



Sunday, February 14, 2021

WEST VALLEY CHURCH OF CHRIST

Losing Your First Love by Jake Schotter

The Lord, through the Apostle John, wrote the church at Ephesus a short yet direct letter detailing their spiritual condition as a congregation. We find this letter in Revelation 2:1-7 and the typical pattern emerges through each letter: we see the destination of the letter, a description of Jesus Christ, the diagnosis of the church (with commendation and condemnation), and a demand for the church based on its health. For the church at Ephesus, they were diagnosed with losing their original love for Christ.

The Ephesians read this letter and saw,

I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have left your first love... (Revelation 2:2-5).

There was a lot that this church was commended for! Several great things could be said about the Ephesians:

They were a dynamic church (*"I know your works"*),

They were a dedicated church (*"I know your... labor"*),

They were a determined church (*"you have persevered and have endured"*)

They were a disciplined church (*"you cannot bear those who are evil"*)

They were a discerning church (*"you have tested those who say... have found them.."*)

But, they were also a declining church (*"But I have this against you, that you have left your first love..."*). The Christian life stresses the importance of love – not only in action, but in attitude. From Leviticus 19:18 to Psalm 119 to John 13:34-35 to 1 John 3 and in Revelation 2:4, we find the constant theme of loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

The Ephesian church had a great beginning. From Acts 20:27 and 31, we know that the Apostle Paul devoted three years of his ministry to teaching and working among the Ephesians. They did things right based on what they did. Certainly, their work was full of zeal, but they did not have love. Paul would elsewhere emphasize the fact that if you do not have love, it is meaningless to do what you do (1 Corinthians 13:1-3).

The church at Ephesus is a great reminder for all Christians that we can lose our flame for Christ. Let us not become so busy and lost in our zealous activities in the name of the Lord that we forget to love the One whom we seek to glorify and serve. We cannot neglect the necessity of maintaining our relationship with God. If we do not pay attention, we will lose our first love and become spiritually apathetic, as well... just like the Ephesians. This is why we find their example in the Scriptures: to see what they did and to heed their example.

Perhaps, it is time to check your spiritual pulse... do you truly love God or are you just here to check your name on the attendance sheet and be seen by people?

