IDOLATRY IS THE DEADLIEST SIN

Feb. 28, 2018 Rev. 2:12-17

Again this week, we hear Jesus speaking to the church in Pergamum a message that is both good news and bad news.

 The good news is that even though Satan has a strong presence in their midst, they are holding fast to the faith and are not denying God’s name. They are being severely tested by the forces of evil but hold on to the true faith.

 How bad is it in Pergamum? It is one of the worst pagan centers of worship. It has been a center of emperor worship for a long time. The temple to the emperor Augustus was built in 29 B.C. It also has a temple to the goddess of Rome and one to the hated cult of Aesculapius whose symbol is a snake. On the Acropolis is a throne-like altar of Zeus Soter, meaning savior.

 Many join pagan cults to join in the festivities, or because it’s good for business to travel in such circles. Some are just curious as to what goes on behind closed doors. Many join because it appeals to their corrupt human nature. Many cults, even today, have sex as part of their rituals. And so, many just cannot resist the lure of sex outside of marriage, because it must be ok since it is part of our worship.

 The bad news for this church is that there are some in the church who are also part of this paganistic immoral activity while also being members in the church. You cannot have it both ways.

 For a member of a Christian church to also participate in pagan rituals is to remove Jesus as the only Lord of your life. Those who do this have removed themselves from the family of believers and are in danger of hell-fire. And so, Jesus calls on them to repent and return to their first love, Jesus Christ and the free salvation He alone offers to all who believe.

 Congregations All thru Synod are battling the forces of evil that come in various shades and entities. We should not be surprised that we are faced with such problems. Peter even says that in his first letter, chapter 4: “Beloved, do not be surprise at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed.”

 To put anyone or anything as the most important part of your life, where Jesus should be, is idolatry. Once this happens, the old evil foe has his dangerous hook in you and what ensues is a battle for your soul.

 Jesus was tested, as a man, in the wilderness and in fact all thru His three years of ministry, to turn from God and embrace idolatry. Jesus stuck fast to God’s reliable Word.

 For, what does it gain a man if he has the whole world but loses his own soul?

 The ongoing battle of God versus evil is all about the human soul. The devil wants our souls-----God has kept His promise to send a Savior to do battle with the devil to save our souls. Idolatry is all about selfish desires for this life. Nothing else.

 God offers, thru faith in Jesus Christ, eternal life, joy forever, no more pain or suffering for all those who fall asleep in Jesus.

 Really, it is no contest, is it? We must pray for those who have been blinded by the false promise of happiness. Pray that they hear the blessed invitation of Jesus to turn from their sin and live.

 Jesus loves us this we know, for the Bible tells us so.