

## Ephesus' Evaluation

### I. Announce:

- A. *Welcome to those Online.*
- B. **Slide1** Community Outreach:
- C. **Slide2** Men's Ministry: Sat morn BS in Psalms, 6:30am, Agape Room, & on Zoom.
- D. **Slide3** VBS Registration: A free event is the week of June 19th -23rd from 8:30 am-12:15 pm. for students entering 1st-5th grade for the 23/24 school year.
- E. **Prayer:** *Lord we are here to hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*

### II. **Slide4** Intro: *Ephesus' Evaluation*

- A. What is something that, once you get started, *you can't stop talking about?* (food, sports team, hobby, someone?)
- B. Our 1st **Postcard from Patmos**. *Dear Ephesus...*
- C. Ever had an **evaluation** done on you? At work. School. Ministry?
  - 1. Does anyone like them? But they are very good for us. (my eval CCBC Homeletics)
- D. **Slide5** Map: Asia (province, not cont.)
- E. **Slide6** Map: Patmos. Circle in order clockwise. Starting with *Ephesus* near the coast.

### III. **Slide7** INTRO TO THE 7 CHURCHES

- A. This starts the 2nd part of John's book outline (1:19) *The things which are.*
- B. John, *Postman of Patmos*, pens *7 Important messages to 7 local churches.*
- C. Why is Christ 1st dealing with **the church** here in Revelation?
  - 1. Because, judgment begins where? (1 Pet.4:17) *For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?*

2. So Jesus deals with these **7 churches**, before He deals with *the lost world*.

D. Why were these 7 churches singled out?

1. Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.
2. Why not Philippi? Why not Corinth? – There were **more popular** churches, there were **larger** churches, there were **more needy** churches.

E. Some say because, these 7 represent *7 consecutive time periods of church history*.

1. Though this is fascinating, intriguing, & we find some correlations when we examine each era ... **we clearly find the merits and weaknesses of not one particular church ... but all 7.**<sup>1</sup> [starts off **plausible**, becomes **forced & artificial**]
2. We need to be careful in **spiritualizing** the 7 churches, as they were **real** churches who had **real strengths & weaknesses**.
3. **Ephesus**: A church that lost sight of its first love. A call to return to your first love. **Smyrna**: A church that experienced persecution. A call not to fear. **Pergamos**: A church surrounded by evil influence. A call not to compromise. **Thyatira**: A church that embraced evil. A call not to tolerate sin. **Sardis**: A spiritually dead church. A call to spiritual revival . **Philadelphia**: A faithful church. A call to persevere & know you are loved. **Laodicea**: A lukewarm, materialistic church. A call to open your heart and recommit your love for Jesus.

F. **4-Fold Reference**:

1. **Local** - To the churches actually addressed.
2. **Admonition** - to **all** churches, of **all** time periods, as tests by which they may discern *their true spiritual state*. **Note**: in 2:7 **churches**.
3. **Personal** - In the exhortations **he who has an ear** & in the promises **to him who overcomes**. (7)

<sup>1</sup> Shepherd's Notes, pg.6.

4. **Prophetic** - The progress of its spiritual state *until the end of the church age*.

G. So why these 7?

1. **Geographically** – They were readily accessible to one another & the world.
2. **Historically** – They each had strengths to commend and/or weaknesses to correct.
3. **Spiritually** – churches of every age share the same strengths & weaknesses as those historical churches.

H. With each of the churches there is: 1st a positive affirmation, then a corrective discipline, & 3rd, a motivating promise.

I. Have you ever *evaluated* a church or a ministry?

1. You probably did when you moved in this area.
2. When you came here to CM, what did you use as a measuring guide?
  - a) The building? The amount of members? How funny the pastor is?

J. **Only Jesus Christ** can see the true condition and give a true evaluation. (not ch survey)

1. Jesus here *peers into the pews* of 7 churches & gives em each *a report card*
  - a) Just as an *ultrasound tech* places the probe onto the mothers stomach, and **views & measures** the growth, and **watches** for any *abnormalities*, So does Christ w/His babies.

