

“...*but have not love!*”

1. **Intro:**

- 1.1. Prayer, for Lisa Chesney(Mark): Aggressive lymphoma.
- 1.2. Cindy Arnold, Marlene, & Kim: *Servant Serving Servants*, Albania Update.
- 1.3. Prayer: Lord as we **read** this, please **read the contents of our lives** to see if we are doing everything but the 1 thing...**loving You!**

2. **7 Churches Intro:**

- 2.1. We now step into our 2nd part of our outline(from 1:19) “*The things which are*”.
- 2.2. The “Postman of Patmos”(John) as he pens 7 Important messages to 7 Important churches!
- 2.3. **Map** – Note Patmos. Circle in order clockwise. Starting with Ephesus near the coast.
- 2.4. **Why is Christ 1st dealing with the church?**
 - 2.4.1. Because judgment begins where? (1 Pet.4:17) “*For the time has come for judgment to **begin** at the **house of God**; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?*”
 - 2.4.2. So Jesus deals with these 7 churches before he deals with the lost world.
- 2.5. **Why were these 7 churches singled out?**
 - 2.5.1. 1:11 “*to the seven churches which are in Asia: to **Ephesus**, to **Smyrna**, to **Pergamos**, to **Thyatira**, to **Sardis**, to **Philadelphia**, and to **Laodicea**.*”
 - 2.5.2. Why not **Philippi**? Why not **Corinth**? – There were **more popular** churches, there were **larger** churches, there were more needy churches.
- 2.6. **Some say because**, these 7 represent 7 consecutive time periods of church history.
 - 2.6.1. Though this is fascinating, intriguing, & we find some correlations when we examine each era, we clearly find the **merits & weaknesses** of not one particular church...but **all 7!**¹
 - 2.6.2. What seems **plausible** at 1st, becomes something **forced & artificial** in the end.
 - 2.6.3. We need to be careful in **spiritualizing** the 7 churches, as they were **real churches** who had **real strengths & weaknesses**.
 - 2.6.4. **Ephesus/Neglected Priorities; Smyrna/Satanic opposition; Pergamos/Religious Compromise; Thyatira/Immoral Practices; Sardis/Spiritual Apathy; Philadelphia/Lost Opportunities; Laodicea/Material Prosperity.** [David Hocking]
- 2.7. **4-Fold Reference:**
 - 2.7.1. **Local** - To the churches actually addressed.
 - 2.7.2. **Admonitory** - An admonition to all churches of all time periods as tests by which they may discern their true sp. state. Note:2:7 “churches”

¹ Shepherd’s Notes; pg.6

- 2.7.3. **Personal** - In the exhortations “he who has an ear” & in the promises “to him who overcomes.” (vs.7)
- 2.7.4. **Prophetic** - The progress of its spiritual state until the end of the church age!
- 2.8. **So why these 7?**
- 2.8.1. **Geographically** – They were **readily accessible** to one another & the world.
- 2.8.2. **Historically** – They each had **strengths** to commend **and/or weaknesses** to correct.
- 2.8.3. **Spiritually** – **churches of every age** share the same strengths & weaknesses as those historical churches.²
- 2.9. Which each of the churches there is 1st a **positive affirmation**, then a **corrective discipline**, & 3rd, a **motivating promise**!
- 2.10. **Q: Have you ever evaluated a church or a ministry?**
- 2.10.1. You should have when you moved in this area.
- 2.10.2. When you came here what did you use as a measuring guide?
- 2.10.2.1. The building? the amount of members?
- 2.11. **Only Jesus Christ can see the true condition & give a true evaluation!**
- 2.11.1. Jesus here “peers into the pews” of 7 churches, & gives them each a report card!
- 2.11.2. Just as an **ultrasound technician** places the **probe** onto the mothers stomach, & views & measures the growth, & watches for any abnormalities, so does Christ w/His babies!
- 2.12. 2 of the churches are given **no affirmation**(*Sardis & Laodicea*);
2 of the churches are given **no discipline**(*Smyrna & Philadelphia*).
- 2.12.1. These churches represent the **good & bad** in churches everywhere & in every age.
- 2.12.2. As we go through these over the next 7 weeks be thinking, **which of these churches would you join & why?**

