

7 LETTERS AND 7 CHURCHES

Greetings precious ones, this week we are going to a seven part series entitled “7 Letters to 7 Churches”. Each week we will take a different church that Jesus wrote to in the Book of Revelations. Though each of these 7 are real churches and existed 2000 years ago, the message that Jesus wrote to them continues to speak to the Church today.

The first church Jesus wrote to was known as the Church of Ephesus. Ephesus is located in what was known as Asia Minor and is now modern day Turkey. The Church was founded by the Apostle Paul on one of his missionary journeys.

The following is the letter as found in Rev 2:1-7, "To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, 'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place--unless you repent. But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." '

Neither time nor space permits me to give an explanation of all the text so I will limit myself to the main message of the letter. Jesus commends the people in the Church at Ephesus for their works for the Lord; resistance to evil; perseverance and patience; testing of who claim to be “sent” from God but are not; and they hated the works of the Nicolaitans. The term Nicolaitans is a compound word which means: Nico conqueror (comes from the Greek word “Nike” and laity which means common people like you and me. There were those within the church system that elevated themselves above others in the church.

All of these qualities are commendable and any church would do well to follow their example. Unfortunately there was a downside; some of the Christians had “left” their first love (Jesus). The word “left” means to lay aside; forsake; let alone. There was a lot of motion (works for the Lord) but there was a lack of emotion (love and devotion).

This is a danger for any Christian to succumb to, none of us are exempt. Remember what the greatest commandment is: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart; soul; mind and strength.” Doing “works/ministry for Jesus is an important part of the Christian life and it is in part how we show out love for Him but too often it takes the place of loving Him.

Let me illustrate by using the example of two dear sisters, both who loved the Lord. In Luke 10:38-42, “Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one

thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

Take note of what Jesus said of Mary, "One thing is needed and Mary has chosen the good part." Mary was sitting at Jesus' feet just loving and worshiping Him. Yes she had been helping her sister earlier get everything ready but when Jesus showed up she chose the better thing to do.

I have to check myself often and make sure I am not just going through the motions; it is all too easy to do. What about you dear one? Do you love Jesus more today than ever before?

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