

DEAR CHURCH

Ephesus: Long Endurance...

Short Love

Revelation 2:1-7

October 15, 2023

MAIN POINT: While there is need to suffer, endure, test those who are false (and not tolerate their evil), and even hate particular teachings, we must not neglect our “first love” in the process.

I. JESUS’S GLORIOUS INTRO (v. 1)

- Jesus speaks to the church in Ephesus by way of a representative angelic being, describing himself in ways consistent with Revelation 1:12-13, 16, 20.
 - The Son of Man controls all spiritual beings, sending them out for the good of his people.
 - The Son of Man is intimately present with his people.

• JESUS’S COMMENDATIONS (vv. 2-3, 6)

- As the One who walks among his people, Jesus knows the church’s works:
 - He knows their labor/suffering (v. 2), their endurance (vv. 2-3), their testing of false sent-ones (i.e. apostles) and not tolerating the evil they bring (v. 2), and their hating of the works of the Nicolaitans (v. 6).
 - It is good for us to remember that these are commendations *from* Jesus.

• JESUS’S REBUKE AND WARNING (vv. 4-5)

- While the church in Ephesus had much to be commended for, they needed a rebuke from their loving Lord:
 - They have abandoned their first love, which likely implied a love for others that flows from a love for God (cf. 1 John 2:9-11; 4:20; Mark 12:29-31).
 - The church in Ephesus must remember and repent, and return to their first love (v. 5). If they don’t Jesus will remove his light and they will cease to be a true church.
 - It is good for us to remember that these are rebukes and warnings *from* Jesus.

II. JESUS’S PROMISORY OUTRO (v. 7)

- What Jesus says to the church in Ephesus, the Spirit says to all the churches:
 - Listen up... overcome... conquer... and Jesus will give of the tree of life (cf. Gen. 2:9; Rev. 22:1-2).
 - The overcoming the church in Ephesus is called to is a Spirit-empowered overcoming of their antipathy toward their first love.
 - The call to overcome, however, is for all the churches.
 - To those who overcome, their inheritance will be God himself (Rev. 21:7).

Suggested Reading:

The Joy of Hearing: A Theology of the Book of Revelation by Thomas Schreiner

Questions/Discovery Points for Life Groups/Families

Please Read Revelation 2:1-7

1. What general thoughts come to mind when you consider the spiritual battle taking place, even now, beyond your immediate awareness? How would the introduction to each church of Revelation 2-3, then, provide encouragement?
2. Jesus is said to walk among his church. Do you genuinely believe that? Take some time and discuss the practical ramifications of Jesus’s presence in the midst of his people.
3. Of the commendations Jesus gives to the church in Ephesus, which do you see being practiced in our local congregation? Which do you see need some improvement?
4. Where does Jesus’s focus land with regards to the first love of the church in Ephesus, a love they had abandoned? What does it look like to abandon that kind of first love? Have you abandoned your first love? What are the ramifications if the church refuses to repent of such sinful behavior?
5. How should the promise Jesus extends to the one who overcomes encourage us toward faithful obedience to the commands of Jesus? How are those who hear and obey described throughout the book of Revelation (cf. Rev. 1:3; 22:7)? How should that inform our understanding of obedience?