

Revelation – The Return

Revelation 2:1-11

The letter to Ephesus

All of the letters were authored by Jesus and sent to the messenger of the church. Who is supposed to read and heed this mail? _____

- Revelation 2:1
- Jesus reminded the Ephesians that the church is His and He is among them. Who were the famous in this church? _Pastor Paul> Timothy> John and M_____. This church is ~ 40 yrs. old.
- Jesus commended the Ephesian church for good deeds, hard work, perseverance, and refusal to tolerate wickedness and false teaching.
 - Revelation 2:2-3
- The Ephesian Pastors and elders protected the church from false teachers.
 - Matthew 13:36-40-43
 - Acts 20:29 Wolves go after the flock
 - 1 Timothy 1:3-4 Don't teach wrong doctrine.
 - Revelation 2:6 Nicolaitans taught among other lies, sexual sin is OK and other idolatry.

Jesus confronted the Ephesian church for forsaking their first love.

When was the last time you did this and why? _____

- Revelation 2:4 Pick something else as first in your heart
- The Ephesian church looked healthy on the outside but was decaying from within.
- Our first love, our highest priority, must be our love for Jesus.
 - Matthew 22:37 Shema Love the Lord your God with all your heart , soul and m_____.
 - Matthew 22:39 Love neighbor as yourself.
- Our “first love” is our zeal for Jesus like when we first believed.
- Religious Activity is not the same as love for Jesus.
- Our spiritual activity can camouflage our spiritual stagnancy.
- Our passion for Jesus can become stale over time.

To stoke our love for Jesus, we:ie *stoke the fire, take out the clinkers*:

Ex. _____

- remember what our first love for Jesus looked and felt like,

- confess and repent of our sins, especially spiritual complacency and apathy, and
- do what we did when we were first saved.
 - We spend time with Jesus in prayer and Bible study.
 - We worship Jesus privately and corporately.
 - We lead others to Jesus.

Jesus warned the Ephesian church.

- Revelation 2:5 Repent and? _____
- If a church refuses to repent and puts other things before Jesus, He will remove their lampstand and the church will die.
- A church is only a church if Jesus is in it.
- If the Ephesians repented, Jesus promised eternal life.
 - Revelation 2:7

The letter to Smyrna

The church of Smyrna suffered heavy persecution. Even the Jews killed Christians to protect themselves

- Jesus reminded the Smyrneans that He had victory over death.
 - Revelation 2:8
- Jesus told them that the persecution was going to get worse.
 - Revelation 2:9-10 ie Polycarp burned alive for his faith
- Jesus promised them eternal life if they remained faithful.
 - Revelation 2:10-11
- We might need to ask if something's wrong if we're not persecuted for Jesus.
 - 1 Peter 4:12-13 We share Jesus's suffering + His glory.

Jesus had nothing negative to say about the church of Smyrna: in suffering we just purified and grow the most.Ex. _____

The Ephesian church appeared to be a better, healthier church than Smyrna, but it wasn't.ie London vs. Nicaragua church

- Above all else, we must love and obey Jesus.
 - John 14:23 If you love me, you will keep my Word

Action Steps

- Read the letters to Ephesus and Smyrna this week and note Jesus' praise, corrections, and promises.

- Pray that HCC will be a church that loves and obeys Jesus above all others and pray for our leaders.
- Invite someone to join us next week.
- Share the gospel with someone this week.

Revelation 2:4

“Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love.” **2** To the angel (messenger) of the assembly (church) in **Ephesus** write: These are the words of Him Who holds the seven stars [which are the messengers of the seven churches] in His right hand, Who goes about among the seven golden lampstands [which are the seven churches]:

2 I know your industry *and* activities, laborious toil *and* trouble, and your patient endurance, and how you cannot tolerate wicked [men] and have tested *and* critically appraised those who call [themselves] apostles (special messengers of Christ) and yet are not and have found them to be impostors *and* liars.

3 I know you are enduring patiently and are bearing up for My name’s sake, and you have not fainted *or* become exhausted *or* grown weary.

4 **But I have this [one charge to make] against you:** that you have left (abandoned) the love that you had at first [you have deserted Me, your first love].

5 **Remember then from what heights you have fallen.** Repent (change the inner man to meet God’s will) and do the works you did previously [when first you knew the Lord], or else I will visit you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you change your mind *and* repent.

6 Yet you have this [in your favor and to your credit]: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans [what they are doing as corrupters of the people], which I Myself also detest.

7 He who is able to hear, let him listen to *and* give heed to what the Spirit says to the assemblies (churches). To him who overcomes (is victorious), I will grant to eat [of the fruit] of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

8 And to the angel (messenger) of the assembly (church) in **Smyrna** write: These are the words of the First and the Last, Who died and came to life again:

9 I know your affliction *and* distress *and* pressing trouble and your poverty—but you are rich! and how you are abused *and* reviled *and* slandered by those who say they are Jews and are not but are a synagogue of Satan.

10 Fear nothing that you are about to suffer. [Dismiss your dread *and* your fears!] Behold, the devil is indeed about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested *and* proved *and* critically appraised, and for ten days you will have affliction. Be loyally faithful unto death [even if you must die for it], and I will give you the crown of life.

11 He who is able to hear, let him listen to *and* heed what the Spirit says to the assemblies (churches). He who overcomes (is victorious) shall in no way be injured by the second death.

Have you lost your first love? Do you want it back?

List action steps?

- 1- Repent and own it.**
- 2- Brake up your affair with _____**
- 3- Set up steps with a trusted accountability partner to not go back.**
 - a. Spend time with Jesus in prayer/praise and Bible study.
 - b. Attend church and worship Jesus privately and corporately.
 - c. Look for opportunities to lead others to Jesus.

