

Series: What Jesus Knows about His Church

Today: "The Church at Ephesus" # 1

Rev 1:11, 19-20, 2:1-7

1-31-16 Sun AM

1. In Revelation 2-3 the focus is on seven historical churches- Note the **slide**. Revelation is easily outlined by Rev. 1:19. The "things that are," [2:1-3:22].

These churches should be viewed as actual churches, representative of churches "to the churches", and prophetic churches, "seven periods in the church age."

2. They are prophetic from the Post-Apostolic church at Ephesus to the raptured church at Laodicea [96 A. D. to rapture].

3. Ephesus was a church that had a problem that many churches have today- They left their first love [96 A.D. to 100 A.D.]

TT: Let's look at what Jesus Himself knew about this church [2:2a].

1. They Were Faithful in Duty [vs. 2-3]. They were a busy church.

They were a serving Church- "works" Filled with acts of service by ministry-minded believers. They understood that they were co-laborers with God.

They were a sacrificial Church- "Labor or toil" They worked until weary, toiled until exhausted but did not faint.

They were a steadfast Church- "patience or perseverance." They kept going in spite of persecution. They were tested, tried, and found true.

1. They Were Faithful in Duty.

2. They Were Fundamental in Doctrine [vs. 2b, 6].

Their love for the scriptures [v. 2b]. "Thou hast tried them"

They put them to the test- they searched the scriptures and used it to put to the test false apostles. They were not biblically ignorant. They had pastors like Paul, Timothy, and John.

Remember the Test- Savior, salvation, and scripture.

Their love for separation [v. 6]. They separated themselves from evil deeds and evil people. There should be a difference in how we treat unbelievers and false teachers?

Two views of the Nicolaitans:

1. The exaltation of the clergy over the laity "laity-conquerors." The beginning of the Catholic Priest-hood.

2. The heresy of a license to sin associated with the doctrine of Balaam [2:14-15].

What does the Idolatry and sexual immorality of the Balaamites mean. Nicolas one of the first deacons [Acts 6] who led people off into immorality and wickedness.

1. They Were Faithful in Duty.

2. They Were Fundamental in Doctrine [vs. 2b, 6].

3. They Failed in Devotion [2:4]. "They left their first love"

Something had happened between 64 A.D. and 96 A.D. They had all things right except their hearts- they left their first love. The love of Jesus had been replaced by routine. They went from zeal without knowledge to knowledge without zeal.

It is possible to serve the Lord for the wrong reasons- praise of men, for prestige or position, from a sense of duty. True service for God is born out of a devoted passion for the Lord.

1. What is "first" love?

What it is not- Not apostasy, not losing salvation nor not loving.

First? First in time, place, rank, "at the first."

Love and devotion to Christ characterized by a new believer. Honey-moon stage- spark, excitement, intense desire to pursue Christ, attend church and be involved.

2. How does one leave their first love?

It happens when we get our priorities out of place- Religion over relationship, program over person, performance over passion, involvement over intimacy, organization over organism, tradition over truth, building over body.

It happens by neglecting the things of God and our relationship with Him (Bible study, prayer, fellowship, ministry, witnessing, and worship).

3. How do we get our first love back? [2:5, 7].

Remember- where you left, focus on Jesus, focus on the finish line, and focus on the race. Be rather than do.

Repent- for leaving not remorse, reform, or regret, but a change.

Repeat- Do the first works again and have obedience motivated by love.

Restored or removed- deeper love relationship or testimony removed of the church or the believer.

Overcomer is not a Christian with special power, but a believer is an overcomer. Those who remain faithful to Christ inherit eternal life.

Con:

1. The church is to work, we are to know the truth and practice the truth, but we must remember we are doing it because we love Jesus.
2. "Nevertheless" Being faithful in duty and fundamental in doctrine can't make up for a cold heart.