

Introduction:

- Last week I gave an overview Revelation chapters 1-3.
 - The book of Revelation is about the Revelation of Jesus: his power, his heart, his leadership.
 - There are 34 majestic expressions describing Jesus.
 - We spent a short time looking at about 20-some of those expressions.
- Since the book is about the Revelation of Jesus and also the end time game plan. We start tonight with Revelation chapter 2. The Church of Ephesus—specifically, Jesus in Ephesus.
 - We are doing this series to purposefully see Jesus in the Letters to the Seven Churches.
 - Who is He?
 - What is He like?
 - How does He treat His bride/me in these letters?
- We want to see Jesus! It is hard to love what you do not see/perceive. By looking at Jesus in the seven letters we expect our love for Him to increase.
- From this study we want to see what is on His heart for us. In the letters we find three things: affirmation, instruction and correction. What is the expectation of our Bride Groom God? I find it fascinating that Jesus would personally deliver these letters to his bride before His appearing.
- Don't forget: In Revelation 1-3 there are 34 majestic terms used of Jesus to describe Him. You will also find 22 rewards mentioned in chapters 2-3 to those who overcome. All 56 of these things are to encourage the church/bride in her relationship with her Groom, Jesus!

I. Jesus Walks In Ephesus

- A. We know from Revelation 2:1 that Jesus holds and walks among his churches. This letter is specifically written to the church in Ephesus. This makes this communication and interaction very personal to the church in Ephesus and should also be very personal to us knowing that He takes time to make it His business to be in our 'business'.
- B. We must look at Ephesus the city to see the context in which Jesus is walking and speaking to His church. Often the light shines brightest in the darkness. In the midst of this darkness of Ephesus, comes Jesus walking and shining brightly there.
- C. Ephesus was the capital and largest city of the Roman province of Asia Minor with a population of approximately 250,000 people and a public theatre seating 25,000. It was a financial center in being a leading seaport on the Mediterranean Sea. This seaport city was known for immorality. Ephesus was also a major center for idolatry in Asia. The central place of worship in the city was the great temple of Diana, which was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world (425 feet long, 220 feet wide, 60 feet high held up by 127 marble pillars). It combined religion and sexual immorality—a major issue of the end times Rev. (9:21 murder, immorality, theft). The silversmith trade was prosperous because of the demand for gold, silver and bronze idols of Diana to be used as one's household deity (Acts 19:25).
- D. This church was a revival center for Asia (Acts 19:26) being the third most prominent church in the Book of Acts after Jerusalem and Antioch. It was a lamp stand bringing light to many... to a Region! Paul first came to Ephesus on his way to Jerusalem from Corinth at the end his second missionary trip in AD 52 (Acts 18:19-21). He initially preached in the synagogue for several months then left. Priscilla and Aquila stayed to train Apollos and the disciples of John

the Baptist (Acts 18:24-28).

- E. Paul returned to establish a church on his third missionary journey (Acts 19-20) which he used as his ministry base for three years (Acts 20:31). The people responded so fervently to the gospel that the market for purchasing idols dramatically reduced. The once fervent worshipers of Diana had become red hot in their devotion to Jesus. The revival resulted in many coming to Jesus with such extreme devotion that they burned magic books worth 50,000 silver coins or drachmas (Acts 19:13-20). A drachma was an average day's wage (\$100/day would have been \$5,000,000).
- F. Paul prophesied to the elders warning them that false teachers would rise up as 'wolves' that would harm the church (Acts 20:17-38). After Paul left, Timothy became the primary apostolic leader (I Tim. 1:1-3). In approximately 65 AD, John became the primary apostolic leader there until his imprisonment on the island of Patmos about 60 miles from Ephesus. At this time, Jesus' mother Mary also lived there. John wrote Revelation about forty years after Paul established the church. The church of Ephesus was the recipient of 8 NT books (Gospel of John, Ephesians, 1 and 2 Timothy, 1, 2, and 3 John, and Revelation). Paul wrote 1 Corinthians from Ephesus.

