



OPENING COMMENT

Revelation is a fascinating and overwhelming book to read. It speaks of some grandiose visions of heavenly realms and spiritual realities that can leave us confused or scared to dive in. At its core, it is intended to bring hope to the churches and remind them of God's sovereign plan and ultimate ends. So it is no wonder that the first thing we read is Jesus speaking directly to these representative churches and calling them to faithfulness and reminding them to persevere.

READ THE TEXT: Revelation 2:1-7

2 "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.

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. **3** I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. **4** But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. **5** 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. **6** Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. **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.'



UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

1. Who is addressing the church of Ephesus?
2. How is his authority depicted?
3. What things does Jesus commend the church of Ephesus for?
4. What things does he rebuke the church for?
5. What is the consequence of not hearing the warning and obeying?
6. What significance is there that the spirit is speaking these words?
7. What is the reward for those who obey?
8. What does the language of conquering imply?

APPLYING THE TEXT

1. Take some time to briefly recount your initial encounter with Jesus, or the time when you felt most in love with him.
2. In what ways does the commendation of the Ephesian church apply to you? Where would Jesus commend you in these areas?
3. In what ways have you abandoned your love of Christ?
4. Where do you need to repent of letting this first love slip? Distraction? Active and persistent sin? Sins of omission?
5. What works have you abandoned in response to the love of Christ that you need to rekindle?
6. How might we help one another to regain our first love and work with the right motivation?

BIBLICAL THREAD

1. Deuteronomy 6:5 – the original command to love God.
2. Psalm 42 – a soul thirsting after God.
3. Matthew 22:34-40 – Two greatest commandments.
4. John 13:31-35 – A new command to love one another.
5. Ephesians 6:23-24 – Paul ends his letter addressed to those who love Jesus.
6. 1 John 3:11-24 – a command to love one another.
7. 1 John 4:7-21 – God is love.

CONCLUSION

The church of Ephesus stands as a stark reminder that we can be engaged with the right things for the wrong motivation and Jesus will bring judgement. Jesus reminds the church that the primary requirement is love of Him. If we are not motivated by, steeped in, and consumed by love for Christ our works are futile and ultimately meaningless. Christ wants his bride to love him with reckless abandon and he is calling us to that today.



SHARE & PRAY

LIFE GROUP VISION:

The goal to meeting together around the word of God is three-fold. First, we want to more clearly understand what God is saying to us through his Word and apply it to our own hearts and minds. Secondly, we want to build a loving community with each other to disciple one another toward maturity in Christ. Thirdly, we desire each of us, as ambassadors of Christ, to look outwards to our community and ask how we can bring the truth of the gospel to bear on those whom God has placed in our lives.

