**PREACHING NOTES: THE CHURCH THAT JESUS WANTS**

**WEEK2: REVELATION 2:1-7 (LOVE)**

(Leon Mileham)

Summary of Seven Letters of Revelation

The letters were written at a time of persecution of the church. Jesus is instructing the church that he is in control, that he is coming back and this is how the church is to be in the light of this.

He commends what is good, rebukes what is wrong, brings warnings, but encourages that there are rewards for those who overcome.

Jesus enables his people to be overcomers through Christ (see 1 John 5:4; 1 Corinthians 15:57; Romans 8:37).

These letters collectively show us the church that Jesus wants us to be.

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**Read Revelation 2:1-7** – *The letter to the Church at Ephesus*

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Galatians 6:9 – *“Let us not grow weary in doing good for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up”*.

The Ephesians were commended for their hard work, perseverance, not tolerating wickedness and enduring hardships for Jesus's name.

V6 – The Ephesians were commended for hating the practices of Nicolaitans which God also hates.

The *Pulpit Commentary* says of v6:

*"It is possible to hate what God hates, but not love what he loves"*

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Some things that Jesus loves

1. *The Church (His Bride)*

Christ and his Bride are a picture of what God wants marriages to look like (see Ephesians 5:25-30).

Jesus has a passionate zealous love for his Bride.

The church is the only thing on earth that Jesus is building.

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How should we feel about Christ’s Bride?

Psalm 69:9 – *“Zeal for your house consumes me”.*

John 13:34b:

*As I have loved you, so you must love one another.*

The Church at Laodecia was rebuked for its lukewarmness. Lukewarm love is not acceptable and, indeed, disgusting to Jesus (see Revelation 3:16).

We are to love the church as Jesus loves us (his Bride); out of this love we invest in it, serve it and care for it.

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1. *Faith*

Hebrews 11:6 says it is impossible to please God without faith.

Faith is what Jesus values and looks for on the earth. We read in God’s word that he is able to be amazed by it (see Luke 7:9) and is amazed at the lack of it (see Mark 6:6). Jesus loves it when we display faith!

1. *Generosity*

*“God loves a cheerful giver!”*

Generosity bears amazing fruit for God’s Kingdom and enables him to bless us to be a blessing to others (see 2 Corinthians 9:6-11).

1. *Justice – equality and care for the poor/marginalised*

Jesus’s desire is for his house to be a *“house of prayer for all nations”* (see Mark 11:17)

**Read Proverbs 31:8-9** – advocacy, liberation and provision for the poor and needy.

1. *Salvation*

Jesus loves it when people believe in him and receive his gift of salvation (see Luke 15:7)

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There are things that Jesus hates, which we should also hate, but we should also love what he loves and demonstrate that love as his hands and feet on earth.

He loves people (but not always what they do).

We should demonstrate and mirror his love

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Forsaking first love

The Ephesians are rebuked for forsaking their first love (see Revelation 2:4-5)

We are not told necessarily of an absence of love, but that that first, zealous, enthusiastic, passionate love has been abandoned and perhaps replaced with a comfortable, over-familiar, unexpressed, assumed love.

The church Jesus wants is one that loves him as he loves her and expresses that love.

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How do we rekindle that first love?

**Read Revelation 2:5-6**

We examine ourselves

We change the way we think

We align our thoughts with God’s (repentance)

We do what we did at first.

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A picture of our state prior to and during that time of first love (salvation)

**Read Isaiah 6:1-8:**

* A revelation of God’s holiness
* A revelation of our sinfulness – brokenness at our condition and circumstances
* A touch by God
* Receiving what Jesus has done for us
* Forgivenness
* Response: ***“Here am I! Send me!”***
* Come to Jesus.
* Seek his face.
* Ask him to reveal himself to you anew.
* Examine yourself.
* Humble yourself.
* Recommit your life to him.
* Reaffirm your love for him.
* Make yourself available to him.

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Obedience

Last week we were encouraged to be obedient to the things that God is calling us to do for him.

What is God prompting you to do?

Perhaps this is something in the church where a need has been expressed or where a commitment has been called for.

Perhaps it is something where you need to make changes in a lifestyle that God is revealing to you is not pleasing to him.

Perhaps you are lacking vision and direction in your life.

Perhaps once upon a time you would have done anything for Jesus.

It is not too late to come to Jesus with the cry of first love: ***“Here am I! Send me!”***

*(Remember, this is first and foremost about the state of our hearts – we don’t come to God with credentials, but with ourselves. We are called to be, then out of the overflow, to do)*

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*FIRST LOVE*

*My highest call, my greatest cause*

*Is loving You*

*Your perfect love has won my heart*

*Now I am Yours*

*Your sacrifice demands my life and I will live to honour*

*Your holy name, the price You paid and so I sing*

*You're my first love, You're my true love*

*You're my reason, You are why I breathe*

*I will give You my devotion,*

*All of me, all of me*

*You chose the cross, You chose me*

*Surrendered Your life, You chose me*

*Though I did not deserve, You chose me*

*So I choose to love just as You chose me*

*I put You first as You first loved me*

*I'll treasure Your grace as You died for me*

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