

Revelation 2:1-7 | Love Lost, Such a Cost

What is Jesus showed up and said, "Reality, I am going to tell you exactly what I think about you as a church..."

- What if he said that to you?
- And wrote it down... for everyone to see... forever!

This is what is happening in this text

- Jesus knows
- **"holds the seven stars"**
- **"walks among the lampstands"**
- Hebrews 4:13
Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed **before his eyes**, and he is **the one to whom we are accountable**.
- Intimately and infinitely...
- **Verse 7^a** (we need to hear this... you need to hear this)
- **Because He loves us!**

The 7 churches are not only historic congregations; they also stand as symbols of the strengths and weaknesses of churches throughout time

- And of every member of the church

Ephesus (MAPS: 1 and 2)

- Nearest to Patmos
- Trade Center
- Wealthy
- Immoral
- Temple of Diana (Artemis)
- Paul
 - Tried to go there on 2nd missionary journey (**Acts 16:16**)
 - Visited on return trip
 - Strategic importance = returned on 3rd missionary journey and stayed for at least 2.5 years
 - Gospel took effect
 - Riot of **Acts 19**
- = A church that was making an impact in a very affluent, vibrantly cultured but spiritually dark and morally corrupt place

And Jesus recognizes this

Commendations (9 things)

- **Verse 2^a**
 - **Deeds** (What you do)
 - = **Toil** (Your hard work)
 - work that exhausts (kopos)
 - = **Perseverance** (Patient endurance)
 - Not passive bearing of a thing, but triumphant fortitude in its face
 - Cf. "I will choose the color"; Beethoven
 - Mentions this quality of theirs again in **Verse 3**
 - **Perseverance** (steadfastness = unwavering resolve)
 - **Endurance**
 - **For my name's sake**

- They did not only work hard and suffer well for the glory of Christ
 - But they also maintained doctrinal and moral purity
- Verse 2^b
 - Cannot endure evil men (love righteousness)
 - Put to the test (practice discernment)
- Verse 6
 - You hate the evil deeds of the Nicolaitans
 - Not sure about Nicolaitans
 - But, there are some ideas and actions that are floated in the church that Jesus hates
 - And the church in Ephesus recognized these things and did not tolerate them

The church in Ephesus seemed to be an amazing one

- Busy in their service + Patient in their suffering
- Discerning about doctrine & practice + Orthodox in their belief
- All for His name's sake

But what they were lacking rendered all these things meaningless—could cost them their place

Verse 4

- In a word, they were backsliders
- They had been in love with Jesus, but now they had fallen out of love
- Neglected the **Greatest Commandment**

Jeremiah 2:2^b-5 (NIV)

2 "This is what the Lord says: '**I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me** through the wilderness, through a land not sown.

3 Israel was holy to the Lord, the firstfruits of his harvest; all who devoured her were held guilty, and disaster overtook them,' " declares the Lord.

4 Hear the word of the Lord, you descendants of Jacob, all you clans of Israel.

5 This is what the Lord says: "**What fault** did your ancestors find in me, **that they strayed** so far from me? They followed worthless idols and became worthless themselves."

Jeremiah 3:19-20 (NIV)

19 "I myself said, 'How gladly would I treat you like my children and give you a pleasant land, the most beautiful inheritance of any nation.' I thought you would call me 'Father' and not turn away from following me.

20 But like a woman **unfaithful** to her husband, so you, Israel, have been **unfaithful to me,**" declares the Lord.

21 A cry is heard on the barren heights, the weeping and pleading of the people of Israel, because they have perverted their ways and have **forgotten** the Lord their God.

22 "**Return,** faithless people; **I will cure you of backsliding.**"

2 Corinthians 11:2^b-3 (NLT)

I promised you as a pure bride to one husband—Christ. But I fear that somehow **your pure and undivided devotion to Christ will be corrupted,** just as Eve was deceived by the cunning ways of the serpent.

This was the tendency in Ephesus

Love for Jesus is the first mark of a true and living church

- The Christian life is meant to be a love relationship with Jesus
- His love is first
 - Revelation 1:5^c
 - 1 John 4:19 (NASB)
We love, because He first loved us.
 - 1 John 3:16 (NASB)
We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us
- Only thing necessary
- Luke 10

How do we know we have “left our first love”?

- Used to be more on fire?
- Where is Jesus in your daily decisions?
- Are you pursuing Him with all your heart?

Why we leave our first love:

- Distractions (good things? Cf. Ephesians Culture; “Martha, Martha”; more shiny)
- Drift (busy; inattentive; Hebrews 1:2; watch over your heart; time spent)
- People (who let us down)
- Pain (all consuming; unfair; why)
- Sin (break in intimacy; hardening of heart; clouding of perception)
- Slop (undisciplined living)

Jesus gives us the course, **plan of action** to get back to the most important thing

Verse 5

- **Remember**
 - His love and forgiveness
 - The Cross and The Gospel
- **Repent**
 - Of whatever has gotten in the way (above list)
 - Don't wait for a feeling
- **Do**
 - What you need to do to pursue Jesus
 - Seek Him with all your heart
 - Give yourself fully to Christ
- **Or else...**
 - Lose what it means to be the church

Promise (verse 7)

- Do you have an ear to hear?
- Who overcomes?
- Tree of Life
- Paradise of God

The Gospel and the Power of the Holy Spirit!!!

“Revive us Lord!!!”