

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).

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FOR THE RECORD

Sunday Bible Study	24
Sunday AM Worship	34
Sunday PM Worship	19
Wed. Bible Study	17
Offering	\$1515

How to Know that You Are Dying Spiritually

THE STORY OF THE CROSS
NO LONGER MOVES YOU

YOU HAVE LEFT YOUR
FIRST LOVE
Revelation 2:4

THE CHURCH
SERVICES BORE YOU
Romans 10:17

YOU HAVE NO INTEREST
IN SAVING SOULS
Proverbs 11:30

WORLDLY THINGS
ATTRACT YOU MORE THAN
SPIRITUAL THINGS
Romans 8:5-7



YOU ARE FOOLING
YOURSELF
1 Corinthians 3:18

BY FAILING TO DO
WHAT YOU KNOW YOU
SHOULD DO
James 1:22

FREQUENT ABSENCES AT
THE WORSHIP SERVICES
Hebrews 10:25

NO PARTICIPATION IN THE
WORK OF THE CHURCH
Romans 10:1-3

AWAKE FROM YOUR SLEEP
the church needs you



A Weekly Publication of the
West Jefferson Church of Christ
130 Robert Street
West Jefferson NC 28694
Phone: (336) 846-5615 | Email: info@wjchurchofchrist.org
Volume XIV September 5, 2021 Number 36

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Times of Services:

Sunday

Bible Study:... 10:00am
AM Worship...11:00am
PM Worship:...6:00pm
2nd Sunday:.....1:30pm

Wednesday

Bible Study:.....7:00pm

Radio Program

Sunday:.....7:30am
"Back to the Bible"
AM 580 WKSK
93.5 FM

**We Extend A
Warm & Cordial
Welcome
To All Our
Visitors!**

**"TO THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS"
REVELATION 2:1-7**

E. N. Melott

The church of Christ that met in Ephesus during the first century was among those churches known to us as the *seven churches of Asia*, found in Revelation chapters two and three. The adjective, seven, is used symbolically in the Book and is found some fifty-four times in Revelation alone. Though not as significant in modern speech and interpretation, numbers were very important to the ancients and carried much significance and deeply rooted meaning. The term "seven" refers to a state of completeness or perfection. The Hebrew term for seven was *sheba*, which, according to Vine, was akin to *saba*, signifying "to be full, abundant" (*Vine's*, 565). We should not conclude, therefore, that there were only seven churches in all of Asia Minor, but rather, these seven—Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea, represent a panoramic view of the Lord's church in the first century and perhaps in every century.

The city of Ephesus contained about 250,000 people and was considered to be among the wealthiest and most magnificent cities of its day. "Its citizens liked to call it 'the metropolis of Asia'" (John R. W. Stott, *What Christ Thinks of the Church*, 21). Its worldly greatness was derived from

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both commercial trade and false religion. Within its city limits stood the famous temple of Diana, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. On his third missionary journey, the peerless apostle Paul spent some three years in this great city, preaching both night and day (Acts 20:31). As a result of his efforts, Christ's church was established in this exceedingly immoral city. Demetrius, a silversmith, gave testimony of Paul's influence when he said: "Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands" (Acts 19:26).

Observing this church without the power to look into the hearts of its members would reveal a hard-working, zealous church that stood for the truth and hated error. However, a closer assessment by the Lord reveals a church that had left its first love (Rev. 2:4). Outwardly, its members labored with great patience and dedication. They bore not those who were evil and tested false apostles, finding them liars (Rev. 2:2; I John 4:1; I Thess. 5:21). According to the Lord, they had labored tirelessly for His name's sake (Rev. 2:3), even hating the deeds of the Nicolaitans (Rev. 2:6). A close examination of the text [Rev. 2:1-7] reveals "seven" admirable qualities, which represents completeness and fullness in the realm of Christian labors!

"Nevertheless," says the Lord, "I have this against you, that you have left your first love" (Rev. 2:4). Love, in this text, comes to us from the Greek word, "agape" which is used "especially of that love of Christians towards Christians which is enjoined and prompted by their religion" (Thayer's, 4). One has said, "This is the love of will. It casts aside emotions, likes and dislikes, and loves because of the worth of the object to be loved" (Jackson, *Bible Words and Theological Terms Made Easy*, 114). *Agape* is the love of God expressed to man (John 3:16). Their "first love" is somewhat veiled to us today, for it could have been one of a number of things. For example, some have opined that their first love was their love for Christ, evinced by burning their books of magic (Acts 19:19) or the love they had one for another as testified by the pen of the apostle: "Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints" (Eph. 1:15). Our Lord, in His great Olivet Discourse, spoke of the time when "the love of many will grow cold" (Matt. 24:12).

Our motives and the condition of our hearts are just as important as the deeds we do and the service we offer. Often it is the case that "What is in the well of our hearts will come up in the bucket of our speech and deeds" (Wendell Winkler). Our Lord stated, "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out

of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks" (Luke 6:45). Similarly, the wise man wrote, "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23).

Jesus exhorted this church to: "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" (Rev. 2:5). The principal purpose for a lampstand is to elevate the lamp (candle), so that it may more effectively disperse light. The Lord's church has for its chief duty the responsibility of upholding the Gospel (I Tim. 3:15), the light of God's Word (Psalm 119:105). Jesus is therefore warning this church of the possibility, if not penitent, of having their identity as the church of Christ taken away. This church, though working, could never properly influence others for good, without the love that it once had. "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" (Rev. 2:7).

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"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled. Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? if any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's. For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed" (II Corinthians 10:3-8).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Sept 5 – Men's Business Meeting & Ladies' Bible Class after Evening Worship
- Sept 12 – Preach-N-Eat & 1:30 Worship Service
- Sept 12-16 – Gospel Meeting with Eddy Craft
- Sept 26 – Prayer Service after Evening Worship
- Please give support money for Chinese orphans to Minnie Kennell