

Title: Rekindling Your Love for Christ

Passage: Revelation 2:1-7

Context:

Revelation

- book dictated by Apostle John as Jesus Christ Himself spoke.
- Passage is among 7 letters to churches in Asia Minor (today: Turkey)
- Letter to Ephesus in Book of Revelation was written 40 years after Paul's epistle Ephesians was written

Passage: Revelation 2:1-7

“To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: ‘The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands.

“‘I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.’

Background:

Church in Ephesus

- Experienced an erosion of love for Jesus.
- Today: Ephesus is no longer a harbor city that it once was. (Due to erosion of silt where water is no longer nearby)
- Previously: founded by Apostle Paul, shepherded for a time by variously godly people (ex: Timothy, Priscilla and Aquila)
- See Acts 19-20 (church being initially established and built up)

Key Point

- It's possible to do ministry and lose one's first love for Christ.
- Deceptive erosion and shift can occur from a living, vibrant relationship with Christ to one merely going through the motions.

1 Samuel 16:7

But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, *but the LORD looks on the heart.*”

John 2:25

and needed no one to bear witness about man, for *he himself knew what was in man.*

Speaker of Passage

Revelation 1:9

I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

Revelation 1:12-16

Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

Revelation 1:17-19

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, “Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades. Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this.

- Outline of Revelation: 1) thing you have seen (Ch1); 2) those that are (Ch 2-3); 3) those that are to take place (Ch 4-22)

Exposition Of Passage

Speaker

Revelation 2:1

To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: ‘The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands.

- “holds” = holding something in palm of hand
 - picture of protection as well as accountability to God
 - God is not distant but rather very present among His people

John 10:28

I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

Commendation

Revelation 2:2

“I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false.

“I know”

- God knows immediately what there is.

Hebrews 4:13

And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

“Those who are evil”

Revelation 2:6

Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

- people who were twisting the Gospel to one of open license

Acts 20:28-31

Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. *Therefore be alert...*

Revelation 2:3

I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary.

- “for my name’s sake”
 - Jesus affirmed and commended them of their endurance and perseverance that had the right focus and purpose

Colossians 3:23-24

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

Rebuke

Revelation 2:4

But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.

- “left”
 - to release = to leave behind
 - Implies a process (not a sudden decision), a gradual occurrence
- “your first love”
 - Sequence of words is important, which would change to bring about emphasis
 - Ex: “I am the true vine” = original: “I am the vine, the true one”
 - Here: “You have left your love, the first one”

Question of Reflection: Do you still have your first love for Christ?

Criteria

- You can go hours or days without a passing thought of Christ
- You don’t have a strong desire to spend time with Him (reading the Bible as a chore or to-do list)

<https://www.reviveourhearts.com/articles/40-evidences-left-your-first-love/>

- *Question:* Are you amazed by the grace of God?
- Song: “This is Amazing Grace” https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=XFRjr_x-yxU

Steps to Return

Revelation 2:5a

Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first.

Three Key Steps

- Remember
 - “From where” = recall past
 - What has God done through Jesus and how much God loves you

Ephesians 2:1-6

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

- Repent (and confess)
 - “Repent” = turn around/change direction toward God
 - Confess = accept responsibility for the wrong (intentional or not)
- Return
 - Return to the things you did at first
 - Verb tense = active, on-going (ex: keep on doing = keep on returning)

Note: Be mindful that this passage was written to the audience of the church and meant in context of the larger body of Christ. While can do these things alone by yourself, better to involve others as you “remember”, “repent”, and “return”.

Caution

Revelation 2:5b

If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.

- This is not reference to risk of losing one’s salvation but rather God’s blessing of the church ministry to continue to impact the surrounding dark community as a light in contrast.

Matthew 13:12

For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.

Promise

Revelation 2:7

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.’

- “overcome” (conquers)
 - If you are in Christ, you are already an overcomer. (This is not about risk of losing salvation)

1 John 5:4-5

For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

1 John 4:4

Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

Song: “I Give You My Heart”

<https://youtu.be/mZGzu6oI9b4>