Sunday Sermon Guide

Central Baptist Church – Crockett, Texas
November 1, 2026 – Church Health: Health Checkup

Main Passage: Revelation 2:1–7

Main Idea:

The answer to spiritual decline isn't more activity. It's renewed love for Christ and His church that produces faithful obedience.

1) Recognize the Danger:

We Can Work for Jesus While Growing Cold toward Jesus *(vv. 1–4)*
Supporting Scriptures: *Matthew 16:15–18*

- Jesus commends Ephesus for its labor, endurance, and commitment to truth. These were good works, yet something essential was missing.
- "You have abandoned the love you had at first." They had not merely misplaced their love; they had turned away from it while ministry continued.
- We can get so used to "doing church" that we forget to BE the church. A full calendar and sound doctrine do not excuse a heart that is cold toward Jesus.
- Christ's Church will endure, but individual congregations can close. Numerical growth does not prove spiritual health, and decline calls for honest examination.

2) Examine the Drift:

We Can Move from Pursuing the Mission to Maintaining the Organization
Illustration: *Dr. Anthony Svajda's church life-cycle model (SBTC)*

- Vision leads a church to reach people and make disciples. Relationships and discipleship grow; programs develop, and management helps organize the work.
- As comfort replaces urgency, vision fades. The church begins to maintain its organization and programs instead of pursuing the mission it was meant to serve.
- Nostalgia and tradition look backward for answers. Discipleship suffers, people and programs diminish, and management struggles to keep the doors open.
- This model is not Scripture or a verdict on Central. Not every church follows this pattern, and decline need not end in death. Renewal is possible through Christ.

3) Respond to Jesus: Remember, Repent, and Return *(vv. 5–7)*

Christ's command: *"Do the works you did at first."*

- Remember how far you have fallen spiritually. Recall your love for the Lord and zeal for His mission; Jesus is not calling us to recreate the way things used to be.
- Repent. Jesus addresses the church: acknowledge where we have turned away, change direction, and turn back to our first love. Appearances cannot excuse drift.
- Return. Recognition must lead to obedience. Keep the labor, endurance, and commitment to truth Jesus commends, with renewed love for Christ driving the work.
- Jesus warns that He will remove their lampstand unless they repent. A remarkable history does not excuse complacency; His warning offers an opportunity to return.

Takeaways

- No church is so healthy that it can afford to stop examining itself. We must ask what kind of church we are becoming, not merely whether we will survive.
- Our programs exist to serve our mission. Our mission doesn't exist to serve our programs. The question is whether we are making disciples or simply staying busy.
- Renewal begins as we recognize where we are, return to our biblical purpose, and faithfully follow Jesus. Another program alone cannot restore our first love.
- We should celebrate what God has done at Central and carry the mission to the next generation. Crockett will still have people who need the gospel long after us.
- What happens individually is reflected corporately. Church activity cannot save us; eternal life is God's gift through faith in Jesus, who died and rose again.

Questions for Reflection

1. Am I personally trusting in Jesus Christ for salvation, or am I simply connected to the church and its activities?
2. Have I allowed my love for Christ to grow cold while remaining busy with the routines, responsibilities, and activities of church life?
3. Are we more concerned about maintaining our church than fulfilling Christ's mission, and what do our decisions reveal about our priorities?
4. Are we making disciples and preparing Central for the next generation, or are we simply preserving what is comfortable for our own?
5. What do I need to remember, repent of, and return to today so that renewed love for Christ produces faithful obedience in my life?

Bottom Line

A healthy church isn't measured by how busy it is, how successful it has been, or how long it survives. A healthy church is one that loves Christ, remains faithful to His Word, and actively fulfills His mission.

For Further Study:

- **Revelation 2:1–7:** Read the passage again. What does Jesus commend, what does He confront, and what response does He require?
- **Matthew 16:15–18:** Christ builds His Church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. Consider the hope and responsibility this gives us.
- **Matthew 28:18–20:** Jesus sends His people to make disciples. How does this mission shape the way we evaluate our church's ministries?
- **Romans 3:23; 6:23; 5:8; 10:9–13:** Salvation is God's gift through Jesus Christ. Reflect on His death and resurrection and your personal response of faith.