

Revelation Part 2 – When Love Grows Cold

Speaker: Dr. Henry Schorr

Revelation chapters 2 and 3 are directed to all churches, including the church today.

Listen to what Jesus said to the **church at Ephesus**. It was a pretty amazing church, founded by the Apostle Paul, pastored by Priscilla and Aquila, Timothy and the apostle John, and home to Mary the mother of Jesus.

Ephesus was the most prominent city in Asia. It was a port city, a major financial center and the religious capital. The temple there of the Greek goddess Diana was considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Ephesus was beautiful but also very dark and corrupt. Immorality was rampant, not only in the temple of Diana but throughout the city. In this spiritually dark city, Christ through the Apostle Paul placed a candlestick – a church, a lighthouse.

Jesus had a lot of good things to say about the Ephesian church (v.2-3).

- (1) **He commended the church for their deeds, their hard work and perseverance.** Others may not see the sacrifices you make, BUT JESUS does. He sees your commitment to prayer, your dependence on Him, your servant heart, and the way you live, serve and give.
- (2) **He commended the church for their commitment to moral purity.** They could not tolerate wicked people (v.2) and they hated the practices of the Nicolaitans (v.6). They were committed to purity of life in a city that was very immoral, and they guarded the church against the infiltration of unholy and immoral ideas, including the practices of the Nicolaitans, who advocated compromise with the idolatrous culture of Ephesus. In other words, they used the concept of God's grace as a license to live sensual and sexually immoral lives.
- (3) **He commended the church for their spiritual discernment.** "You have tested those who claim to be apostles and are not, and have found them false" (v.2). They knew the Scriptures and as a result were not susceptible to deception.

Only **one thing was lacking**. "**You have forsaken the love you had at first**" (v.4). First love makes Jesus the object of your highest affection. But REALITY tests the quality and depth of your love. First love will wear off and die because of **neglect, worship of counterfeit idols, or sin in your life**.

Initially, the believers in Ephesus were passionate in their love for Jesus, for one another and for those without Jesus. As time passed, they became so focused on protecting TRUTH and correct doctrine that they lost their desire and passion for the mission Christ had called them to – to love and reach out to those who were spiritually lost.

And Christ called them on it! "**If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place**" (v.5). Jesus was saying, "I'm removing your impact as a church. You will no longer be the light of the world that I called you to be."

Jesus then gave three steps to revitalize their first love and keep it fresh and vibrant.

- (1) **REMEMBER.** "**Consider how far you have fallen!**" REMEMBER what things were like when you first fell in love with Jesus. Ask the Lord to search your heart and show you what is causing there to be distance between Him and you.
- (2) **REPENT.** Take steps to actually change. With God's help turn around and do what God is calling you to do.
- (3) **DO THE THINGS YOU DID AT FIRST** when you fell in love with Jesus – things such as regularly observing the Sabbath, a day which God established for our benefit.

sermon study guide

IN – PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. Share a hobby you first “fell in love” with. How much time and resources did you spend on it?
2. Name a time when you got distracted from an important thing you needed to do. What happened?

UP – PURSUE GOD

1. Read Revelation 2:1-7. What were the Ephesians commended for? Rebuked for? What was so tragic about the Ephesian church forsaking their first love?
2. What reasons mentioned in the sermon led them to lose their love for Jesus? What other reasons might have caused them to lose their love?

OUT – PURSUE MISSION

1. How can the things the church was commended for be a stumbling block to your relationship with God?
2. Have you ever lost your first love for Christ? If you have returned to your first love, what helped or is helping you to keep that love alive?

For Personal Reflection / Prayer:

Where are YOU in relation to Jesus? Are you in the romance stage, the reality stage, or the backseat stage? What reasons caused you to lose your first love? What things do you need to stop and/or start doing to regain the love you once had for Christ? Ask God to give you the strength to do what He tells you to do.

THE WORD

Revelation 2:1-7

“To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands. ² I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. ³ You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.

⁴ Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. ⁵ Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. ⁶ But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

⁷ Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

Psalm 139:23-24

²³ Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.

²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Matthew 6:19

¹⁹ “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

This week’s writers: Elsa Henderson, Gene Gibbs, Sandi Somers and Jorel Quemuel