

Rev. 2:1-7 The Church at Ephesus

What we want to do now is look at these 7 churches and ask ourselves – Does this describe our church?

What Commendation does Jesus, the Lord over us – Have for us? – So that we can do that

What Correction does He have for us as well? – So that we can avoid doing that

How is our church doing in the Lord's evaluation?

All of these letters are addressed to the angels of the church (2:1) – These are the announcers (Pastors)

So that they can then announce to the people what Jesus was saying to them

The First one is the Church at Ephesus in Turkey (2:1) – Started by the Apostle Paul and his letter to it is our book of Ephesians

- 1) This was a Metropolitan City – A major harbor where ships would unload their cargo
- 2) Caravan routes from the north, south and west convened in Ephesus, making it a leading commercial center
It also made it a center of great idolatry – Given over to worship of the goddess Diana

I. Commendation

A) The Lord knows what is going on in Ephesus (v. 2)

- 1) Because He is in the midst of all the churches (v. 1) – He knows what is happening in each and every church
This reveals to you that Jesus has the divine attribute of Omnipresence – Everywhere all the time
- 2) He says this to every one of these churches because He is concerned about them – Including ours!
This reveals to you that Jesus has the divine attribute of Omniscience – All Knowing

B) Jesus Commends the Ephesian church for their faithfulness to Him (v. 2)

- 1) Deeds – They were a working church – Not just a social club
- 2) Toil (Labor) – Effort that produces the work, even at the cost of pain
These people were willing to sacrifice – Their labor was very costly and even painful at times
- 3) Perseverance – They pressed on, even when obstacles got in their way
They did whatever it took to get the job done – Their goal was to do what Jesus wanted. Period.
This is further emphasized (v. 3) as the Lord A SECOND TIME commends them for their hard work

C) They were also a doctrinally sound church (v. 2) – They were not liberal in their theology

1) They could not endure evil men

- a) They did not approve of people in their ranks who were living in impurity – Nor teaching others to do so
- b) This is what happened with a group called the Nicolaitians (v. 6)
They professed faith in Christ – Yet lived apart from any standards of any moral Law
They practiced licentious living in the name of Christian liberty
This is something that Jesus also hates
Yes, there are some things that our God of Love hates – And this is one of them

2) They did not approve false apostles

- a) They put them to the Test! – They did not believe every one who was proclaiming Christ
- b) They tested them at the Word of God – The only infallible standard that we have
- c) They had the courage to call them what Jesus did – Liars!
Jesus told the unbelieving Jews of His day – “You are of your father, the devil ...” (John 8:44)

D) This church sounds a lot like what we are in the AFLC – A church that is laboring for the Kingdom of God

- 1) Conservative – Holding to the Word of God as inerrant and the final authority
- 2) Evangelical – Teaching a faith that receives Jesus and His salvation
- 3) Pietistic – Godly Christian living

Yet there is only ONE thing that Jesus has against this church
But it is significant

II Correction

A) They had left their first love (v. 4)

- 1) Notice that they had not lost their first love – But had left it
- 2) It means that they had not grown cold – But gotten detracted in their priorities
- 3) The first love was their love for Jesus and what He had done for them on the cross
- 4) They had gotten so involved in their labors that they had lost their relationship with the Lord
It is a relationship of Love

B) The First Love is a Love of Simplicity and Purity

- 1) It is a love of whole-hearted devotion – You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind.” (Matt. 22:37)
- 2) The first love is an unselfish love
The first love abandons everything of self in response of Love to Christ – Just as Jesus abandoned all of Himself in His love for us
- 3) This church was busy doing all the right things – Yet without love
- 4) They were not involved in immorality, false teaching, compromise or liberalism – Yet they were still not entirely pleasing to the Lord
- 5) The Ephesian Christians now carried on out of duty – Not love
- 6) God had their heads and their hands -- But not their hearts
Does this describe us as a church? – Do we have a real love for Jesus when we come together?

**Or are we so busy laboring for the Master that we have left the Master Himself?
Then our work for Christ becomes our Lord, not the Lord Himself**

III Counsel

A) This is not the way that the Lord wants His church to be toward Him

- 1) Any people’s effectiveness as a church is only as good as their devotion to Christ First
- 2) In fact, the Bible says that you can do all kinds of great things the wrong way
“And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.” (1 Cor. 13:2)

B) So the Lord gives the church 3 admonitions concerning their condition: (v. 5)

1) Remember

- a) A command to continually do all of your Christian life
- b) Remember the love that Christ showed for you on the Cross – Think about it – Meditate upon it
Remember the intense love you had for Christ when you were first saved

2) Repent

- a) Change the way you think about this and turn around your behavior as a result of that
Which will lead to:

3) Repeat the First

- a) Return to your Love for Christ as your primary thing – The Works flow out of that
The admonition for the whole church is given to each individual (v. 7) – Let HIM

C) To overcome (v. 7) in this context means that they do return to their first love for Christ

It means to listen and heed and take action accordingly – The reward is Paradise in heaven