#### IV. Slide 8a **BUT HAVE NOT LOVE (1-7)**

A. **EPHESUS** (1)

B. **Background:** A great commercial center. It bore the title *The Supreme Metropolis of Asia*. It had the great Temple of Artemis/Diana (1 of the 7 wonders of the ancient world).

1. It was an important gulf city, a crucial export center, they had sea trade, 3 main routes converged there. It was wealthy, politically influential, & a very pagan city.

2. **Paul** did the church plant there. **Timothy** followed up. Later **John**.
- C. **Slide8b Holds & walks among** – Jesus’ **hands & feet** are emphasized here.
1. **Jesus is in the midst of the churches & He knows** what is going on.
  2. **Holds** - When God has a hold of something it speaks of **divine security**, sovereign control. [remind you of Jn.10]
  3. **Walks** – represents His **continual presence** in his church. (*peripateo*/ walk about) **Adam in the cool of the garden**.
- D. **Others** have an opinion of our church...**but** what does **Christ** think of it?
1. **Isn't it interesting** what **we** look at in a church, verses what **Jesus** looks for & commends or condemns in them.
  2. **We ask, Is it a mini or a mega-church?** Hymns or contemporary music?
  3. **We say, wow it's successful because they have a large building, or so many home studies, or programs, or awesome retreats.**
  4. **What would you expect Christ to hone in on w/the churches?**
- E. **Note:** 1 point from the description of **Jesus** in **1:13-16** is used for each of the churches.
1. The specific attribute of Christ that applied to the particular needs of the church is emphasized in the message.
- F. **Slide9 EPHESUS, BATTLE TESTED & ORTHODOX** (2,3)
- G. **Religious busyness** - a *status symbol* in many churches today.
- H. Remember He’s speaking to those **inside** the church.
1. **It was a Serving church** - a **Saint Martha’s** if you will, **no not** the Catholic Church in town (though they are a *serving church/Pantry*) **but** a reference to **Mary/Martha**.
    - a) **Works** - They were **busy** doing the **works** of the Lord.
  2. **It was a Sacrificing church** - **Labor** = *toil to the point of exhaustion*.
  3. **It was a Steadfast church** - **Patience** = *endurance under trial*.

4. It was a **Separated** church - They **didn't tolerate** those that are evil, & they **tested** visiting ministers.

a) They were the *Pit-Bulls* of orthodoxy. Guardians of truth. Chasing away false teachers.

b) They knew **How** to defend the doctrines of the Word, **but** forgot **Who** the doctrines pointed to.<sup>2</sup>

I. (3) They were tired **in** their labor, **but** not **of** it.

1. They were a **busy church** with high spiritual standards.

2. In every way this was a **successful** church ... **from the human** standpoint

J. Slide10a/b **LOVE IS PRIMARY** (4)

K. The Righteous Bro's sang, *"You've lost that loving feeling - Oh, that loving feeling - You've lost that loving feeling - Now it's gone, gone, gone - Whoa-oh"*

1. **Was** Christ singing the same? - He had **one bone** to pick with them.

L. What is it to *have abandoned your 1st love?* (left, or stopped maintaining)

1. Do **feelings** follow **behavior**, or the other way around? Is this first-love issue primarily an issue of **feelings**, **or behavior**? Is **Jesus** concerned with our **behavior**, **or** how we **feel** about **Him**? Your behavior has a direct impact on your feelings.

2. **Now**, we both know *biblical love* isn't talking about *a loving feeling* but is **love in action**. That love isn't only sharing w/someone some words but is both words & action.

3. Slide10c **Love is primary**, and without it, the church has no reason to exist. (wow)

M. After hearing of all the positive things this church was **doing**, it's surprising to discover they had **abandoned** (*not lost*) their **1st love**.

