

Pale green - death (P. outline)
white - Purity
Black - Faith
Gold - worth value
Orange - strength
Scarlet - immorality

50. Nay - Sept. 5 - 71 P.M.
N.W. - March 4, 2001
WXRI

THE CHURCH AT EPHEBUS

Rev. 2:1-7

Rev. written in codes indicated above - ~~Carson Tompkins~~, put John in prison on Island of Patmos

INTRODUCTION: 7 - Divine, God's Number 4 - World 144,000 12x12 = whole
6 - Imperfection, Evil 10 - Completion People of God

This sermon this ~~day~~ is from the contents of the letter the Lord writes to the church at Ephesus. It can be easily understood and outlined for remembrance. What would He say to the Ch. Today?

Message for 7 Churches in Asia - Ephesus; Paul Preached 3 yrs. If He Returned in Person, This church will be remembered for mainly (one thing) -- that it was ~~John~~ No Doubt Preached there

loyal but lacking. And of course you have heard this quoted many times. "Thou hast left thy first love."

I remember in the Seminary hearing Dr. Summers talking about the Seven Churches In Asia and an assignment was made on this first church. And one of the students turned in his lesson and the subject he used, "The Honeymoon Is Over". The church had departed from that fervor and love which had characterized their first experience as Christians. They were active, aggressive - but they had departed from that love.

I wonder often, if this is not the case with many people, soon the honeymoon is over. And they forget everything.

I remember reading about a groom ^{walking} that was very nervous. He shifted from one foot to another, he buttoned and unbuttoned his coat, and then rebuttoned it. Finally a friend asked him if there was something wrong. He inquired, have you lost the ring? No, he replied, I have lost my enthusiasm.

Now I think in this study this evening, we will discover the same thing true in church that happens to an individual. Quite often when the honeymoon is over, some people forget all about those promises.

I remember an old man once, who got married, and after the honeymoon he quit going to church, and he quit taking his wife around. And

everything was sugar and cream when he first got married and before he got married. He was going to build a castle for her to live in. Nothing was good enough for her. He even attended church with her. But after their honeymoon - that (love soon disappeared.)

I. A Special Communication - V. 1

The opening verse of this chapter tells about the special communication which contains a special message.

The writer identifies himself and it is a description of our Saviour.

He holds the (stars) - these stars are ministers of Christ. And are under the special care and protections and he knows them by name. They were to shine on the earth in the sun's absence. They have a high station in life. And the business of the star is to give light and the same thing is true of the minister., who is here symbolized. The Preacher who fails in his sermons to give light - is not a star made of God. Stars really have no use to us accept that they give light. They maybe very big bodies making their circuit but they need light.

These are held in his (right hand) - he holds them - they are his agents, his instruments.

1st Golden Lamp Stand Ephesus
The (candlesticks) are the churches. It is the office of the church to hold up that which gives out light. The candlesticks are meant to hold candles, to support light.

He (walks) in the midst when he was on earth he said - where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. In this we see, it does not take a great cathedral or even a very large assembly

V.I. unto the Angels - Timothy might have been Minister -
-3-

of people to make a church. He is in their midst. And this tells us that the relationship he has with the churches is the same as he has with his ministers. And so he walks in their midst and in their presence. Now he has a very special message for them.

*Ephesus - 60 miles from Patmos
Planted by Paul 3 yrs - Aquila & Priscilla Acts 18:24
220 yrs in Building - one of 7 Wonders of world Temple to Diana
Act 19:35*

II. A Special Commendation - V. 2

"I know what you have done." I know by works. He says this of himself.

I think he wanted the church at Ephesus to understand that he knew thoroughly all of its work, its labor of love.

This church over 500 yrs old when message sent.

Now several things he says, that I know. As he congratulates them and commends them. Active Church in Business for God!

First, their hard work. Jesus said he knew about their hard work, their activity, they were really in the Lord's business. They were working at it. They were doing a good job in their Sunday School, in their organizations. They were trying to baptize some folks. They tried to send in some mission offering. And Jesus was aware of all of the fine work that was going on in this church at Ephesus. They were diligent - they were a working church. They were not all sitting by with folding hands. I heard of a church once who sent in their annual letter and they filled in the blanks like this. New Members - None. Baptisms - None. Missions - None. Then the Clerk wrote at the bottom, pray for us that we might be faithful until the end.

