



OVERCOMERS

OVERCOMERS - PART 10

Last week we looked at putting the letter to the seven churches into context, now let's begin to unpack each church's letter. The first church is at Ephesus. Ephesus was a city of trade, business and economic commerce. The city was also known for the worship of the Greek goddess Artemis.

Let's look at the Scriptures.

Revelation 2:2-7 "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this: 'I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place— unless you repent. Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.'

The first important truth which we must take to heart, is in who is writing this letter to the Ephesians. Jesus Himself is making His people aware of their TRUE SPIRITUAL CONDITION.

The angel may be the one communicating it to John, but make no mistake, it is Jesus who is saying this.

If Jesus is taking the time to speak to you as a church, one would be doing their utmost best to ensure what He is saying becomes your number 1 priority and focus. To not would be fatal for you.

Jesus acknowledges what the Ephesians have done well and praises them for their deeds, toil and perseverance in identifying false apostles and dealing with them. He also praised them for not tolerating the deeds of the Nicolaitans.

The deeds of the Nicolaitans was all about putting a whole lot of religious expectations on people, which they could not carry or keep and lording these expectations over the people.

They very much taught one thing and lived another, very similar to Jewish religious leaders.

We then see in verse 4 these words ..."but I have this against you. You have left your first love."

I thought Jesus was for us and not against us. Isn't that what Romans 8:31 says? Yes, it does and God is



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certainly for us, in fact He is more for us than what many of us are even aware of, hence He makes the Ephesians aware of their true spiritual state before Him, by telling them they have left Him, their first love.

They haven't lost their first love but they left Him. You say how can someone leave Jesus? One can leave Jesus, just like one can leave a husband or wife.

One over time slowly disconnects from the love that first won them. The relationship over time becomes all very functional and our fellowship with God becomes stagnant and ceases.

He lets them know of their absolute need to repent from this position, so they can walk in oneness with Him again, and not miss out on their position in His kingdom.

He says if they don't repent He will remove the lamp stand from its place. He will remove this church from their place in the kingdom. As we know our justified position is not in question but our future reward/inheritance/role/position in the kingdom is.

We can forfeit God's eternal purpose and plan for us as His people, because we don't live our lives in absolute alignment to His design. This is what the Ephesians are doing.

They have left **Him**, for works **for** Him. I wonder how many of us have done this or are doing this right now. The works for Him become our greater priority and focus than our fellowship in and with Him. A fatal mistake.

Only those who overcome through their divine fellowship with Jesus will He grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.

Will this be you?
Will this be me?

What I do know is that it's not automatic, based on being justified. This reward is based on overcoming the world, the flesh and the adversary, proving yourself to be faithful and obedient to the Father's eternal covenant and purpose.

I pray this testimony will have us all asking some very serious questions in relation to our love for Him and if He is in fact first in every aspect of our lives.

Colossians 1:18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.



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QUESTIONS

1. Why is it important to take note of who is writing this letter to the Church at Ephesus?
2. Put yourself in the Ephesians shoes, what do you think their response would have been to reading this letter? What would your response be today if Jesus sent you the same letter?
3. What does it look like to leave your first love?
4. Why is it so detrimental to us to get caught up in works for Him instead of being captivated by Him?
5. Who or what would you say has first place in your heart and why?

ACTION POINT: If you aren't able to honestly say Jesus holds first place in everything, take some time to pray together and repent, ask Him to take first and only place in your heart.