

**Revelation 2:1-7**  
**What Jesus Says to the Church Part 1**  
**Ephesus**  
**- Red Letters Series -**

**How many of you enjoy getting letters?**

A) Today emails right? I get average about 75-100 emails a day –

B) Many - I don't read inbox 7500 emails right now in my inbox

C) But I love when I open my in box see an email from someone in the church or online –

1) Who has been who has blessed by the ministry

D) Or when I get a message from a friend that I haven't heard from in while

1) Awesome – those are ones I want to read

**Imagine being part of a Church – that received a letter – directly from Jesus. –**

A) How exciting would that be? –

B) Pastor Aaron on the view next week – Hey guys CV got a letter from Jesus

1) Next Sunday- Pastor Rob is going to read it to us.

C) How many of you would be here? **“That is a service that I am not going to miss.”**

D) Others - Depends on what it said

**Well that is exactly what happened to seven churches in Asia Minor in the 1<sup>st</sup> century –**

A) they received a letter from Jesus.

B) Over the next several weeks – we are going to look at 3 of them. – **Why only three?**

C) There are three of them, that are a good representation of the church today here in the west.

1) Great Relevance to our church – more than the others

D) For example – one church Smyrna – is the persecuted church - -

1) there are believers in other countries right now who run the risk of losing their lives mention Jesus

E) That is Way more persecution than we face here in America – though could change someday.

F) Another Church – Thyatira – actually allowed occultic practices into the church –

1) might happen in some places in the Western church  
-Not the norm here

**But the Churches of Ephesus, Philly, and Laodicea**

A) Are churches that I think represent well the various aspects of the church we see here in America.

B) So that will be our focus over the next few weeks

C) Today – Ephesus –

**Church with great foundation and Reputation**

A) Started by Paul himself – pastored for 3 yrs - / Then Timothy and even the apostle John

B) Quite a legacy – Billy Graham, Chuck Smith, and Greg Laurie

C) Ephesus was a major city in Asia minor and the Church had made quite an impact in their city.

**Let's see what Jesus said to this church**

A) Let's put ourselves back in first century Asia minor you are part of the church in Ephesus

B) Gathered on Sunday morning – at a small building – no LED wall – Simple – sitting probably on the floor – your family

C) Pastor gets up to read this letter from Jesus –

1) Imagine the **ANTICIPATION / EXCITEMENT / NERVOUSNESS – ALL IN ONE!**

The Pastor starts to read - **To the angel of the church of Ephesus write,** ‘These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: <sup>2</sup>“**I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil.**./ good -a smile - And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; <sup>3</sup> and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.

**WOW-→**

### **THIS IS awesome – Jesus is stoked at us**

<sup>4</sup>Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love. <sup>5</sup>Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. <sup>6</sup>But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

<sup>7</sup>“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.”

### **First of all notice the way that Jesus identifies himself to this Church**

**These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:**

A) Stars = angels Guardian angel of the Church –

B) Stars also messengers – Spokesmen – the Pastors and leaders

C) Golden lampstands are light bearers/ lighthouse Or a torch – ON FIRE

1) What a church is supposed to be in the community

**So Jesus identifies himself as the one who is holding the Pastors in his hand – I love that -**

A) Beautiful picture – nail scarred hands

B) And he is the one walking in the midst of this church –

1) He is present/ he is for this church

C) He is not mad at them – He is radically for them!

**Then Jesus proceeds to tell the Church what they were doing right!**

A) I know your works Labor and your patience – **Serving Church** –

B) I know that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;-

1) They were a church that put a **priority for Sound doctrine**

C) They were Bereans – tested the scriptures and didn't put up with false teaching

C) I know that you have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary

1) They were a **Steadfast church** –

**Labored= working to the point of exhaustion** –

A) But they hadn't grown weary in well doing – **Steadfast – kept going and serving**

B) So at this point the Church of Ephesus – would get an A+ grade –

1) They were an active church – full Bulletin -lots of ministries / a scripture loving church –

C) But then Jesus burst their bubble – with these words V.4 – **Nevertheless I have this against you-**

1) Those are not words you want to hear from the mouth of Jesus

**Their Problem: They had left their first love – didn't lose it – they left it**

A) **NOTE THIS** - The idea here is not that they had become cold and callous – toward the Lord

B) They are not a carnal church on the contrary – from the description of Jesus – **they are very committed**

C) They are still active in service – still having Bible studies - -

1) They are faithful In standing for truth

D) But there is a **vibrancy that is missing** – there is a routine that has set in

E) They have started going through the motions.

1) What they are missing is intimacy with Jesus.

**Now before we are too hard on this church**

A) Let's be honest – I think most of us have been there in our walks with Jesus.

B) It is the same thing that I often see that happens in a marriage –

1) with two people who have been married a while

C) Their relationship gets a little-stale – Do they love each other – Yes –

1) are they committed to each other? Absolutely –

**But the passion and Vibrancy that once marked their relationship has been replaced by the routine,**

A) Their relationship has gotten a little mundane.

B) They find themselves going through the motions and have sort of accepted that this is the new norm.

