



Mess. 6:
The Church's Degradation Over the Centuries
Scripture Reading: Rev 2:6, 9, 14-15, 20

Link to this live on the IVPT Channel
<https://youtu.be/oGrjDKrqL7o?feature=shared>



Offering Center
<http://institutovidaparatodos.org.br/central-de-ofertas/>



May I pray for you?
<https://www.lifeforallministry.org/mayiprayforyou>



Word given by brother **Pedro Dong**, and transmitted by Instituto Vida para Todos, directly from Estância Árvore da Vida, on **06/09/2024**. Text not revised by the author.

We encourage you to watch the full message on the IVPT YouTube channel.

1. This message is being delivered during the last moments of the 2024 Women's Conference. The last few days have been unforgettable, the Lord spoke to us through the example given by the women, of seriousness and commitment in seeking fellowship in the teaching of the apostles. Their speech penetrated our hearts like a sharp sword, there is no way to remain indifferent when the Word of God penetrates our hearts in this way. **The Lord is managing in taking the church to another level, the sphere of resurrection! Through the word, He has managed to detach us, uproot us from this perverse world full of religiosity.** We want to give the Lord a church in Philadelphia that truly lives the brotherly love and gives Him the edification of the Body.

Acts 2:42,44; Luke 8:1-3

2. In Acts 2 we see that everything begins with the teaching of the apostles. At the time, the Lord spoke through the apostle Peter, and this word was ruminated by the other brothers and sisters, producing a normal church life. Knowing this, for 20 centuries Satan tried to destroy this teaching of the apostles and the fellowship of the Body, introducing hierarchy into the church. Still in Acts 2, we see that the fellowship of goods among the members of the primitive church occurred spontaneously. **That is, naturally among them, as they were already uprooted from the concerns of the world, they lived in oneness even financially and handed over everything they owned at the feet of the apostles.**

3. **Over the next few years of the church's history, it was not possible to maintain this model, but the principle remained.** Today, money is one of the things that keep us rooted to the earthly sphere. But the Lord wants us to be uprooted from the world! We, who belong to the Church, a living organism that gives the Lord the possibility of executing His will, must uproot ourselves from this perverse world, from the concern for our own sustenance. **Therefore, although each of us manages our own finances, we must be aware that our goods belong to the Lord.** Thank God, He has taken away the possessiveness we have regarding our financial life.

4. During the period in which Jesus was on earth, the first group raised being concerned in serving in the ministry with their material goods were the women. For it to be possible for the Lord and His disciples to travel, it was necessary to have financial support. In Luke 8 we see that among the women who had this burden, there were some who had been healed of illnesses and evil spirits.

These evil spirits can be present in our love of money, our sense of ownership over our possessions. May the Lord free us from all slavery to money!

5. The first to be mentioned in the New Testament regarding Kingdom Investors, in Jesus' ministry, was the women. Today we have several fronts in need of offerings, as we have shared. There are gospel preaching fronts around the world, and more recently there was a need to renovate the Bread of Life room, a space available for fellowships. Upon hearing about this need, the sisters quickly organized themselves and were willing to meet the demand! The space in the Bread of Life room will be greatly used to advance the gospel of the kingdom and build the body of Christ!

6. I was very touched by the speed of the sisters' action! Women are in fact quicker to react and support the work. By this reaction, many people will be reached by the word, and the Lord will obtain among us His church in Philadelphia!

Rev 3:9

7. Regarding those who promote hierarchies in the church, we read in Revelation that the Lord will make them prostrate themselves at His feet. Among us there is no difference in classes, all members are functional in a living organism!

Prov 29:18 (KJA); Deut 8:1-3; Ex 19; Matt 4:4

8. When there is no prophecy, the word brought by the apostles, the people become corrupt, they have no order, but whoever accepts the Lord's revelation is happy! When the people of Israel entered the good land to possess it, they must remember all the way in the wilderness through which the Lord led them for 40 years. We need not only God's word of revelation, but also the trial. **We need Him to test us, to show us what is in our hearts.** Many times, we ourselves do not recognize the dirt inside us. Thus, the word that reaches us needs to have the cooperation of suffering. **Part of the absorption of the word in us occurs through the trials generated by suffering.**

9. The Lord sends us the word, but He also tests us to reveal what is inside us. The word that comes to us is an order, it often bothers us and takes us out of our comfort zone, but it makes us work! **Trials come to show us whether or not we will practice this order. Trials uproot us from material things, they make us see that man cannot live by bread alone.**

10. God not only left the ten commandments transcribed by Moses, but also commanded the people in the wilderness with His own voice. This indicates that God's people live and are governed by the word that comes from the mouth of God. In the wilderness, there is no way for man to live by his own ability, nor can he obtain provision for his sustenance. There man depends completely on the Lord, and He shows that man will live by the word that comes from the mouth of God. In a wilderness there is no shortcut, nothing we can hold on to, except the word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. This is how He wants to teach us to live!

