

To the Church in Ephesus

May 27, 2018

Revelation 2:1-7 ESV

1 To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: 'The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands.

2 I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false.

3 I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary.

4 But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.

5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.

6 Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.'

THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

Revelation 2:2-3

2 I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance...

3 I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary.

The bedrock of the Christian's perseverance is knowing it is better to die with Jesus than to live without Him. It is better to die with Jesus than to live with this world.

John 6:66-68 ESV

66 After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.

67 So Jesus said to the Twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?"

68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life,

69 and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."

Hebrews 6:4-6 ESV

4 For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit,

5 and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come,

6 and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.

John 11:7,8,16 ESV

7 Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."

8 The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?"

16 So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

Daniel 3:14-18 ESV

14 Nebuchadnezzar answered and said to them, "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up?

15 ...if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?"

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.

17 If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king.

18 But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

Revelation 2:2,6

2 I know...how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false.

6 Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

As a Christian, you are responsible for your choice of spiritual leadership you follow.

Philippians 1:9-10 ESV

9 And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment,

10 so that you may approve (dokimazō - test, examine, prove, scrutinize) what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ.

Hebrews 13:7 ESV

7 Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.

2 Corinthians 11:2-21 ESV

2 For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

3 But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be

led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

4 For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough.

5 Indeed, I consider that I am not in the least inferior to these super-apostles.

6 Even if I am unskilled in speaking, I am not so in knowledge; indeed, in every way we have made this plain to you in all things.

7 Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached God's gospel to you free of charge?

8 I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you.

9 And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my need. So I refrained and will refrain from burdening you in any way.

10 As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be silenced in the regions of Achaia.

11 And why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do!

12 And what I am doing I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do.

13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.

14 And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

15 So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.

16 I repeat, let no one think me foolish. But even if you do, accept me as a fool, so that I too may boast a little.

17 What I am saying with this boastful confidence, I say not as the Lord would but as a fool.

18 Since many boast according to the flesh, I too will boast.

19 For you gladly bear with fools, being wise yourselves!

20 For you bear it if someone makes slaves of you, or devours you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or strikes you in the face.

21 To my shame, I must say, we were too weak for that! But whatever anyone else dares to boast of--I am speaking as a fool--I also dare to boast of that.

1 Peter 5:1-4 ESV

1 So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed:

2 shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly;

3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

Hebrews 6:11-12 ESV

11 And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full

assurance of hope until the end,
12 so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

THE LOVE OF GOD

Revelation 2:4-5

4 But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.

5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.

Any relationship in which you expect the other party to fulfill all your desires and make you “happy” is doomed to failure.

The American Christian wants their religion to be:

- *convenient*
- *non-invasive*
- *non-confrontational*
- *emotionally soothing, reassuring and uplifting*
- *entertaining and amusing*
- *self-gratifying*
- *self-promoting*

How many times is our religion self-serving instead of a genuine and deep love for God?

- *We repent to avoid consequences and judgment.*
- *We perform good works to feel less guilty or to draw attention to ourselves.*
- *We praise and worship to feel an emotional release or calm.*
- *We attend church, pray and study the Bible to feel the accomplishment of duty and obligation.*

Matthew 22:37-38 ESV

37 And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

38 This is the great and first commandment.

John 14:23 ESV

23 Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.