C) I know in my relationship with my wife Denise  
1) we have to fight hard and be very intentional to not end up in up in that place –

D) Life gets busy, the demands are many – you become like too ships passing in the night –  
1) what suffers is intimacy. – Vibrancy

**Marine couple sitting in the back – showing much affection – just returned from tour**

A) But would almost prefer it to the couple that has grown apart – no more passion –

B) Somewhere in between – where you can tell – those two people are in Love – they really love each other –  
1) admire each other – look at how she looks at him when he talks

C) The same thing that can happen in a marriage relationship can happen in our walk with the Lord.  
1) It lacks intimacy, passion and vibrancy.

**Signs that you have left your first love**

A) It is when Activity replaces intimacy

**B) It is when We get more concerned about what we are doing for the Lord**

1) and how we are doing it instead of who we are doing it for.

C) **Me in Oregon – my Joy and Satisfaction were coming from being involved in what the Lord was doing – rather than the Lord himself**

D) Easy thing to have happen – if the Lord hadn't showed me that – **I would have burnt out long time ago**

**Remember – Mary and Martha story – Luke 10 – Jesus comes to their house**

A) **Martha is serving** – but she is agitated – doing it all by myself – **Martyr complex**

B) She interrupts Jesus Bible study – Lord don't you care..... Wow.

1) wrong perception of Jesus – He doesn't really care about me -

C) Martha, Martha – worried and troubled so many things – **ONE THING IS NEEDED** – Mary has chosen the better part

D) What did Mary choose? – Choose Intimacy before Activity.

E) Realizing service is meant to flow out of intimacy

**Signs left first love**

A) It is when Activity replaces intimacy - when duty replaces devotion

B) Devotional time with Jesus is a duty – My personal devotions – a Have to instead of a Get to.  
1) I have to get my reading in- got to cover my chapters

C) When Programs replace passion – More excited about a program we are doing –  
1) rather than who we are doing it for.

D) When - The word doesn't stir your heart like it once did  
1) Become Connoisseurs and critics of Bible studies instead of – looking for how the Lord is speaking

**E) Altar calls – instead of crying – you are cynical**  
1) Some of the signs – sure there are others

**The Divine Remedy**

<sup>5</sup> Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.

**Divine Remedy – 3 R's**

**1<sup>st</sup> Remember.....** – Honest heartfelt evaluation –

A) Where am I really? Lord where is my heart with you.

**B) Has ministry replaced you as my passion?**

1) Have I become mechanical in my seeking you?

C) Is there something wrong – something missing that was once there

1) Be honest and admit that

D) Tell the Lord - I don't want to stay here in this place

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Step Repent -

A) Change your mind about the place that you are in right now

B) Tell your self today- I am done with being happy with the Status quo

1) I am done with settling for mediocrity/ new norm

C) Instead of rationalizing complacency – I have just matured –

1) Admit there is a problem– own it and confess it

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Return

A) Do the first works again – Be intentional about intimacy

B) Denise and I – Be intentional – schedule time for Romance and connection – Date Days

C) Intentional about conversations – No ministry – no business –

### In a similar way – we have to be intentional about – quality time with Jesus

A) Remember when you were most in love with Jesus – do that again - NOT FAIR

B) COLLEGE DAYS time..... my life was simpler and less responsibilities

C) Issue is quality vs quantity –

### Things I do to be intentional

A) Read from a different translation – right now NLT forces me to see things from a fresh perspective

B) Journal – Communicates – expectancy – God responds

C) Fast from – Food – Tech – Heightens my spiritual senses

### Set aside one day a month – just you and Jesus

A) Date days with Denise - 2 day getaways

B) Same thing with the Lord – Need to get away.- Just me and him – walks Kayak – Bible prayer

C) Fans the flame in my heart for the Lord

### D) Pick a book to read – dives deep into one aspect of his character - fall in love all over again.

1) Denise loves doing word studies – The Father in Isaiah – The Spirit in Romans – she gets so excited

### All those things are helpful – keep Jesus as your first love

A) But you have to be intentional – it doesn't just happen. -

Close – Warning

**<sup>5</sup> Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent**

A) What does **remove your lampstand from its place** mean ?

B) This doesn't mean that individual members of the Church are going to lose their Salvation

1) But – that They would lose their ability to be a light in that community.

C) They will lose their contagious influence

### Again using the analogy of a marriage –

A) Some couples – young couples and unmarried people ADMIRE - want to emulate.

B) I want to talk to them about marriage – they are still in love after all these years.

C) But there are other couples that young couples and unmarried people are like –

1) I don't want to end up like them  
Even their own kids – will say that -

### D) That is Not the kind of marriage that we want.

### And so too – when a church is so in love with Jesus and all about Jesus –

A) It has a contagious effect on others – I want to be a part of that. –

B) I want that kind of heart – and intimacy toward the Lord

**C)And it is even attractive to unbelievers/ – that person that group has something I want**

**May we be a church that is known for being radically in love with Jesus**

**A)Great ministries happening yes – Good programs – all good –**

**B)As long as it is all flowing from a heart that is full of great passion for JESUS**

**C)Where Everything that happens here is merely the OVERFLOW of what is happening in our hearts.**

**1)AMEN ?**

**Final word: 7 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.**

**A)We all have ears right – so what he is really saying is – will you listen and respond with your heart. –**

**Pray**

**Signs – Activity replaced Intimacy**

**A)Duty has replaced Devotion**

**B)Cynicism and criticalness has replaced – being in AWE**

**C)Complacency has replaced Compassion**

**D)Can we own that? – Today – Say Lord – light a fire in me – more of you Lord**