

# Clive Wissmann: Ephesus (20/7/19)

**Scripture Reading:** Revelation 2:1-7

## Introduction:

Today we will begin by considering the message as it applied to the church in Ephesus. Secondly, we will be considering its application to us.

In **Revelation 1:3** it says “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.”

So, today, let us think about what is read and heard, that we may also keep it.

## Review:

The structure that we are using to break down the messages to the seven churches is this seven part structure.

1. City
2. Church
3. Correspondent
4. Commendation
5. Concern
6. Command
7. Counsel

## City:

Ephesus, which means “desire,” was the most important city in the province of Asia Minor. It had a fine harbour, and being at the junction of three most important Roman roads in Asia Minor, trade centre.

Its population was estimated at somewhere between 250,000 to 500,000 people.

The city's theatre held approximately 25,000 people.

**Acts 19:27** - The temple of Diana (goddess of fertility) was also located in Ephesus. This temple, larger than the Greek Pantheon, was one of the wonders of the world, employing thousands of people.

**Acts 19:19** - I guess you could say that Ephesus was a bit of an occult hub.

## Church:

**Acts 18:19,20 & Acts 19:8,9** - The Apostle Paul spent lots of time ministering to the people in Ephesus. He was the first Pastor of the church in Ephesus to which he wrote the epistle that we now have recorded in scripture.

**1 Timothy 1:3** - Timothy followed Paul as the second Pastor of the church in Ephesus. The two letters that Paul wrote to Timothy (now recorded in scripture) were instructions regarding his work in that church.

**Acts 20:17,28-31** - It was to the church in Ephesus that Paul spoke of the need to shepherd the church because of the ‘grievous wolves’ that would come in to destroy the flock.

History goes on to tell us that John, the author of Revelation, was a later Pastor of the church in Ephesus.

In other words, this church had a solid Biblical foundation! Which it needed, given the pagan and occult influences around the region.

## Correspondent:

**Revelation 2:1** - "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."

Jesus, when speaking to the church in Ephesus, said that He held the messengers (angels) - represented as stars - in His right hand.

In the midst of an occult hub, Jesus, the deliverer, promised to be a firm foundation for the mother church of Asia Minor (Matthew 28:20, John 10:28).

## Commendation:

**Revelation 2:2,3** - "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."

- "I know your works" - God sees all things - even our motives and hidden thoughts (Hebrews 4:13).
- "Labour" - diligent (hard) work.
- "Patience" - Perseverance, endurance.
- Discernment - Because of the grievous wolves that were coming in.

**Revelation 2:6** - "But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate."

- "Hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans" - The Nicolaitans are often thought to be those who followed Nicolas, one of the seven first ordained to the diaconate by the apostles.
  - *"The doctrine is now largely taught that the gospel of Christ has made the law of God of no effect; that by "believing" we are released from the necessity of being doers of the Word. But this is the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which Christ so unsparingly condemned."* Ellen White, Signs of the Times, January 2, 1912.

## Concern:

**Revelation 2:4** - "Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love." This, leaving the first love, necessarily happens as an act of neglect.

It can happen to us when we neglect things like Bible study, prayer and witnessing.

**Deuteronomy 8:11-14** - Moses counselled the Israelites of old that they not *forget* what God had done for them. By keeping it fresh in their minds they would live with an awareness of God's presence and how fortunate we are to have Him as a part of our lives.

**Judges 2:7-11** - It can also happen as a result of losing parents or mentors.

### How am I to love God?

**Mark 12:30** - "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment."

- Heart - Does God have first place in my heart?
- Soul - Do I still yearn for quality time in Prayer and Bible study?
- Mind - Do my thoughts wander off on everything else but God?
- Strength - Do I give in easily to temptation? Give ALL our strength and trust Jesus to supply our lack.

### Have I left my first love?

**Mark 12:31** - "And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Do I love my neighbour when I don't give cheerfully to the needy? (1 John 3:17).

### Have I left my first love?

**John 14:15,21** - "If you love me, keep my commandments... He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

Do I see God's laws as restrictions and not as expressions of His love?

Have I left my first love?

**1 John 2:15** - "Do not love the world, or the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

Do I yearn for acclaim from the world in things like riches, position or power?

Have I left my first love?

**1 John 4:21** - "If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?"  
Am I unable to forgive?

### **Command:**

**Revelation 2:5** - "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."

Three words: *Remember, Repent and Return.*

Jesus' message to Ephesus, and His message to you, is that you would go back and do the things that you did when you first loved Jesus.

Remember your zeal, your standards of conduct, your willingness to serve and spend hours in prayer and Bible study, your willingness to give your time and money.

### **Counsel:**

**Revelation 2:7** - "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."

Jesus counsel to you today is the same as it was to His church in a distractible city like Ephesus. He says: Pay attention! Keep your eyes on the prize. Recapture your first love and be an overcomer.

### **Conclusion:**

Today, we have read and we have heard, so let us think about how we can keep these words from our Saviour.

**Revelation 22:1-5** - "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever."

The promise is sure! These promises belong to the overcomes who have read, heard and keep.

The message to Ephesus can be summarised in the three questions that Jesus asked Peter after He was resurrected:

1. Do you love me?
2. Do you love me?
3. Do you love me?