1. No amount of **separation**, **sacrifice**, or **service**, can make up for your **lack of love** toward the Lord.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Swindoll, The 7 Churches, pg.15.

a) **Slide10d** 1 Cor.13:1,3,13 *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, **but have not love**, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal...And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, **but have not love**, it profits me nothing ... **but the greatest of these is love.***

b) When Paul wrote his letter to this church (Eph) earlier, he referred to Love **20x's!**

N. Isn't this the very question Jesus asked Peter (3x's)? **Do you love me?**

1. There is always the danger of **a love grown cold.**

2. **Slide10e** It's not a **hatred** of Christ, **not** even being **mad** at God; **it's indifference, it's apathy, it's lack of interest, lack of concern.**

3. **Christ is more concerned what we do with Him, then for Him.**

a) **Labor** is no substitute for **love.**

4. To the public, the Ephesian church was **successful**, to Christ it had **fallen.**

5. **Peter**, do you love me? **Ephesus**, do you love me? **CM**, do you love me? **Your name here**, do you love me?

a) *The love of Christ compels/controls me.* 2 Cor.5:14

O. What decisions did you make that resulted in you **feeling on fire for Christ?**

P. **Slide11a BEING RESTORED TO 1ST LOVE STATUS** (5) 3-fold step

Q. **Remember** / *keep on remembering...* What you've lost. Cultivate a desire to regain that close communion again.

1. The prodigal **remembered** his home. [This is the 1st step to the road back]

2. **Reminisce.** *Flip back the pages in your mind. Take a walk down memory lane.*

3. **What do you remember about your 1st date w/your spouse/boyfriend?**

a) Dad's Caprice Classic. Supertramp's *Breakfast in America* 8-track playing. Seafare Inn Whittier (drawn butter, zipper, curb).

#### 4. What do **you** remember about 1st being saved?

a) The freshness of God's word. Being enraptured in Worship. Hanging out after bible studies talking to friends.

R. **Repent** – *Repentance is the admission that the fault is ours. It is the **acceptance of responsibility** for our failure & our fall.* Barclay

1. The prodigal son said, *I have sinned*. Saul (OT) said, *I have sinned. ...Indeed I have played the fool and erred exceedingly.*

2. (Spurg) **Christ & we will never be One, until we & our sin are Two.**

S. **Repeat** or *Do the works you did at 1st* - The sorrow of repentance is **Not** to drive a man to **despair**; it is meant to drive him to **2 things**:

1. Drive him to **fling himself on the grace of God** saying, *God be merciful to me a sinner.*

2. Drive him to **action** that we may bring forth **fruits** w/repentance. (ie) *A changed life*

a) \* Notice, they are to **Do** their 1st works, **not** to **Feel** their 1st feelings :)

T. **Slide11b** (msg) **Turn back!** *Recover your dear early love. No time to waste, for I'm well on my way to removing your light from the golden circle.*

U. The danger to the churches is that Christ would **remove their testimony**. He would rather have a city in the darkness **than** to have a lampstand out of His divine will.

1. "The church that **loses** its **Love** will undoubtedly **lose** its **Light** ... no matter how doctrinally sound it may be."

a) The glorious city of **Ephesus** retained its vigor till the 5th century, **but** now is a heap of stones today, silt 7 miles inland.

b) **The local church** is to shine as a light in the world. W/o true **love** for Christ, it's true **light** will go out.

V. **Slide12a NICOLAITANS** (6)

W. **Nicolaitans** [nikao=victor, laos=the people] *To conquer the people*, a sect who lorded over the people. **A Christian heresy.** [Inventors of the *clergy/laity* split]

- X. **Slide12b CONQUERS** (7) *overcomers* at the end of all 7 churches
- Y. **Conquer** = Nikao (knee-caw-o). Nike, **Gk goddess of Victory**. [26 x's in NT, 21 in John's writings, 15 in rev]
- Z. **Conquer what? 2 things**: persecution **and** the temptation to compromise. **Or don't give up or don't give in.**
1. **Q: How do we conquer?** Note, 2 times last church, **read 3:21**. **A: Jesus!**
- AA. **Tree of life** – **lost** in Eden, **regained** in Paradise.
1. The **thief on the cross** was promised **this Paradise** by Jesus.
- BB. **Slide12c** Picture of my **Icon**, *Copy of Byzantine Art*. [illiterate]