

The Loveless Church
Revelation 2:1-7

These letters that Jesus has written to the seven churches must be taken seriously, for in these letters it will.

1. Encourage us

2. Challenge us.

3. And correct us.

1. Each of these letters were written to seven real churches in the first century.
2. In each letter to the churches, Jesus says, "I know your works."
3. In each letter to the churches, there is a verdict from Jesus regarding the condition of the church.
4. In each letter to the churches, Jesus says, "To him who overcomes."
5. In each letter to the churches Jesus says, "He that has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the church."
6. In each letter to the churches Jesus gives a description of what that church is in need of.

These are personal letters to each of us today if there were two way mirrors in those churches we would see our own face and spiritual condition.

Rev. 2:1 [¹ "To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, 'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:'] The seven stars are the Pastors and the seven lampstands our the Churches.

Listen Jesus wants to reinforce accountability to the church's leadership as well as to the church body, for their witness actions and service.

Notice He says He who holds the seven stars. The word “hold” is the Greek word *krateo*, it means to have in a grip; to have seized with dominance, to control by direct use; to have all authority over another.

No one wants to be krateod today do we?

No one wants to be put under the authority of another.

When getting married some wives to be want to keep their last name.
When getting married, some husband to be wants the wife.
to have his last name in all capital letters.

It’s sad that even some Pastor put in their bylaws that they can’t be fired from their position. It’Pastor for life

Jesus says it does not matter what you think or what you say, I am in charge and you have to answer to Me. Then He goes on to say that **He walks in the midst of the seven golden lamp stands.**

Jesus wants His churches to know that He is still there.
He wants to know the atmosphere of
His this church.

Is it warm, and inviting?

Is it caring and reaching out?

Or is the church only open on Sundays.

Vs.2-3 [2 “I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; 3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary.]

I like this, before Jesus gives them the bad news, He gives them the good news. You will see this as a pattern in His letter to the churches.

He goes on to say.

- 1. I know your works. James 2:14 [14 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?]** Good news, Their works proved that their faith was real. Side note. Only Jesus can judge a person motives.

2. **I know your labor.** This word labor means that they served so faithfully and so long that when they stopped, they would hit the bed exhausted.

People, it should cost us something when we are following Jesus. Look these churches where living in the first century. They were not censoring churches to keep them quiet they were killing them. A dove symbol on your door was a target for death. I have ask individuals if they were Christian and some responded why you want to do.

Jesus tells a story in

Mark 10:21 of how He asked a young man to follow Him.

[²¹ Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.”]

Taking up your cross for Christ is a labor of love.

In the physical this seems hard.

In the physical this might cost you everything.

But in the spiritual

His burden is light and His yoke is easy.

1 Cor. 15:58 [⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.] Sometimes when I'm faced with what I see as hard, I say.

lord if you don't go before me I can't go.

Lord if you don't hold my hand I'm turning around.

Lord If you don't carry me across the finished I'm going to come up short.

3. **I know your patience, your endurance. How do you** Their heart was right, therefore they could endure hardship and not give up. They were not whiners. They got better when things got hotter.

People we need to stop tapping out.

When things get hard
we quit on our marriage
we quit on our kids
we quit on our jobs
then we quit on our churches.

Far be it for me that I would quite on what God has given me.

1stTim 2:3 ³ You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

Remember that word krateo when Jesus krateos us it should remind us of what He once said,

All that the Father has given Me I have kept and no one is able to pluck them out of My hand.

Let me share this with you Super Glue doesn't compare to Jesus Christ,

His bond with you is for all eternity.

- 4. I know that you can't bear those who are evil.** This is church discipline being applied. If there was something going on in the church, they didn't close their eyes to it, they dealt with it. But sadly, this is one reason churches today are so weak and polluted, we fail to deal with sin within the body of Christ. The very God that walks in our midst asks us a question, **Do you hate what I hate?** **Ps. 5:4-5 ⁴ For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness, Nor shall evil dwell with You. ⁵ The boastful shall not stand in Your sight; You hate all workers of iniquity.**

- 5. You have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them to be liars.** By comparing what had already been revealed to them in scripture with what some teachers were saying, they were able to quench false doctrine. **Acts 20:29-30 [²⁹ For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰ Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.]**

When a church or a person starts to deviate from truth, it opens itself up to satanic delusion.

6. Then He says, And you have persevered, and have patience, and have labored for my names sake, and have not become Jesus is so faithful to us because all good words will be acknowledged. Gal. 6:9 ⁹ And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

Now after the commendation, Jesus gives them the condemnation. He says in vs. 4. **Nevertheless, I have this against you, that you have left your first love.** Wow! After all the good things said about this church, they still had a problem.

In the original Greek, it reads, But I have against you that you have abandoned the love you had at first. The word abandoned or left, is the same word found in **1 Cor. 7:11 when it says divorce or put away¹¹ But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife.]** Wow!

This tells us that the church in Ephesus had become too busy to carry on with the love relationship they had with Christ at the beginning of their walk. **Has the business of your ministry become so incredible, that you have forgotten why you do things for Christ?**

When love for the Lord dries up and is replaced with service for the Lord, there is trouble. God wants us to serve Him, but not at the expense of our relationship with Him.

This is what has happened to some older Christians (not age).

You've become so refined and mature that you've fossilized in your chairs.

- You do nothing with no one, but for you.
- You once shared Jesus with others because you couldn't keep your mouth shut.
- You once gave of your time because your time belonged to Jesus.

- You once gave of your money because you believed that it would reach others for Jesus.

Now your new name could be Lazarus. You've been resurrected from the dead, but now you're wrapped in old stinking grave clothes!

Notice that Jesus said they left their first love not lost their first love.

When you lose something you don't know where it is, but when you leave something, you know where it is but you've simply walked away from it. (Go back)

V5 Next we have the three R's...Remember, Repent, Repeat.

Remember therefor from where you have fallen, and repent and do the first works.

1. Remember. I think we need to look at this in two ways.
 - a. What was so good about our life before Christ?
 - b. We need to remember the change that took place in us when we first began to serve Christ. For me it was night becoming day.
2. Repent. Lord I am not where I need to be with You. **Ps. 51:17** ¹⁷ **The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart—These, O God, You will not despise.**

Note this, We can run a great distance away from God, but it only takes one step to return to Him.

3. Repeat. I know what the Lord is calling me to do in order to keep my love alive for Him. One thing that He is saying to me is get up while it's still dark and you will hear from me. What about you? What do you need to repeat?

V5 Or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lamp stand from it place, unless you repent.

Jesus says that they would lose their witness and that's exactly happened. People, there is no longer the church of Ephesus. **2 Cor. 13:5** ⁵ **Examine**

yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.

V6 ⁶ But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. We'll talk about this when we get to the church of Pergamos. But He makes it clear, they hate sin not the people but their deeds.

V7 ⁷ “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” He who had an ear, let him hear.

This calling is for all who desire to live for the Lord, and it has a promise to the over comer, an entrance into heaven.

2 Tim. 4:7-8 ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. Wow!