3. **...BUT HAVE NOT LOVE! (1-7)**

- 3.1. **EPHESUS!** (1)
- 3.2. **Background:** A great commercial center; it bore the title “*The Supreme Metropolis of Asia*”; it had the great Temple of Artemis/Diana (1 of the 7 wonders of the ancient world)
- 3.2.1. It was an important gulf city, a crucial export center, they had sea trade, 3 main routes converged there. It was wealthy, politically influential, & a very pagan city.
- 3.2.2. Paul did the church plant there. Timothy followed up. Later John.
- 3.3. **Holds & walks** – Jesus’ hands & feet are emphasized here.
- 3.3.1. **Jesus is in the midst of the churches & He knows what is going on.**
- 3.3.2. **Holds** - When God has a hold of something it speaks of divine security, sovereign control.
- 3.3.3. **Walks** – represents His continual presence in his church.

² Ibid; pg.6

- 3.4. Who cares what men say of your church or denom. ... **What does Christ think of it?**
- 3.4.1. Isn't it interesting what **we** look at in a church, verses what **Jesus** looks for & commends or condemns in them!
- 3.4.2. **We ask:** Is it a mini or a mega-church? –Hymns or contemporary music?
- 3.4.3. **We say,** “wow it's successful because they have so many home studies, or programs. They do concerts! They have awesome retreats.”
- 3.4.4. **What would you expect Christ to hone in on w/the churches?**
- 3.5. **Note:** 1 point of the description of Jesus in **1:13-16** is used for each of the churches
- 3.5.1. The specific attribute of Christ that applied to the particular needs of the church is emphasized in the message.
- 3.6. **EPHESUS, BATTLE TESTED & ORTHODOX!** (2,3)
- 3.7. **Religious busyness!** (a status symbol in many churches today)
- 3.8. Remember He's speaking to those “inside” the church!
- 3.8.1. **This was a Serving church** - a “*Saint Martha's*” if you will. **Not** the Catholic Church in town, but a reference to Mary & Martha.
- 3.8.1.1. “**Works**” - They were busy doing the works of the Lord!
- 3.8.2. **This was a Sacrificing church** - “**Labor**” = toil to the point of exhaustion.
- 3.8.3. **This was a Steadfast church** - “**Patience/perseverance**” = endurance under trial.
- 3.8.3.1. They were also known as *The Dura-cell Bunny Church!*
- 3.8.3.2. **They were Christian marathoners, disciplined, determined!**
- 3.8.4. **This was a Separated church** - They didn't tolerate those that are evil, & they tested visiting ministers!
- 3.8.4.1. **They were the Pit-Bulls of orthodoxy; guardians of truth; chasing away false teachers.**
- 3.8.4.2. They knew **How** to defend the doctrines of the Word, **but** forgot **Who** the doctrines pointed to!³
- 3.9. (3) They were tired in their labor, but not of it!
- 3.9.1. **They were a busy church with high spiritual standards.**
- 3.9.2. In every way this was a **successful** church from the human standpoint!
- 3.10. **LOVE IS PRIMARY!** (4)
- 3.11. The Righteous Bro's sang, “*You've lost that loving feeling - Oh, that loving feeling - You've lost that loving feeling - Now it's gone, gone, gone - Whoa-oh*”
- 3.11.1. **Was Christ singing the same?**
- 3.11.2. **He had one bone to pick with them!**
- 3.12. **Love is primary, & w/o it the church has no reason to exist!** (read again!)
- 3.13. After hearing of all the **positive things** this church was doing it's surprising to discover they had **left(not lost)** there 1st love.
- 3.13.1. I guess you could say like Jeremiah... *I guess the honeymoon's over!*
- 3.13.1.1. **Read Jer.2:2.**

³ Chuck Swindoll; pg. 15; The 7 Churches.

