



Today's Message

Date: October 13, 2013
Speaker: Pastor Steven Thomas
Title: ***Keeping Your First Love***

Text: Revelation 2:1–7 (ESV)

“To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: ‘The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands.

²“ ‘I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. ³ I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name’s sake, and you have not grown weary. ⁴ But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. ⁵ Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. ⁶ Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. ⁷ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.’

Introduction: Chapters two and three contain seven letters from Christ to churches in western Turkey. The letters all follow the same format. The heart of each one is Christ’s evaluation of the church, identifying its strengths and weaknesses. Next he offers counsel to help the church persevere. Churches in every generation exhibit the characteristics of the recipients of these letters and thus need Christ’s counsel.

I. Description of the Author: The glorified Christ cares for his church. 1

- A. Christ holds the church's leaders in his hand.
- B. Christ walks among his churches.

II. Evaluation of the church: Christ has intimate knowledge of the church's works. 2-4

- A. He knew the virtues of the church at Ephesus. 2-3
 - 1. They worked hard to protect the truth.
 - 2. They endured severe opposition.
- B. He knew the failures of the church at Ephesus: They lost their first love. 4

III. Counsel to the church: Christ calls the church to change. 5-6

- A. He outlined the path of change: Remember, repent, and return!
- B. He revealed the consequence of failure to change.
- C. He offered encouragement to pursue change.

IV. Promise to the church: Christ gives blessing to those who persevere. 7

- A. The blessing belongs to those who "hear."
- B. The blessing is life in the world to come.

Today's take-home truth: Perseverance is not just a matter of holding on to right doctrine and right practice; it also requires right affection.