

Revelation Lesson 26  
Ephesus: The Lagging Church (Condemnation) Part 2

Revelation 2:4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

Now, what we have seen at the Church at Ephesus is thus: We have seen Christ's Salutation to the Church in verse 1, Christ's Commendation to the Church in verses 2-3 and now tonight in Lesson 26 we hear His Condemnation. What does He condemn within this Church? Well to most folks, a Church that is hard-working, laborious, patient and turns away from evil, would be a GREAT Church and that all surely would be well with the Lord. However we find that since Jesus knows the heart, He knows IF everything is okay betwixt the Church and Him....

**Nevertheless** – This word means: “in spite of that: it means that whatever is coming is going to be different or in contrast to what was previously stated. Thieme stated: “It is the contrast between the good report and the criticism.” I have said that “Nevertheless” is nothing except a big word for “BUT.”

**I** – Christ. As the Only Supreme Judge and the One Who looks within our hearts it is Christ and Him alone that can have the authority to say and do what is being done here.

**have somewhat** – This phrase means: “in a small amount or degree : to some degree” Look at verse 14: “*But I have a few things against thee...*” Greene says: “First one thing – the church left its first love. Next, a few things. When a church or an individual departs from the “virgin love” of the new birth experience, that person or church will find itself slipping farther and farther as the days and weeks go by.”

**against thee**, - Christ is stating he has an objection. Something that is offensive to Him.

**because** – This word essentially indicates: “The following information is the reason.” Thus the word because brings us to the WHY? Why does Christ have something against the Church at Ephesus?

**Thou** – This is the singular YOU. Notice again, we see the local Body of Christ referred to as a singular entity. Truthfully this is what we are (1 Corinthians 12:14) we as members make up THE Body of Christ. Not the Bodies of Christ.

**hast left** – This means “Have Left.” Now that word “left” means “to send away, to disregard, to depart from, to go away leaving something behind, to abandon.” Note, WHO did the LEAVING? It was the Ephesian believers – not the Lord. HE IS ALWAYS FAITHFUL. Christ did not leave them – indeed He is seen as being in the “midst” of the churches. Remember Matthew 18:20 “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

**thy first love.** - While the Ephesians had hands and heads committed to the Lord, their hearts were far from Him. That's all Church had become to them: WORK. Some 30-40 years before, it was a different story. In Ephesians 1:15 Paul states: “*Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,*” Now, in Paul's day – about 30-40 years before this writing of Revelation – the Ephesians were well known for their love. Now recall also: 1 John 4:21 “And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.” You cannot love your brother, unless you LOVE GOD also.

Jesus plainly states in John 14:15 “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” and in John 14:21 “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me

shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.” that we LOVE HIM WHEN WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS.

Now, let us note this FIRST Love. The Scriptures tell us in 1 John 4:19 “We love him, because he first loved us.” Now, the Love mentioned here in Revelation 2:4 denotes RANK. This means the FIRST Love, any of us should have should be for the Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour, Redeemer and King. We should love our Spouse, our Children, our Church, our Neighbours BUT the FIRST in RANK should be the LORD JESUS CHRIST. This is what the Church at Ephesus had done. The number one slot had been filled with something or someone else.

Think of what Love entails - 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 “Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; 6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; 7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.”

Paul rightly stated in 1 Corinthians 13:1 the following: “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.” The word CHARITY is in the Greek AGAPE (G26) that is the UNCONDITIONAL LOVE OF GOD.

In the Bible we find examples of different “loves:” PHILOS (brotherly love), STORGE (parental love) and ASTORGE (negative love – unnatural love) one “love” never found in the Bible is EROS Love – Love between a husband and wife – where we get the word erotic from. It is the word AGAPE that is used for God's Love for us – It never changes! This is the Love we ought to have towards Him and each other, but we cannot obtain it within our power but only within His Power and strength. That happens once we observe all of John 14:21 in our life!

We are further told in the Old Testament (Deut. 6:5) and by Jesus in the New Testament to: “Mark 12:30 “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.”

A way to check our Love is to see 2 things:

1. Check the Fruit of the Spirit – as Love is the FIRST in RANK - Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.
2. Check our TALK:
  1. Matthew 6:21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.
  2. Matthew 12:34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

If I am to LOVE HIM then that Love ought to be SEEN in my actions, deeds, talk, lifestyle, etc. J. Vernon McGee said thus: My friend, when your home life and your church life become a burden, there is something wrong with your relationship with Christ. When you get that straightened out, other things will straighten out also. This is the reason the Lord Jesus said to the Ephesian believers, "You are getting away from your first love, your best love." When Church, Prayer, the Bible etc. becomes a chore that's a SURE SIGN YOU'VE LOST YOUR FIRST LOVE. How do you get it back? Well, preview of our next study: look at verse 5 “REPENT!” THIS IS ANOTHER REASON WHY WE HAVE REVIVAL!