

YOUR FIRST LOVE



HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN YOUR FIRST LOVE?

Think back for a moment of the day you discovered the saving grace of Jesus Christ. The new experience was life changing, as it should be, and your full attention was focused on your new-found Saviour. However, as time went on, inevitably your “first love” became less important as the usual demands of life distracted your attention.

The church in Ephesus was no different. Right in the middle of some of the worst forms of paganism, idolatry and persecution, this church was important, so much so that first Paul, and later Jesus, wrote letters to them. When Jesus visits John on the island of Patmos, He instructs him to write letters to seven of the churches in Asia (modern-day Turkey).

While many scholars hold the view that the seven churches are representative of seven successive ages since the start of the church in the first century (Ephesus), to the church today (Laodicea), all of the information given to the seven churches are valid to all believers of all ages. The church in Ephesus is the first on the list. Let us have a look what message He has for them:

¹Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; ²I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: ³And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. ⁴Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. ⁵Remember 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. ⁶But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. ⁷He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. – **Revelation 2:1-7**

Jesus commends the church for the following:

- They do not approve of those who are evil.
- They have tested those who claim to be from God, and those have proven themselves to be false and liars (See 1 John 4:1).
- They have endured persecution for His name and have not given up.
- They disapproved of the deeds of the Nicolaitans, a dangerous sect of the time.

However, after the commendations He reveals a less than positive side of their walk in faith:

⁴Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. – **Revelation 2:4**

What a shock this must have been, despite all of their good works, to be accused that they have left (to the point of turning their backs on) their first love (their focus as Christians),

Jesus Himself. Caught up in their daily work, quite possibly even the church structure became so entangled in rituals and works that the focus of the church, faith in Jesus Christ, has diminished. Does this sound like you today?

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

Have you left your first love, Jesus, because you have been entangled by the burdens of everyday life? Think of your spouse for a moment and then think back when you just got married. A marriage usually starts with both partners focusing fully on one another. You probably adored your spouse and tried your level best to satisfy them in every possible way. As time goes on though, it is easy to fall into a trap, a pattern where the other person in the marriage becomes part of the furniture, so to speak, and the initial adoration, affection and focus fade.

Revelation 2:4 should be a wakeup call for all of us. Imagine you were to receive a letter from Jesus in person today, and He writes this about you:

- **Nevertheless** – Despite all your good works
- **I have somewhat against thee** – I have a problem with you
- **Because thou hast left thy first love** – because you have abandoned Me, your Saviour, your first love.

He says of the church that while they are doing all things correctly, in their hearts He is not their focus anymore. The love and warmth of an intimate relationship are not there anymore, only the observance of duties.

The word “left” in Greek is ἀφῆκες [aphēkes] and it means to **send away**; to **bid going away**, **depart**, or a **husband divorcing his wife** (Anon., 2021). It does not mean to *lose* your first love but to deliberately or actively *leave* your first love.

This is not what your relationship with Jesus is supposed to be like. In this verse He is not condemning you. He is pointing out that losing focus on Him waiting at the end of the race happens and warns you so that you should re-evaluate your situation and recommit, return, to Him. The rituals and works will only be meaningful if He is the focus and the recipient of our efforts.

Maybe you should stop what you are doing now, make time, be alone and re-evaluate your relationship with Jesus Christ. Maybe you find that in time, you have allowed situations to become a wedge between you and your first love. Fix this by recommitting to Him without delay. Here is one of the best examples of suggestions from the Word:

²³Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: ²⁴And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. – **Psalm 139:23-24**

Ask Him to search your heart – He knows you intimately and there is nothing you can hide from Him. The beauty of this verse is that you are asking Him to take you off the wicked road (way) and put you back on the road that leads to everlasting life. Remember where you were, repent, and do the first works again (Revelation 2:5). Return to your first love today.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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