

Faith that Endures

(Online Study, Tuesday Evening at 7:00 PM)

Week 7: Faithfulness in a Fading Love-- Revelation 2:1–7

The letter to the church at Ephesus is the first of seven messages from the risen Christ to His churches in Asia Minor. On the surface, Ephesus seemed to be a model congregation. They worked hard. They endured patiently. They tested false teachers and rejected them. They refused to tolerate evil. By nearly every outward measure, the church at Ephesus was doing well.

Yet Jesus had a devastating charge against them: “You have abandoned the love you had at first.” Their doctrinal vigilance and tireless labor were real virtues, and Jesus commended them for both. But something had cooled at the center. Their faithfulness had begun to run on duty more than devotion. They had not abandoned the truth — they had abandoned their first love for the Lord of the truth.

This letter is a sobering warning for every congregation and every Christian. It is possible to hold sound doctrine and still grow spiritually empty. It is possible to work tirelessly for God and yet drift from loving Him. Christ’s remedy is threefold — “Remember ... repent ... and do the first works” (Rev. 2:5). Repentance in the Scriptures is never a mere feeling; it is a turning that shows itself in renewed obedience and renewed devotion. Enduring faith holds both the truth and the love of Christ together.

Group Discussion: How is it possible for a church to be doctrinally correct, hardworking, and morally disciplined and still be in danger of losing its relationship with Christ? What does this warning reveal about what Jesus values most?

Personal Reflection: When you compare the devotion you felt at the beginning of your faith journey with where you are now, what has changed? Are there “first works” you need to return to?

Read Revelation 2:1–7

Study Questions

1. In verse 1, Christ describes Himself as the One who “holds the seven stars” and “walks among the seven golden lampstands.” What does this imagery teach about Christ’s relationship to His churches?
2. Verses 2–3 list several commendable qualities of the Ephesian church: hard work, patient endurance, intolerance of evil, and testing false teachers. Why does Jesus acknowledge these before addressing their failure?

3. In verse 2, the church “tested those who call themselves apostles and are not.” Why is doctrinal discernment important, and how does a congregation test teachings against the truth?
4. Despite all their strengths, Jesus says in verse 4, “You have abandoned the love you had at first.” What is this “first love,” and how does a believer or a congregation lose it?
5. How can hard work and doctrinal correctness become substitutes for genuine love for Christ? What does this reveal about the danger of merely going through the motions?
6. In verse 5, Jesus gives three commands: “Remember...repent...do the works you did at first.” Why is remembering the starting point for repentance and renewal?
7. Jesus warns that He will “remove your lampstand” if the church does not repent (v. 5). What does the removal of the lampstand mean, and why is this warning so serious?
8. Verse 6 commends the Ephesians for hating “the works of the Nicolaitans.” What does this tell us about the importance of maintaining both love and moral conviction?
9. In verse 7, Jesus promises that “the one who conquers” will eat from the tree of life. What does it mean to conquer in this context, and how does this promise motivate endurance?
10. Looking at Revelation 2:1–7 as a whole, what does this letter teach about the relationship between truth, love, and enduring faithfulness?

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: **Jeremiah 2:1–13** — Israel forsaking its first love for God; **Matthew 22:36–40** — The greatest commandment: love for God; **1 Corinthians 13:1–3** — Truth without love is nothing