Deut 18: 15,18-22; Num 9:15-23; 12:1

11. The Lord said He would raise up a prophet, just as He chose Moses, into whose mouth He will put His words. The Lord's prophets are not free to say what they want, but only what the Lord commands them. This is the word that governs the people of God. **This is a very serious principle, because anyone who speaks in the name of the Lord, without speaking the word that comes from God, commits a very serious fault, as God did not choose him as His channel.**

12. How then can we recognize that someone is truly the chosen prophet who speaks in the name of the Lord? The word of this prophet must be fulfilled, it must happen as he prophesied. **That is why the prophetic word is unmistakable: God is the one who makes it happen!** Moses was the prophet chosen by God and used to lead the people to the entrance of the good land. God governed Israel by His command, His mouth. **God had already given the people the ten**

commandments, therefore, the word to be obeyed was already available, however the daily command was the prophetic word. **In our daily living we need to receive the voice of command from the Lord. Thank God we have the Bible, His Word, and also His daily speaking.**

13. The Lord's order came through Moses, a man. It is difficult for human beings to believe that a man, prone to failure, can be the mouth of God. In Numbers 12, we see that even Moses was questioned about this. In the midst of the storm, we have been through in the last year, I was questioned about my insistence on speaking the prophetic word, to which I said, "I am just being faithful to the Lord." My intention is never to exalt myself. **Moses was used by the Lord in the wilderness to establish God's government among the people.**

1 Cor 2:14; Num 16:1-3, 12-14; Neha 9:26

14. However, it is very difficult for the natural man to understand the things of God, and he begins to question why God only uses a man to speak to His people. This happened with Miriam and Aaron, and also in the case of the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, as we read in Numbers 12 and 16, respectively. The concern of the rebels in the wilderness was that Moses intended to place himself in a superior position to the others. **Now, Moses was called not to a position, but to a function: to transmit the Lord's speech.**

15. Nehemiah, when he stood up to rebuild the temple, was accused of wanting to position himself as king of Israel. Brethren, this is a common attack: the Lord uses people who have no concern for position, but Satan raises this evil suspicion. Of the prophets that the Lord raised up among the people of Israel, many were persecuted and killed for passing on the word.

Heb 1:1-2; Eph 3:5; Matt 23:2; Acts 20:29

16. In the Old Testament, God spoke many times and in many ways through the prophets. **In the New Testament, which refers to these last days, it is Christ who speaks, as He received the task from the Father to fill the church with reality and, through it, become head over all things.** Thus, **those who prophesy today do so through Christ, for He is the one speaking.** Therefore, we use the term prophetic word to define the "*rhema*" word that God speaks through the prophets to execute His will in each age.

17. Unfortunately, in the absence of prophets, teachers were raised up. At the end of the first century, the church no longer gave importance to the words of the apostles, and in John's time it was common for church leaders to no longer appreciate their words. From the second century onwards, God no longer sent prophets. The bishops, teachers, began to govern the church using human precepts.

18. Paul already warned that when the church fails to follow the teaching of the apostles, it opens doors for the entry of ravenous wolves, which will not spare the flock. They don't care about the flock, about families that are divided, couples that are on opposite sides. This occurred in Paul's time and is occurring today.

1 Tim 1:3-4; Gal 1:6; 2:14; 4:16-17 (KJU); 2 Tim 3:10

19. Since the time of the apostle Paul the problem of promoting different teachings within the Church was present. At that time, many wanted to talk, but their content was genealogies, curiosities, and characters from the Old Testament. This diluted Paul's speaking, who, despite being constrained, asked Timothy to warn the brothers and sisters to stick to the prophetic word. To the Galatians, Paul stated that anyone who preached a gospel beyond what he was preaching would be perverting the gospel of Christ. And by telling the truth, he became an enemy of the Galatians, because those who preached another gospel wanted to isolate them from the apostle.

20. In the year 67 AD, close to his martyrdom, Paul, in his second letter to Timothy, reveals the clear degradation penetrating the church at the time, as all those in Asia abandoned him, deviating from the truth with useless and profane talk. However, Timothy followed closely behind. **We need to guard ourselves against negative words, words of death, as they contaminate us and can cause irreversible damage.**

21. Brothers and sisters, how sad! At the end of his career, Paul had been abandoned by everyone, they had despised the prophetic word and degradation had entered the church. Timothy was the only one who remained by His side.

22. The letter to the church in Pergamos describes the situation in the middle of the fourth century, when Caesar of the Roman Empire, Constantine the Great, granted the Church imperial favor. That is, it recognized Christianity as the official state religion, until the establishment of the papal system in the second half of the 6th century. We will look at some more elements of degradation that were introduced by Satan.

