people through books.

44. At the time of Jesus, the Jews persecuted Him and sought to kill Him because He healed a paralytic on the Sabbath (John 5:16-18). Jesus then said that the greatest proof that He was sent by God was that the works that the Father entrusted to Him, the very ones that He performed, testified about Him that the Father sent Him (v.36). And He said to the people, who were apparently zealous for the Law: "You search the Scriptures, because in them you think you have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me. However, you do not want to come to me to have life" (vs.39-

40). **It was not enough to have the Scriptures in hand, man needs to go to the Lord and receive the revelation of the Word from Him to have life.** It's not about being punished, but having life. Jesus is the good shepherd and came so that we might have life in abundance.

#### **Lk 24:25-32**

45. After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. When Jesus explained to them what was in the Scriptures about Him, they felt their hearts burn as He spoke (Luke 24: 25-32). **When there is the living speaking of the Lord, the heart burns and man receives revelation. The people need our speaking that brings God's revelation.** When colporteurs go out into the streets, the hearts of those who hear them are warmed. Despite the difficulties, we took the explanation of the Word to the people and their hearts burned. Everyone needs the revelation of the Word.

#### **Ac 8:26-39**

46. After the persecution of the church in Jerusalem and the death of Stephen, Philip was sent to an Ethiopian, a high official of Candance, and found him reading the prophet Isaiah, and asked him: Do you understand what you are reading? He replied: How can I understand if someone doesn't explain it to me? Philip explained the Scripture to him, preached Jesus to him, and the eunuch was baptized. We need to be obedient to the Lord. The eunuch must have been in a luxurious carriage. **The Spirit led Philip to approach this man. People need us to come to them to bring them revelation.** When someone, in a food court, invites you to sit down and listens to the explanation of the word, they leave full of joy. The joy of the Lord is our strength!

#### **Mt 13:3, 19; 24:14**

47. **The Lord commissioned the church in Philadelphia to bring about the end. For this, it is necessary to preach the gospel of the kingdom. There is no other way to do this than through the colporting work.** Let us take the books that contain the revelation of the word of God to the people who seek. Many will come to walk with us on the path to the manifestation of the kingdom of heaven. We have this responsibility and this is our commission. Don't fall into the conversation of those who are against colporting, against immersion, and against what the Lord is doing. It is Satan who is using them to speak against. In practice, we will bring the Lord back by preaching the gospel of the kingdom. Just as the Lord went out to sow the seed of the kingdom, today we are following Him. What Pedro Valdo and the first colporteurs did, we are continuing (Mt 13:3, 19).

48. **Our mission as the church is to bring the revelation of the Word to people through books, media, and meetings. Furthermore, we have the responsibility to preach the gospel of the kingdom throughout the whole world, as a witness to all nations. Then the end will come (Matt 24:14). We are commissioned to preach the gospel of the kingdom so that the end may come. The colporting work aims to sow books that contain the revelation of the Word, which will make Christ head up all members who obey Him.** We have little contact time on the street when approaching people, so God has given us the colporting work as the tool that will bring the Lord back. We leave books and get contacts of people who want to be cared for. Those who seek will surely find the way to be overcomers like us!

**Jesus is Lord!**