Now Jesus knew what they had been doing. And he knows what the church today is doing. In other words, this was real labor. It was constant toil - the idea here is - they were doing it at a cost. This cost them something - they worked for God at a great cost and they toiled on. And they labored in it. And they pushed on.

v20 Second Their Patience

Endurance - Holding on - didn't quit - stayed with it -

-5-

I once read a story of an evangelist who told a most interesting story that you've ever heard in your life. He loved to hunt. He bought himself two new bird dogs - two setters. He put them in his back yard. One morning there came down the alley a mean vicious bull dog. He meant business. So the evangelist said his first impulse was to take his setters and put them in the basement, that they might not tear up that bull dog. But he said, he had a second thought he'd just let that bull dog learn a lesson. The bull dog came over the fence and into the back yard and those two dogs and the bull dog went around and around and around. After going around and around, the bull dog ran away. All the rest of the day he spent licking his sores. The evangelist said he thought that was the end of it. There would be no more bull dog around his yard but the next day at the same hour, the same time, over the fence jumped the bull dog and they had it again. Those two bird dogs beat the stuffings out of him. Chewed him up. And after a while, when the bull dog got enough, he went home with more sores and more scars. And spent that day licking his wounds. He said I thought for sure that would be a lesson to that bull dog. But on the third morning the same, down the alley came the bull dog, he jumped over the fence and they went at it again. The same thing happened. The two bird dogs chewed him up. After the bull dog had all he could take, he jumped the fence and went back home to lick his wounds. The evangelist said I had to leave for a revival meeting and I was gone several weeks. When I came back, I asked my wife about the bull dog. Husband, I don't know what in the world, but I want you to know that at the same time every morning that bull dog came back and had it out with those setters. And I want you to know that the time has come when those two setters just looking at the bull dog, start whinnying and running into the basement. He jumps over the fence and just walks around, the Lord of every place he puts his foot on.

Now you just can't beat somebody that just stays with it. And that is what Jesus said, that he liked about this church at Ephesus - they stayed with it. They were persecuted, they were discouraged, chewed up, beaten down, cast out - but they endured everything.

V, 2, c - Third, they were sensitive to the presence of evil. And here is the way he states it. /They cannot bear or tolerate wicked people. They - did you know it is possible to get accustomed to it until you hardly know it. You think about the things about prohibition, the advertising of liquor. On bill boards and signs. People used to have to buy in the back alley from a n unrespectable person in the back alley. It wasn't legal. But you notice today on every corner - blinking lights with this poison stuff. And I admit, I used to be very sensitive about that, but you get to the place where you are so accustomed to seeing those signs that you hardly notice it anymore. And I think all of evil is like that. There are a small part in every congregation who would vote for liquor everytime. And they get so accustomed to it - and you accept it. But not so with this church at Ephesus. They were conscious and sensitive to evil. Thou canst not bear them which are evil.

V 2 D Fourth, they tested the doctrine. Jesus said that they or somebody came along and posed as an Apostle claiming to be a missionary of the Gospel. They knew how to test his teachings. They knew how to deal with those door-to-door people who had all sorts of literature. Jesus said that they found out that they were liars and they couldn't bear them. Now did you know that is just the opposite of what we do in our modern theological world. The more rank you may be, the more you challenge the doctrine of faith. You are well received as a great liberal man and a scholar who is interested in the advancement of Biblical knowledge. You let some fellow come along and deny every doctrine in the Bible, and there are some people who will love him and follow after him.

These people had not grown weary. There were no thoughts of giving up or giving over to the conflicts of evil. They had not wearied. This is such a picture of devotedness to Christ.

V. 4
III. Special Condemnation - V. 4

Now here is a wonderful church - but there is also something that Jesus disapproves of - he condemns them for. And this is the thing that I mentioned at the offset of the message. One thing - love isn't what it was at first. Now remember Jesus knew in clearness all of the facts. They had cooled off. They had left their first love. As the student wrote, the honeymoon was over. They did not possess the fervor that once filled their hearts as Christians, when they were first converted.

