

Reviving First Love

“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”

Revelation 2:4-5

Introduction:

1. As sinners in a sinful world, the easiest thing to do is to lose our first love for the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. As sinners in a sinful world, the hardest thing to do is to keep our first love for the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. You have three enemies combined against you – your own flesh, the world, and the devil himself.
4. As Jesus warned His generation, abounding iniquity causes love of saints to grow cold (Matt 24:12).
5. It is important to remember that losing first love means you are flirting with another, which leads to fornication or spiritual adultery or whoring after something of the world (Matt 6:24; Jas 4:4).
6. As we know from our relationships, especially the marriage bed, going through the motions, no matter how skillfully or frequently done, without passion is highly offensive and not satisfying.

The Text

- 2:1 The Lord Jesus Christ is speaking by His full authority to the angel and church at Ephesus.
 - A. In each of the seven epistles, an aspect from the vision of chapter 1 is brought forward.
 - B. While the pastor is addressed directly with singular pronouns, the church is included.
 - C. A good example of including the church is found in the epistle to Smyrna (2:10).
 - D. Jesus Christ walking among the golden candlesticks indicates His authority to judge.
- 2:2 The Lord, knowing the works of all men and churches, lists many virtues at Ephesus.
 - A. Accomplishments: the Lord Christ saw their works, which He proceeded to identify.
 - B. Efforts: Jesus had witnessed the labor they had applied to obeying Him and His word.
 - C. Faith: the Lord had seen their patience in trials and tribulations, which is great faith.
 - D. Holy: they were a strict and separated church that would not stand evil compromisers.
 - E. Doctrinal: they had confronted false apostles and condemned them (Acts 20:28-31).
- 2:3 The Lord, knowing the works of all men and churches, lists many virtues at Ephesus.
 - A. Endurance: they had borne many difficulties and temptations in their profession.
 - B. Patience: the church and pastor had kept their faith in the face of much opposition.
 - C. Loyal: they had diligently applied themselves to serve on behalf of Jesus Christ.
 - D. Perseverance: though the way had been difficult, they were not about to quit.
- 2:4 The Lord Jesus Christ, expecting full love and zeal from His own, was not pleased.
 - A. “Nevertheless” indicates that the list of virtues was not enough to earn His full praise.
 - B. In spite of all He had commended them for, they had slipped in something important.
 - C. The thing they lacked was sufficiently important for the Lord to hold it against them.
 - D. They had left their first love and passionate zeal for Christ – it had not left them.
 - E. Love is a choice, and it is important to remember this simple but profound fact.
 - F. First love is a matter of affection, emphasis, motivation, priority, and zeal for Christ.
 - G. The first and great commandment is clear – we must love God with all we are and have.
 - H. He stated similar disapproval to Laodicea – they were lukewarm religiously (3:14-17).
 - I. Spouses understand how loss of love and passion dulls any actions; parents feel this when children obey grudgingly; and children know it when parents listen distantly.
- 2:5 The Lord gave the way for recovery, without which He would judge quickly and severely.
 - A. The status quo – doing nothing about their poor situation – would bring His judgment.

- B. Remember ... they were to compare their present affection with that of the past.
 - C. Repent ... they were to confess their guilt and turn their hearts and actions to Him.
 - D. Do ... they were to reinstate the zealous choices and actions when first converted.
 - E. If they did not do these things – the Lord would remove the Spirit from their church.
 - F. It has been a signal fact for many generations that there has been no church in Ephesus.
- 2:6 The Lord, ever kind and fully cognizant of all things, commended them further for virtue.
- A. They hated the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which the Lord Jesus Christ also hated.
 - B. Whether the doctrine here is of Nicholas or rule of the laity does not affect the point.
- 2:7 The promised encouragement for faithfulness was to eat of the tree of life in heaven.

