

Preparing Our Hearts for the Return of Jesus

14- Ephesus: What Went Wrong

I. Ephesus

- Largest city in Asia
- “Light of Asia” known for its tolerance and a place where enlightenment ideas were birth
- Home to the Temple of Artemis (one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world); they worshipped Diana of the Ephesians
- It housed the Pro-council of Rome, the #1 leader of the Roman Empire in all of Asia Minor, w/ tons of soldiers
- Largest church in the 1st Century
- Key Moments:

Acts 19 – Paul came across 12 disciples were baptized only by John’s Baptism, Paul introduced them to the Holy Spirit and they were on fire after that,

Also had the School of Tyrannus, which is where Paul taught for 2 years and as a result all of Asia heard the word of God.

Extraordinary Miracles in Acts 19, where Paul used handkerchiefs to heal the sick

Then you have the Sons of Sceva

The burning of books and magic items whose total worth was 50,000 pieces of Silver... Occultic items

Apollos was one of the first converts in Ephesus, and has a very powerful testimony

II. Patterns of these 7 Letters

The church is Identified

Jesus gives a description of Himself

Jesus gives the present condition of the Church

He praises the church’s strength

Jesus exposes their faults

He gives corrective action to fix the issue

He gives the reward for overcoming these faults

III. What You Do Vs. What You Believe

Rev 2:1-7

¹ ***“Write this letter to the angel of the church in Ephesus. This is the message from the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand, the one who walks among the seven gold lampstands:***

² ***“I know all the things you do. I have seen your hard work and your patient endurance.***

We need to stop and reflect at what Jesus is saying. Jesus is more concerned in what you do, than what you believe. Ultimately you do what you actually believe. James says “I will show you my faith by my good deeds.”

If you partake in sin, whether it being a gossiping, sexual immorality, profanity, you are professing your real faith by your actions, or in other words the level of your maturity and growth in your faith

IV. Ephesus’ Report Card

I know you don’t tolerate evil people. You have examined the claims of those who say they are apostles but are not. You have discovered they are liars. ³You have patiently suffered for me without quitting.

What a report card for any Christian to have: They work hard for the Kingdom, Active in church in outreaches and its financial responsibility. They are patient. They do not tolerate evil people and they are not unequally yoked. They don’t fall for self-appointed preachers.

This church does everything we would consider right.

V. Losing It's Love

⁴ ***"But I have this complaint against you. You don't love me or each other as you did at first! ⁵Look how far you have fallen! Turn back to me and do the works you did at first. If you don't repent, I will come and remove your lampstand from its place among the churches.***

This church we will see hated the Nicolaitans, which is a hyper grace movement that was around back then. It is the God loves you through your sin, His grace is sufficient without ever once requiring repentance or obedience.

So what we are seeing is a church that is strong in Truth but Lack Love

¹⁵***Instead, we will speak the truth in love (Eph 4:15)***

Truth w/o Love you end up being dogmatic and legalistic

Love w/o Truth you end up being woke, worldly

It takes both.

Ephesus lost it's love for God and People while still strictly adhering to bible.

There are segments of the church in varying degrees (because a lot of us have issues with this) that will call you out on the carpet. For any issue they can see, even if they are legit issues.

Jesus called out the pharisees in Mt.23 for their hypocrisy telling them they "strain out a gnat", which is obsessing over tiny, insignificant matter; "Swallow a camel" while ignoring much greater moral failures

And the internet with the protection of not having someone call you out to your face, while still exposing your heart lends for cowards to call out women preaching, or moral failures, or corrupt faith meanwhile these same people praise King David, Peter and women leaders in their lives

Truth alone calls us to identify the issue.....which we need....Love allows us to see Truth and administer Gods Love.

God restored David despite his actions and the administered consequences and never once told him he had to stop being King.

Jesus restored Peter the foundation of our faith. Despite in the most important moment to show fidelity with the One you love, rejected Him because he was a coward (a person who lacks the courage to do or endure dangerous or unpleasant things)

VI. Returning To Your First Love

Turn back to me and do the works you did at first. If you don't repent, I will come and remove your lampstand from its place among the churches. ⁶But this is in your favor: You hate the evil deeds of the Nicolaitans, just as I do.

⁷***"Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches. To everyone who is victorious I will give fruit from the tree of life in the paradise of God.***

²***"Go and cry in the hearing of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says the Lord: "I remember you, The kindness of your youth, The love of your betrothal, (Jer 2:2)***

Paul say in **2 Cor 11** that we are **betrothed** to Jesus, and made **chaste** by Him.

Think about the first few months you started dating your spouse, the kindness and capacity to overlook faults that we had with one another.

Remember the First time to had that encounter with Jesus, that you felt His amazing love, that you were succumbed with such love, such tenderness that all you can see is the good in people, although it might be hiding by all their bad.

How does a mother forgive a man for killing a son?

How does a Father forgive a person for abusing their child?

How does a person not yell and give the one finger salute when you are cut off

The only way I know is with God's Love, because He sees all the issues that leads to destruction, He sees the heart.

Jesus is saying Protect that Love, Love that is bound by truth, and Truth that is Bound by Love. Softly spoken and a lesson we can all acquire more of.

LISTEN CAREFULLY!

The *love* God requires is not optional—it is the very key to restoring what was lost in Eden.

Being *saved* is a gift, but *sharing in His eternal glory* is a calling far greater. There is a difference between simply entering eternity and **walking in the fullness of His presence**, face to face.

To eat from the **Tree of Life**, to dwell in the **very presence of God**, is not just a reward—it is a *relational promise* from the heart of the Father. This is Eden *restored*—but greater, eternal, and unshakable.

This is the Reward promised by Jesus to learn to Love the ones the world calls loveless!!

Love your enemies with this Love.