It is astonishing that one could find anything wrong with that church. But here is one with a penetrating eye, to look and to see. How tragic that he could find this in this church. Nevertheless, I have, he says. I have against thee this - the old abounding joy that overflowed with gladness - that enthusiasm has been halted. Your service has become mechanical. It has become routine. The old flame, the old fire has now turned to coldness. You do not have that interest - that spirit of love that you once had. To our amazement - practically all churches drift this way. We get icy, dead, dull in our routine. We get so cold.

Dr. A. J. Gordon, once in talking about the spiritual condition of a church in Boston, said, it looks like a corpse. The casket has been layed out, lined with satin and decorated with silver and an abundance of flowers. Many churches have died because of respectability. And every church should be warned of it's present day opportunity - that if it loses this love it may

and the Bible is read irregular, and we do not mind the carnal pleasure which we take part in.

IV. A Special Commission - V. 5

Here is a task, a charge, a correction that is needed and I call it the commission.

Now a Doctor comes in when a person is ill and he writes out a prescription. And it seems here that is what takes place. Our Saviour comes and he says I have a commission - I have a prescription. Two or three things here especially here we notice about the counsel he gives.

V. 5A ->

First, remember from whence thou art falling. Exercise your memory - bring your mind into activity. Look back. Relive the events of your life. Compare what you once were and what you now are.

2. Repent of your Past - Peter Denied - Repented

3. Return to do as you were at first - Reproduce;

How was it before today - how was it when you first started - when the Lord saved you from your sin. How precious was his word. Did you pay much attention to the Lord's Day and the church attendance - was it a joy? Did you enjoy singing the old hymns of the saints? Having fellowship with the Lord - was that free and easy?

4. Remove - Take lampstand from its place.

Has there been a change - are you conscious of indifference. Has something chilled your joy as a Christian. If you have been losing your first love - you know about it. We used to love sermons - people used to love prayer meeting - reading the Bible. Doing something for the Lord. But now we are just content - Jesus said, nevertheless. Christ loved the church and gave himself for it.

He died for his people.

Dispite his efforts, a few grow indifferent and worldly. He covets the church atmosphere with will warm and consecrate them.

A back-slidden member of Phillip Brook's church called at the study to request his name be dropped from the roll. Dr. Brook's reminded him that the steps he proposed were serious ones and appealed to him to reconsider. But the man was insistent. Just then a poorly clad youngster entered the study, bearing a note scribbled in lead pencil, on a soiled and crumbled paper. The minister read it. And addressed the caller. He said, my friend, this is an appeal from a poor sick woman, for a visit and help. I must go to a funeral in a few minutes. Would you be good enough to go along with this lad to this home and learn what this woman needs and supply her. Certainly Dr. Brooks, I will gladly do for her what she needs.

The boy led the way to a structure down a street, the street narrowed, and finally to an alley - the door was half open, held by one hinge. The room was unlighted. The man stepped into a little hut where there was a diseased and half blinded woman, began to speak. Oh, Dr. Brooks, I thought you would come. You are God's men. You always come to call when in trouble. I am sick and hungry but I want you first to pray for me - please pray.

The man had not prayed in years. What should he do. He hesitated - he sought to tell her who he was. And she pleaded, oh pray for me. His heart would not let him refuse any request, from a case like this.

He dropped on his knees. The first sentence was a petition for his poor back-slidden soul. The woman knew it was not Dr. Brooks. Who it was, she could not imagine. The ashes of indifference had blown from the altar of the prayer's heart. And the fire of devotion burned again. He be sought the throne for this

distressed woman and closed the prayer.

Addressing her, my dear woman, you have discovered that I am not Dr. Brooks. I am the most worthless Christian in Boston. Dr. Brooks is conducting a funeral and he sent me to help you.