Remember Therefore from Whence Thou Art Fallen

- A. Ephesus was one of the great churches of the New Testament with much written about it.
 - 1. Paul first visited it on his second journey, spent 2-3 years there on his third, distributed handkerchiefs, encountered the sons of Sceva, saw curious arts burned to the tune of 50,000 pieces of silver, saw the word of God grow mightily, encountered Demetrius, and was greatly loved by the elders, among other traits and actions of this church.
 - 2. The Bereans received the word readily and searched the scriptures daily (Acts 17:11)!
 - 3. The Galatians loved the messenger enough to give him their eyes (Galatians 4:12-16).
 - 4. Mary, of Mary and Martha, could not leave the feet of Jesus to hear Him (Lu 10:38-42).
 - 5. When we consider David, we see a man remembering much past joy (Psalm 42:4; 77:6).
 - 6. When we compare it to marriage, we all know the difference from the fiery desire of dating to the boring monotony of the routine. It is this difference that Jesus Christ rejects.
- B. We must go back in our memories to those times when we were most affected with Christ.
 - 1. How joyful were you? Your level of excitement and happiness in the gospel was great!
 - 2. How zealous were you? You wanted to tell everyone, and you wanted to learn it all!
 - 3. How did you read the Bible, pray, sing, and talk about the Lord? With great passion!
 - 4. How thankful were you for Him and His word? You were thankful all the time to many.
 - 5. How committed were you for what He had done for you? Nothing could deter you!
 - 6. You know things that you did when dating that you may not do now in your marriage.

Repent

- A. Repentance is a turning away from what is wrong and a turning to what is right and good.
- B. It involves a very clear admission of wrong, confession of guilt, and begging for forgiveness.
- C. Elihu described it as admitting a perversion of goodness without any profit (Job 33:27-28).
- D. Solomon described the certain lack of prosperity for those who tried to hide sin (Pr 28:13).
- E. John described forgiveness for confession, but when did you last confess this sin (I Jn 1:9)?
- F. Paul told the Ephesians saints to awake from sleep and arise from the dead (Ephesians 5:14).

Do the First Works

- A. It is a choice! It is not a circumstance! It is not an accident! It is not fate! It is a choice!
- B. The Lord did not tell them to wait for power from on high to restore their passion once again.
- C. He did not tell them to get the first feelings. He did not tell them to wait for the feelings.
- D. He told them to do the first works – the actions they had done in the beginning for the Lord.
- E. The feelings, if they are even necessary, will come in the doing, not the other way around.
- F. This is the inspired formula – which you will need often – to restore your first love of Christ.
- G. For example, the simplest and best way to restore a marriage is to do the first works of love.

- H. What were your first works? And when will you restore them to your walk with God?
1. Did you crave the Bible? How did you read? To gather jewels or to mark off a chart?
 2. Did you meditate on the words? Or did you skim read over the words to finish a chore?
 3. Was prayer a chore? Was prayer dry and dull? Or did you pray spontaneously with joy?
 4. Did you love to sing His praise? Hear His praise sung? And rejoice in church singing?
 5. Did you talk to others with enthusiasm and passion and zeal about the Lord Jesus Christ?
 6. Did you cut out anything from your life – easily – that distracted or detracted from Him?
 7. Did you alter priorities to make sure He was first in your life in affections and actions?
 8. Did you prepare, pay attention, and review to maximize response to His word (Lu 8:18).
 9. Was the overriding goal in your life to please Him, win Him, delight in Him, and so on?
 10. Were you so committed to Him that losing anything or everything seemed as nothing?

Conclusion:

1. Listening today without doing anything – holding the status quo – will bring His certain judgment.
2. As with Ephesus, no matter your list of godly virtues, less than first love is totally unacceptable.
3. If we fail as a church, we will lose our candlestick; if we fail as individuals, we will lose the Spirit.
4. Jude put it this way to his readers, “Keep yourselves in the love of God,” (Jude 1:21).
5. You must rearrange your priorities in your heart and in your schedule to do the first works.

For further study:

1. The sermon outline, “[The Lord Is Jealous](#),” covers the subject of God’s jealousy from many different angles.
2. The sermon outline, “[Revelation 3:20 Reclaimed](#),” details the improving of a relationship with Jesus Christ.
3. The sermon outline, “[Praying for Soul Revival](#),” approaches revival from many directions, including Psalm 119.
4. The sermon outline, “[Hot, Cold, or Lukewarm](#),” deals at length with our Lord’s warning to the Laodiceans.
5. The sermon outline, “[Spiritual Adultery](#),” compares carnal Christianity to a lewd and profane adulteress.
6. The sermon outline, “[We Would See Jesus](#),” provides many angles and details for delighting in Jesus Christ.