

The Church at Ephesus

Revelation 2:1-7

I. Introduction:

A. Second section

- *Jesus gave John the threefold outline of the Book of Revelation. (Revelation 1:19)*
 1. – Chapter 1
 - a. Chapter 1 records things which John has seen referring to his vision of Jesus.
 2. – Chapters 2-3
 - a. In these chapters John records the things which are. It's Jesus' personal messages to seven local churches in Asia Minor. Jesus gave an evaluation of each church.
 - b. Jesus is interested in what we are doing as church at Oakleaf Baptist.
 3. – Chapters 4-22
 - a. These chapters record the events that are future meaning the things that will take place at the end of the age/end of time. A valuable thing to know.
 - b. Jesus revealed to John how human history on this earth will end.

II. Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-3)

- *Jesus began message to the local congregation at Ephesus with a commendation noting things they had done well.*

A. Stars and Lampstands

1. Chapter 1 states that the lampstands represents the local churches that Jesus was addressing and the stars represent the pastors of messengers to those churches.
2. Jesus said at Ephesus that He walks among the local congregation of believers & He holds the pastors in His hand. Every gathering of born-again believers belongs to Jesus.
3. We are His church. When we meet together, He is here with us.

B. Three commendations

- *Jesus gave three commendations to the church at Ephesus.*
 1. – Labor
 - a. Jesus commended this church for working hard in the ministry.
 - b. The word “**labor**” means Greek word *kopos* which to use up all of one's physical and mental capacity on a task.
 - c. These Christians were giving all they had in serving Jesus.
 - d. Application: We should be serving God every day!- (Not Part time)
 2. – Patience
 - a. Jesus commended this church for patience. Greek word *hupomone* means endurance.
 - b. These Christians were steadfast in their faith. No matter the trials, tribulations, or persecutions, they continued to stand for Jesus,
 - c. Application: No matter where God calls us to serve, endure until He calls us home.
 3. – Doctrinal integrity
 - a. Jesus commended the church at Ephesus for their doctrinal integrity.
 - b. These Christians measured message from false teachers against the Word of God.
 - c. Application: Doctrinal integrity is still important today. When it comes to the foundational doctrines of the Christian faith, there is no room for compromise.

III. **Condemnation (Revelation 2:4-5)**

A. **Left your first love**

1. Their love for Jesus had cooled, it had faded. So did their love for one another.
2. Possibly, their focus on rooting out false teachers & guarding doctrine took place of love for Jesus. Thus, they did well at the expense of the best, loving Jesus completely.
3. Application: This is a real danger for local churches today. A local church fellowship can have zeal for ministry & passion for doctrine, while failing to love Jesus above all.
4. Our love & devotion to Jesus should be fuel driving everything else we do in church.
5. We give our time, energy, talents, skills, & material resources because we love Jesus.
6. When our love for Jesus fades, everything else in our Christian life will diminish.

B. **Call to return -*Having pointed out their sin, Jesus called them to do three things.***

1. – Remember

- a. Jesus spoke to saved people who were once walking with Jesus, they loved Him w/ a biblical passion. He said to pause & remember how good it was to walk w/ Him.
- b. Application: If you are backslidden this morning, Jesus calls you to remember.
- c. Remember how good it was to have fellowship and walk with Jesus.

2. – Repent

- a. Repent means to realize and acknowledge to God that we are wrong. Be sorry.
- b. Jesus called these Christians to repent of their sin.
- c. Application: All confession of sin must be accompanied by repentance not just sorry for being caught or for the negative consequences, but for we've offended God w/ sin.

3. – Do the first works

- a. Jesus called them to return to their first love for Him.
- b. Repentance is to be accompanied by outward evidence which means stop doing what's wrong & begin doing what's right. Obedience is evidence of genuine repentance

C. **Warning**

1. If they did not return to their first love, Jesus would remove their lampstand.
2. That means their ability to be a testimony for Jesus would be removed.
3. They would lose their ability to do what the church is supposed to do.
4. Ephesus was an influential church into the 300s AD, but by the 5th century the church and the city declined and were gone.
5. Application: The same is true for local churches in the 21st century. If we lose our love & passion for Jesus, the church will lose its testimony in the community.

IV. **Another commendation (Revelation 2:6)**

A. **Nicolaitans**

1. There is much debate over who this group was and what they believed.
2. Jesus spoke to their "deeds" indicates lifestyle that was contrary to the Christian faith.
3. The Temple of Artemis plus 1,000's of temple priestesses/prostitutes were in Ephesus.
4. Immorality was an accepted way. The church stood against grace being a license to sin.

V. **Exhortation (Revelation 2:7)**

A. **He who has an ear**

1. Jesus here speaks to each person. We may be part of a local church assembly, but we are each responsible to hear what Jesus has said and we are responsible to respond.
2. We're to take the appropriate action to bring our lives in accord with His commands.

B. **Promise to the overcomer**

1. The "overcomers" will have the privilege to eat of the tree of life in God's heaven.
2. Those who are saved by faith in Jesus are overcomers. (1 John 5:4-5)