Oh, how you have helped me. What do you need. She told him that anything would be appreciated. There was no food, fuel, or medicine. He asked the boy to accompany him and they went to the store. He filled the basket with fruit and dainties. Gave it to the boy for his mother. Ordered groceries, coal, and medicine and had it charged to himself. Then he hurried back to the Pastor's study. Soon Dr. Brooks came from the cemetery. The man stepped forward - his hand was extended, his eyes were tearful, his voice was mellow. Oh, Dr. Brooks, I don't want to be dropped from the roll. I am all right now Sir, I am all right now!

Oh, that that same experience could be repeated thousands of times in our churches. Perhaps there are some who are listening to me tonight who need this same experience. Back-slidders were reclaimed.

19:17 Third, and final - sinners were saved. They reached sinners. So mightily was the Gospel its both extensive and intensive. The stages of it's progress were - they were brought face to face with the super-natural and they magnified the name of Jesus. V. 17. The magicians were frightened by the fate of the exorcists and seeing the difference between the power of Jesus and his own futile ark, abandoned their magic. V. 19.

19:20 The whole city was brought under the power of the Gospel. To such an extent that it prevailed. V. 20. And men like Epaphras, Trophimus, were converted.

V. Special Compensation - V. 6-7

Now to refresh your memory - there was a special communication, commendation, condemnation, commission, and now compensation (or price). In this conclusion we see first they hate what Jesus hated - V. 6. He calls attention to their concern. That they were hating the things that he hated. Nicolaitanes - their works were decidedly evil in character. And of course, they were fleshless.

And the church would not accept them - they hated them. Temple - Marble 342' high

Theatre - largest at time 50,000 people - Goddess Diana 220 yrs old. This Temple
- live any way - Races, fights, Bithyn, Beethoven.

7 - Second, listen if you have ears - V. 7. He calls attention. The individual here is called to listen, and to harken to the word of God.

7 - Third, a promise of mercy. Here is a victory. Eat the tree of life. And this is now in the garden of God. They have gone through the trials - and he is promising them if they are faithful and victorious. If they will give attention to the one who is walking in their midst. They are to forget about man and think about God. They are to forget about their ease and think about the Gospel that quiets. They are to forget about their own happiness and think about self-denial. They are to think about the difference between truth and a lie. And they are to think about their laziness and their fidelity to their Lord. This is the greatest promise when he says the tree of life. Now here is a fellowship with life. That something - they are going to have everlasting life. And entrance into life. The Bible speaks of this wonderful symbol - the river of life, the tree of life, the bread of life, the water of life, the spirit of life.

And this is made to each separate member of the church - to him that overcometh.

Access to the tree of life is the paradise of God. This takes us back to the Genesis story. The purpose of the tree of life was to eliminate the mortality

of man of the body. Now here is a promise that the glorification of the body will be experienced by the Christian and he will receive that which is incorruptible. For Paul says that we know that if we shall be manifest, we shall be like him. After Adam's fall - he was expelled from the garden - lest he eat of this fruit and live forever in a body of sin. (Gen. 3:22.)

But now here Jesus talks that mercy is going to be established and of course there will be a way to the tree of life, which before had been prevented.
Gen. 3:24, 4-4, Heb. 11:4.

Flaming sword

Jesus makes a closing appeal for an urgent decision to be made immediately.

As an old man once who heard a sermon and an invitation once said - if that be true, I ought to respond myself.)

*Love's Last appeal - Hosea 14 - married Homer - 3 children - the not faithful - full victim to moral climate of her day - never felt
Hosea Prayed - & then his 1st love - grief & broke heart - Ever Slave Market Freedom He
" Recovered love side of it! (Wendell, Sailor)*

Simon Peter - matt 26:65 ff - trial of Jesus

*Samuel - servant girl - you were with Jesus the Galilean - Denied
I do not know that you mean -*

*on beach - A Maid - This fellow was with Jesus - Denied
I do not know this man -*

*Late - Bystander - you are one of them, your speech, your count
gives you away -*

*Peter Comenced Cursing, Swearing
I do not know this man -*

at once The Cock Crowed -

*Remembered Jesus words - "Before
I give you up three times"*

Christ side Went Bitterly

at Christ Jesus told Peter Put up your sword -

@ 1st love had crown cold -