

First Love

Revelation 2:1-7

Revelation 1:19: Write the things which you have seen, (ch 1) and the things which are, (ch 2-3) and the things which will take place after this. (ch 4-22)

Revelation 2:1: To the angel of the church of Ephesus...

40 years earlier, on Paul's 3rd missionary journey, the church at Ephesus was born.

Paul stayed in Ephesus for 3 years teaching the Word of God! We read in Acts 19 of the multitudes that believed in Jesus! On one occasion people were so convicted of their sin that they came publicly confessing their sins and burning their magic books in a public display repentance!

The awakening in Ephesus was so great, that the pagan temple to Diana was in danger of being shut down.

In Acts 19 we are told from this one church in Ephesus, the word of the Lord Jesus spread through all Asia.

Revelation 2:1: To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, "These things says He (Jesus) who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:"

Revelation 2:2: 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;

The word here "know" speaks of complete and full knowledge.

"Labor" speaks of laboring to the point of exhaustion.

Ephesus was a church hive that was filled with diligent worker bees for the cause of Christ.

Ephesus was not a spectator church where the majority of the people watched — while a few were doing all of the work.

"Patience" here speaks of endurance in trying circumstances.

Revelation 2:2: ...and that you cannot bear those who are evil...

The church at Ephesus was a church that would not tolerate evil going on in the church.

Revelation 2:2: ... and you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars...

Ephesus was a doctrinally sound church. They were able to discern true and false teachers.

Revelation 2:3: And you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.

What a wonderful thing it is to be part of a work where the laborers are being sustained by the Lord!

Revelation 2:4: Nevertheless, I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

The church at Ephesus was doing all the right things: they were actively serving, they were doctrinally sound, they were reaching the world, and being sustained! All of these are commendable.

Yet the charge that Jesus brought against them was this "You have left your first love."

Revelation 2:4 (Living Bible): Yet there is one thing wrong; you don't love me as at the first.

Amplified: depth of love

The Church at Ephesus had motion (outwardly things looked good) but inwardly they had left that place of devotion to Jesus!

What began as a beautiful move of God's spirit was now in danger of becoming more like machinery.

Jesus was no longer their passion. He was no longer their first love, their chief love.

It is possible to be serving, to be an active, laboring member of a church - even a leader, an elder, a deacon, a pastor - where outwardly there is plenty of activity going on, but inwardly you have left your first love.

Revelation 2:7: He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Have you left your first love?

- Have you have walked away from the Lord? (John 21)
- Are you backslidden like Peter?
- Are you a Christian, but Jesus has never been the first love of your life.
- Maybe you are not yet a true Follower.

Luke 14:25-26: Now great multitudes (huge crowds) went with Him. And He turned and said to them, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."

You cannot be a true disciple and be half-hearted!

Jesus wants all your heart!

Think of how audacious Jesus is here! He asks for us to love Him, above every other love in our lives! And we do! Why? Because of His love for us! (1 John 4:19)

Revelation 2:4: Nevertheless, I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

Revelation 2:5: Remember therefore from where you have fallen (fallen away); repent (turn back to Me) and do (re-do) the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand (church) from its place; unless you repent.

The path back is **Remember, Repent, Redo:**

- Remember: Memory is a powerful thing. **Remember** where you once were, acknowledge that you've drifted from the passionate love you once had for Jesus! Remembering can be the spark that starts a life ablaze for Jesus.
- Repent: Turn from coldness and spiritual neglect. Turn to Jesus tell him you love Him. Tell Him you want Him to be the great love of your life.

- **Redo:** Engage again in the spiritual habits that characterized your early devotion to Jesus.

Revelation 2:6: But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate...

Revelation 2:7: 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.