

PART TWO: HANDOUT Revelation Chapter 2: 1-8 Church of Ephesus

American Churches have moved from a Post-Modern Culture to a Post Truth Culture and are Facing Their Last Stand! Congregations and Leadership are Facing Spiritual Compromise, taking short cuts to following Gods Word completely. *We Need God the Holy Spirit to Fall on Our Churches Driving Us to Have a Passion for Christ, Replacing Complacency with a Holy Spirit Filled Church!* Chapters 2 & 3 of Revelation Introduce us to what Jesus expects of the Church and what must change to have His Spirit Filled Power and Blessing!

Chap 2 -3 are Hard Truth They War Against Human Desire In the Church! These 7 Messages are exhortations which constitute instruction and warning to the church and Christian! Each message to the Church ends with a personal exhortation ***“He that hath an Ear to Hear, Let Him Hear!”***

- When the book of Revelation was written Ephesus was the most Prominent city in the Roman province of Asia and had already had a long history of Christian Witness. Paul had ministered in Ephesus for 3 Years. The Preaching of the Gospel had Adversely Affected the Worship of Dianna which resulted in people Rioting because of a Loss of Income. **READ REV 2: 1-7**
- **THE ISSUE:** The Ephesian Church Had Lost Their First Love! In Fact, They had Abandoned It!

VS One: The letter is addressed to the “Angel/Messenger” of the Church of Ephesus. Greek Word: “aggelos” is translated in English as Angel. **There are differing opinions, However, most Scholars believe that these Messages are definitely directed to the Pastors of these Churches!**

- Last week, we discussed the meaning of the 7 Lampstands and the 7 Stars: The Stars were those Overseeing the church and the 7 Lampstands were the 7 churches.
- Christ holds the “Messengers” of these Churches in His Right Hand. The Greek word used for Hold “Kraton” means to “Hold Authoritatively” with Sovereign Protection & Divine Authority over Pastors!
- **THOT: God Hold’s Pastors in His Hand...As we Stand on the Divine Authority of His Word He Will Protect Us And His Spirit Will Move Supernaturally through Our Church!**
- Christ is Walking in the midst of the 7 Lampstands {Churches}... *This Symbolizes His Presence and His Observation of each Churches Testimony.* His Message is Based on His “Perfect” Knowledge of Each Churches Commendable Works as He Mentions their Notable Character

In Vs 2-3 the Church of Ephesus is Commended! However, in Vs 4-5 Jesus says, You Have Lost Your First Love! The Greek order of words is more emphatic saying, “The First Love...You Have Left!”

- The Church of Ephesus had Not departed completely from their “Love for God” But, There Love “No” Longer had the Fervency, Depth or Meaning it Once had! **What does “FIRST LOVE” Mean?**
- First Love Means God Is First Place In All Things...ALWAYS! The Heart is Not Divided. No Duplicity!
- *Jesus said, If you love me you will keep my commandments, His Mission is to be Our Mission!*

This Point is seen in the Perspective of the...3-fold Nature of Man’s Spiritual Poverty!

Some Spiritual Needs Stem from a “Lack of Faith” in God! *A person either “Falls Short of Salvation” or if Saved “lacks an Abiding Dependence on God and the Promises in His Word!”*

- It’s the Difference between The Mind (Comprehension) And the Heart (Application)

The Second Problem Lies in the Exercise of “Human Will”! Many who believe in God have *not yielded* themselves completely to God. ***They Do Not Live Filled with the Holy Spirit Surrendered to Christ!***

- KEY: First Love is a Heart Fully Surrendered & Life Totally Filled with the Holy Spirit!

It is “Always” a Matter of the Heart! And here...The Heart had Cooled! Which leads to the 3rd point: **Compromise!**

- WARNING: The Cooling of the Heart is Always the “Forerunner of Spiritual Apathy!” *And it Always Leads to the “Elimination” of Christian Testimony!*

To Correct This Weakened Spiritual Position Were Given 3 Urgent Exhortations!

1. **Remember...** Therefore from whence You Have Fallen! First, Go back to the place of departure of your faith! Re-Examine Your Heart in light of God's Word.
2. **Repent!** *Change Direction and Return to a Love of God! Put Him First in Everything...Obedience to Everything God says! NO COMPROMISE*
3. **Do the First Works!** *True Love Manifests Godly Works! Christ said, "You Will Know a Person in Christ, By their Fruits!"*

In Verse 6: Jesus Commends them for Hating the Practices of the Nicolaitans. They hate what God hates, the Deeds of Abomination & Sexual Impurity. Nicolaitans, like the Gnostics abused the Doctrine of Grace *Doing what they Think in their Own Hearts Paying NO Attention to what God Says!*

- Throughout the ages the Church has been plagued by those of the Nicolaitan spirit. The Only way to recognize False teaching is to be Intimately Familiar with Truth Through Study of the Word of God.

In Verse 7 Jesus says, "Whoever has Ears to Hear, Let them Hear". Hearing Gods Word and Following comes a Promise: *The Right to Eat from the Tree of Life will be given in the Midst of Paradise. {ETERNITY!}*

- Jesus says, "To the One who is Victorious" or "To Him who Overcomes" 1 John 5:5 Living under the principle of God's Grace & the empowering of God the Holy Spirit...We Will Overcome this World!
- The World Seeks to Create Compromise, Apathy and Self-Seeking Attitudes!
- The World Seeks to Replace Our First Love For Christ W/Duplicity In Our Hearts

The Question We Need to Ask, "Is Christ First in My Life?" Making Christ First Place midst the Busyness of Life...Will Not Happen Automatically...**You Must "Intentionally" Choose to Focus on Christ!**

- **KEY:** This Requires We Surrender Our Schedules and Our Natural Tendencies...*and Let Christ Define Our Priorities and Discipline Ourselves to Follow Obediently!*
- It is About Our Heart Seeking to Love Christ, and to Love Each Other MORE!

So How Do We Guard Ourselves From Becoming Dull/Cool in Our Passion for Christ?

One: We Must Recall the Love, Enthusiasm, Passion and Heart-Felt Devotion That we had for Him and for each other! It's About Passionately Wanting More of Christ! KEY: Doctrine Without Devotion Fails to Satisfy Jesus who Longs to Relate to Us From the Passion of Our Hearts!

Two: **Repentance** Corporately and Personally Surrender. **Total Submission** is giving Jesus your heart, including strengths, weaknesses, hopes, and fears. **Total Submission** to Jesus involves letting go of anxiety and trusting Him with your future, health, and finances. **Total Submission** is Daily, Moment-by-Moment, Decision to Live in His Presence and Follow Christ Rather than Conforming to the Worlds Ideals. **Total Submission** means we abandon selfish ways, "Deny Ourselves, Take up the Cross, and Follow Him"

Three Be Intentional...More Time with Jesus-Less Time In the World. Jesus Expects Our Passion to Remain Unchanged from when We First Received Him! Trusting and Obeying in All Things Being Filled with God the Holy Spirit...**To Love God with Everything and then to Love our Neighbor the same.**

John Stott: One of the Great Dangers of the Modern Church is that the Holy Spirit Could Leave Us while the Machinery of Ministry Keeps On Operating as If Nothing Happened! However A Church Without the Filling of God the Holy Spirit is Powerless!

Jesus is calling for Us to Respond...To have More than a Form of Godliness. To Courageously Step Up and Make Him Our First Love. **To be Fishers of Men...NOT Just Keepers of Aquariums!**

POINT: "FOR CHRIST TO BE MY FIRST LOVE...HE MUST HAVE ALL MY HEART!"