

FIRST LOVE

Scripture Reading: Read Revelation Chapter 2

Seven letters to seven churches. Letters from one “like a son of man.” One dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet with a golden sash around his chest. From one whose head and hair were white like wool and whose eyes were like blazing fire. One with feet like glowing bronze and whose voice was like the sound of rushing waters. From one out of whose mouth came a sharp double-edged sword and whose face shone like the sun in all its brilliance. From one who walks among the candlesticks and who holds the seven stars in his right hand. A message of commendation, correction, encouragement and exhortation. A message for seven 1st century churches: to the church at Ephesus, at Smyrna, at Pergamum, at Thyatira, at Sardis, at Philadelphia and at Laodicea. A message for the church of all ages. A message from Jesus to his church. A message that dare not and cannot be ignored.

The first of his seven letters was addressed to the church at Ephesus, probably the largest and most important of the seven in terms of influence in the province of Asia. There was much for which to commend the church. In keeping with Paul’s directions (see Acts 20:28-31), the church had remained faithful to the teachings of Christ and had rejected false doctrine and the false teachers who brought it. They had also faithfully served the Lord with good deeds. They worked hard at doing what was right and did not give up when the going got tough. They persevered and endured difficult hardships. Faithful soldiers for Christ were found in Ephesus to be sure.

Yet, in spite of right doctrine and good works, there was a problem in the church. A problem so serious that if left uncorrected the church would cease to bear witness for Christ. What was it? Jesus told them, “*You have forsaken your first love.*” They had abandoned their first fervent love they had for God and for each other. The red-hot fire of first love had dulled to the point that only a few warm embers remained. They were still serving God and holding on to truth. No doubt, they still professed to love God and each other, but the intense love was no longer present. They had right heads (doctrine) and right hands (service) but the wrong heart.

What happened? Perhaps it was their passionate pursuit of truth that led them to view with suspicion other believers who could be the next wolf in sheep’s clothing. Perhaps, after persevering for so long under great duress, life became mechanical...simply going through the motions and love cooled.

Whatever the cause, Jesus had a solution for the church at Ephesus and for the “Ephesian” churches of the 21st century. **Remember, repent and redo.** Remember the height from which you have fallen – the love you used to have for Christ and others. Repent for your failures. Redo the works you did at the beginning.

Action Step & Prayer Focus: Take a few minutes to think back to when you first came to Christ. What were those early days like? How hungry were you for the things of God and the house of God and the people of God? If your love has dulled through the years, it’s time to remember, repent and redo.

Take-a-way: *First love lost can be rekindled when we remember, repent & redo!*