II. Jesus Revealed In Ephesus

- A. He holds the seven stars and He walks among the seven lamp stands.
 1. The seven stars are the seven angels/messengers (apostolic leaders) of these churches. It is significant that He holds the seven messengers in His right hand.
 - a) This show us the tenderness and commitment that he has to His leaders of His church.
 - b) The right hand is the hand of kindness that protects when attacked (Ps. 17:7); delight (Ps. 16:11), blessing (Ps. 18:35), power (Ps. 20:6) and honor (Heb. 1:3).
 - c) Psalms 17:7 *"Wondrously show your steadfast love, O Savior of those who seek refuge from their adversaries at your right hand."* (Psalm 17:7, ESV)
 - d) The right hand is significant as it speaks of strength/authority. Jesus holds his leaders in His authority. He has authority to speak and to do what He is about to declare in these letters. From the letter to Ephesus we can learn that Jesus has authority over his church. That in the midst of persecution or prosperity it is He that holds us not we that hold Him.
 - e) Voice like many waters-Rev 1:15; Lord has broken through like wall of rushing water 2 Sam 5:20. Strength/authority. This Jesus must be seen in our hearts!
 2. The seven lamp stands are the seven churches he is writing to and that He is walking among.
 - a) Rev 1:15 His feet were like burnished brass. The picture is glorious! That Jesus has passed through the fiery furnace of affliction himself and has been found to be not wanting! No sin, no perversion towards sin! He has been tested and passed! He is righteous and He is just!
 - b) It is those feet that now walk among His church. Because of who He is, He will judge righteously. He will not make mistakes in His judgments. He knows the heart of a person and He knows the heart of a church. You can't hide from the eyes of fire. They

- see it all and He judges accordingly. "Ya, but..." will not stand up Him.
- c) Polished bronze speaks of judgment as you see it throughout the O.T.
 - d) Deuteronomy 23:14 *"Because the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp, to deliver you and to give up your enemies before you, therefore your camp must be holy, so that he may not see anything indecent among you and turn away from you."* (Deuteronomy 23:14, ESV)
 - e) God is serious about protecting and advancing His church.
- B. He is quick to recognize and affirm us. It is the heart of Jesus to encourage us in all our movements towards Him. He is acknowledging the heart of the Ephesians towards him in the midst of their culture. All of these actions are good—don't stop! Jesus knew the Ephesians to be a hard working church, faithful for decades!
1. I know your works.
 2. I know your labor.
 - a) They were zealous vs 3 to establish a true Biblical message and maintain fervent outreach.
 - b) *"For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do."* (Hebrews 6:10, ESV)
 3. I know your patience.
 - a) *"This means that God's holy people must endure persecution patiently, obeying his commands and maintaining their faith in Jesus."* (Revelation 14:12, NLT)
 - b) 2 Corinthians 12:12 *Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.* NKJV
 4. I know you can't stand those who are evil. Doctrinally and morally.
 - a) They exposed false apostles (2 Cor. 11:13). The church is to confront (Mt. 18:15-18; Eph. 5:11; 2 Thes. 3:6-15; 1 Tim. 5:19-20; Tit 3:10-11).
 5. I know you test those who say they are apostles. Acts 20:29-30 *For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.* NKJV
 6. I know you have not grown weary in doing this.
 7. I know you hate the Nicolaitans. Two views:
 - a) Followers of Nicolas a deacon who fell into error (Acts 6:5). They taught you indulge the flesh with immorality. It was a form of cheap grace that allowed you to sin while thinking you are ok with God.
 - b) The transliteration of Nicolaitans means to rule the people. Or it is the exalting of the clergy over the people.

III. Jesus Corrected Ephesus

- A. Five of the seven churches are corrected. Three were corrected with affirmation (Ephesus, Pergamos, and Thyatira). Two were corrected with no affirmation (Sardis and Laodacia).
 1. Proverbs 3:12 *"For the Lord corrects those he loves, just as a father corrects a child in whom he delights."* (Proverbs 3:12, NLT)

2. The love of a father is revealed in correction. It is in correcting that the right path is shown, revealed. It is in correcting that the heart of the Father is revealed. He wants what is best for His child and is willing to risk speaking into their lives for that.
 3. Good fathers want what is best for their children. Any father who looks like Rev 1:12-17 qualifies.
- B. They are corrected for losing their first love.
1. They put labor and growing their ministry reaching into all Asia before cultivating a heart of love for Jesus. The first and great commandment is to love God with all our heart. This will empower us to love people much deeper and with consistency. Lovers always out-work workers.
 2. *You have left your first love* – they left or neglected their original heart of devotion for Jesus that was seen in the great revival in which the church was started in Acts 19. Service and doctrinal purity are very important but they can never replace our love for Jesus.
 3. *I have this against you* – Jesus loves us enough to speak against us in redemptive rebukes. *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.* (Rev. 3:19)
- C. Jesus is redemptive—He is looking out for their best and He gives them a way out. Remember, Repent or be Removed. He gives the opportunity to change to us.

Conclusion:

- Jesus corrects and affirms because He desires to see movement in us. He affirms us to encourage forward movement. He corrects us to provide a pathway for forward movement. He both reveals himself so that we may behold him and He instructs us to show us how to behold more of Him.
- *Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." 38 This is the first and great commandment.* (Mt. 22:37-38)
- *Satan's first priority against the Church is to lead us astray from cultivating the ability to be responsive to God with wholehearted love and extravagant devotion.*