- 3.13.2. No amount of **separation**, **sacrifice**, or **service**, can make up for your **lack of love** toward the Lord.
- 3.14. 1 Cor.13:1,3,13 “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, **but have not love**, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal”...“And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, **but have not love**, it profits me nothing...**but the greatest of these is love.**”
- 3.15. When Paul wrote his letter to this “Ephesian church” earlier & referred to **Love 20x’s!**
- 3.15.1. **1st mention** Eph. 1:4 “just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in **love**,”
- 3.15.2. **Last mention** (last verse) 6:24 “Grace be with all those who **love** our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.”
- 3.16. **Read** 6 year old Kyle journal entry.
- 3.17. Isn’t this the very question Jesus asked Peter(3x’s)? **Do you love me?**
- 3.17.1. **There is always the danger of a love grown cold!**
- 3.17.2. It’s not a **hatred** of Christ, not even being **mad** at God; it’s indifference, it’s apathy, it’s lack of interest, lack of concern.
- 3.17.3. **Christ is more concerned what we do with Him, then for Him!**⁴
- 3.17.3.1. **Labor is no substitute for love.**
- 3.17.4. To the public, the Ephesian church was **successful**; to Christ it had **fallen**.
- 3.17.5. **Peter do you love me? Ephesus? CCM? Put your name in the blank?**
- 3.17.5.1. **The love of Christ compels/controls me!** 2 Cor.5:14
- 3.18. **BEING RESTORED TO 1ST LOVE STATUS!** (5)
- 3.19. **Remember** – “keep on remembering”...What you’ve lost; cultivate a desire to regain that close communion again!
- 3.19.1. The prodigal “remembered” his home!
- 3.19.1.1. This is the 1st step to the road back.
- 3.19.2. Reminisce! Flip back the pages in your mind. Take a walk down memory lane!
- 3.19.3. **What do you remember about your 1st date?** (mine & Kel’s)
- 3.19.4. **What do you remember about 1st being saved?**
- 3.19.4.1. **The freshness of God’s word; being enraptured in Worship; hanging out after bible studies talking to friends.**
- 3.20. **Repent** – “Repentance is the admission that the fault is ours. It is the acceptance of responsibility for our failure & our fall!” (Barclay)
- 3.20.1. **The prodigal son** said, “**I have sinned**”; **Saul** said, “**I have sinned....Indeed I have played the fool and erred exceedingly.**”
- 3.20.2. (Spurg) “**Christ & we will never be One, until we & our sin are Two!**”
- 3.21. **Repeat** - “**Do the 1st works**” - The sorrow of repentance is **Not** to drive a man to despair; it is meant to drive him to 2 things:

⁴ Warren Wiersbe; Outlines of the NT.

- 3.21.1. [1] Drive him to fling himself on the grace of God saying, “**God be merciful to me a sinner!**”
- 3.21.2. [2] Drive him to Action that we may bring forth fruits w/repentance!
3.21.2.1.(i.e.) a **changed life!**
- 3.21.3. **Notice they are to Do their 1st works, not to **Feel their 1st feelings!****
- 3.22. (Message) “**Turn back! Recover your dear early love. No time to waste, for I’m well on my way to **removing your light** from the golden circle.**”
- 3.23. The danger to the churches is that Christ would **remove their testimony**. He would rather have a city in the darkness than to have a lampstand out of His divine will.
3.23.1. **8 churches** close their doors every day in the U.S. - 6 open.
- 3.24. “The church that loses its **Love** will undoubtedly lose its **Light**,...no matter how doctrinally sound it may be!”
- 3.24.1. The glorious city of Eph. retained its vigor till the 5th cent. but now is a heap of stones today, silt 7 miles inland!
- 3.24.2. The **local church** is to shine as a light in the world. W/o **true love** for Christ, it’s **true light** will go out.
- 3.25. **NICOLAITANS!** (6)
- 3.26. “**Nicolaitans**” [*nikao*=victor, *laos*=the people] “*To conquer the people*”, a sect who lorded over the people [inventors of clergy/laity].
- 3.27. **OVERCOMERS!** (7)
- 3.28. **Tree of life** – lost in Eden; regained in Paradise.
3.28.1. **Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the **tree of life**, & eat, and live forever⁵**
3.28.1.1.(i.e.) live forever separated from God!
3.28.2. The thief on the cross was promised this **Paradise** by Jesus.

R.A.Torrey, Revival needs **3 things**:

- [1] Only a few Christians to get thoroughly righteous w/God themselves!
[2] Bind themselves together in a prayer group to pray!
[3] Put themselves at the disposal of God for Him to use as He sees fit!

⁵ Gen.3:22