Matt 13:31-32; Rev 2:14; John 17:14-15; James 4:4; Matt 6:24

23. In the period of the church in Pergamos, the Roman Empire changed its tactics, stopped persecuting the church and joined it as in marriage, made it a fortified tower, like the mustard seed that grew into a great tree and the church became monstrously large. **This marriage of the world with the church is a spiritual fornication, a prostitution, because the church is a pure virgin espoused to Christ.**

24. Other factors contributed to deepening the degradation of the church: idolatry and prostitution. Before the union of the church with the world, the clergy were already being elevated to a high position, full of honors, and claiming that the common people needed them to reach God. **But when the church and the state joined, the position and power given to clerics was even greater. This totally corrupted the church.**

25. Balaam's doctrine seeks to destroy the separation between the church and the world, and the result is idolatry. On the eve of His martyrdom, Jesus prayed to the Father, "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one" (John 17:14-15). **The Church is in the world, but it is not of the world. Jesus chose us as a select group who, like Him, do not belong to the world.** In the times of Emperor Constantine, the Church became a friend of the world. In Matthew 6:24, we see that behind the love of money there is idolatry, **we cannot love the Lord and money at the same time.**

Col 3:5; 1 John 2:15; Matt 20:25-28; Num 31:16

26. Colossians 3:5 mentions prostitution along with covetousness, which is idolatry. Idolatry arose through covetousness; man, worshiped idols to enrich himself and seek his own benefit. And idolatry always goes hand in hand with fornication. **If we allow idolatry and covetousness to enter our lives, the consequence is fornication. If anyone loves the world, the Father's love is not in him. The world is in opposition to the Father!**

27. When Constantine united the Church with the world, a little after the year 300 AD, the clerics began to receive salaries from the State treasury, and gained state power, thus completely losing their purity and sanctity. **Whoever receives it starts to serve whoever pays their salary, and not the Lord. Balaam's doctrine is to hire people.**

28. In Matthew 20:25-28, Jesus told His disciples that in the world governors dominate and rulers exercise authority over the people, but it is not like that among us, in the Church. Unfortunately, with

the clerical class strengthening in power, wealth and status, its members began to compete for functions and positions to obtain more and more privileges.

29. Balaam was hired by Balak, king of the Moabites, to curse the people of Israel and introduce prostitution and idolatry into them. This prostitution corrupted the camp, and it was a work that Balaam did for pay. He was the first to make money from the gifts God gave him. **Unfortunately, this became embedded in Christianity, serving God for salary or remuneration.**

Phil 4:10-19; 1 Cor 9:3-14

30. Paul established as a principle not to be hired by anyone, but the churches had mercy on the apostle. The Philippians associated themselves with Paul's suffering and offered for his needs, but the apostle still wrote with embarrassment, making it clear that his search was not for material riches. **A servant of the Lord who receives a salary may end up in the hands of those who would hire him. Therefore, in our midst, those who transmit the word are not employees, as our intention is to be faithful only to the Lord.**

31. **Our intention is not to remain in the hands of any millionaire, as we intend to please the Lord above all.** Still, thank God, we have been supplied by grains of sand, we lack nothing! Paul says, in 1 Corinthians 9, that those who preach the gospel should live by the gospel. This verse applies very well to our colporteurs! **They don't do colportage for money. When they do, they don't get results, it doesn't flow. Colportage is not done for money, but the Lord supplies them through it.** They are not hired by anyone, but God feeds them with the fruits of preaching the gospel.

32. The enemy has not only destroyed the prophetic word over the last few centuries and corrupted functions within the church through clericalism, but he also wants to destroy us by paying those who speak. **However, here there are no employees, we all depend on the Lord!**

2 Pet 2:3; Rev 2:15; Eph 4:12

33. In 2 Peter 2, we read about false prophets and teachers who, driven by covetousness, started to do business with the brothers and sisters with fictitious words. **We do not serve any man; we depend on the Lord for everything.** Those driven by covetousness are those who abandoned the straight path, went astray, following the path of Balaam, son of Beor, who loved the reward of unrighteousness. Consequently, he further strengthened clericalism: "Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate" (Rev 2:15). Today there are many religious leaders who distort the word of the Lord to justify a luxurious living. What at the time of the church in Ephesus was called "works of the Nicolaitans," has now become the "doctrine of the Nicolaitans."

34. Through union with the world, the clergy in the Church began to enjoy, in addition to religious power, also political and economic powers. Completely establishing the hierarchy in the Church. In this way the clerical system was consolidated, opening the door to the papal system in the period of the church in Thyatira. **The doctrine of the Nicolaitans destroys the function of the members of the body of Christ, paralyzing the edification.**

35. **Thank God, He brought us the restoration of the function of the members of the body of Christ, as an organic body and living organism in which all members are nourished by the word.** All over the earth churches are living and moving forward in oneness! Only God's government established through the word can do this! **We will build the Church to give the Lord a dwelling place, where He will rest!**