



## Sermon Title: Where has Love Gone?

### Text: Revelations 2:1-7

*“We pray for a blessing. We pray for grace. We pray for mercy. We pray for wisdom. We pray for empowerment. We pray for strength. We pray for favor. We pray for anointing. We pray for everything—yet we neglect to pray simply for Him, to desire Him, and to love Him. Return to our First Love—our Savior, Jesus.”*

Imagine a church that has it all: world-class leadership, unwavering courage in the face of persecution, and a sharp ability to discern false teachings. On paper, the church at Ephesus was the gold standard of the New Testament. They were mentored by giants like Paul and Timothy, witnessed the raw, miraculous power of God, and purged their community of pagan sorcery through radical repentance. By all modern standards, Ephesus was a thriving success. They were the warriors and watchmen of the early Christian world. Yet, in Revelation 2, the resurrected Christ gives a harsh performance review that cuts through their impressive credentials. Despite their labor, endurance, and theological accuracy, Jesus delivers a stern warning:

***“You have abandoned the love you had at first.”*** (v.4)

The story of Ephesus serves as a haunting reflection for the modern believer. In an era where we have greater access to biblical resources, podcasts, and training than any previous generation, we encounter a subtle yet dangerous temptation: Truth without tenderness; Activity without intimacy; Programs without real power.

How does a church—or a heart—shift from the fire of “Enchantment” with Christ to the cold “Disenchantment” of routine?

In this study, we will analyze the Ephesus church's historical heights, the signs of a waning first love, and the roadmap Jesus provides for a return to authentic devotion.

## DON'T MISS WHAT CHRIST WILL SAY- WHAT HE SAYS MATTERS MOST

Before Jesus delivers His famous rebuke regarding “first love,” He establishes His identity. In v.1, He is described as the one who *“holds the seven stars and walks among the seven golden lampstands.”*

In the symbolic language of Revelation, designed to protect the church during Roman persecution, these images carry immense weight.

The Seven Stars: These represent the messengers or leaders of the churches. Being in His “right hand” signifies His direct authority, protection, and sovereign control.

The Seven Lampstands: These are the churches themselves. Christ is not a distant observer; He is actively “walking among” them, signifying His presence, inspection, and intimate care.

Today's believer often falls into a harmful trap: prioritizing the wrong voices. We tend to listen to the crowd's applause, success metrics, or our own inner justifications for spiritual coldness. We hide behind past spiritual experiences, current ministry successes, intellectual skills, and contributions. While it is easy to rationalize our actions, the most important thing is to focus on what Christ is saying at this moment. Do not be fooled by outward appearances or the steadiness of your past. The most important voice you must hear and respond to is the Word of Christ.

## DON'T BE FOOLED BY OUTWARD APPEARANCES OR STEADINESS OF THE HEART

It is dangerously simple to believe that a smoothly functioning spiritual machinery means our relationship with God is thriving. Nonetheless, Ephesus demonstrates that a church can be historically successful and doctrinally correct yet lacking genuine spirituality. On the surface, Ephesus appeared to be the ideal church, with proper rituals, leadership, and discernment. However, Jesus looked beyond their achievements and identified a critical flaw. We cannot use external activities—attending services, serving on teams, or defending doctrine—to justify our standing before God. As God reminded the prophet Samuel, *"Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart"* (1 Samuel 16:7).

We are often the worst judges of our own spiritual health. Jeremiah 17:9 warns that the heart is *deceitful above all things*. Only God truly understands the shift from devotion to duty. Doctrine and works are important, but without love for Jesus, they are just empty formalism. We may pray for many things yet often neglect to pray simply for Him. Outward religious acts can impress others, but God seeks genuine inward devotion. Do not let your good works mask a cold heart.


## DON'T MISS THE INVITATION OF JESUS CHRIST


Jesus does not just point out the problem; He provides the cure. In v.5, He offers a roadmap for restoration through the **3 Rs**.


1. **Remember:** Jesus urges us to recall our "devotion of your youth" (Jeremiah 2:2).

- Recall the zeal: Remember when prayer was a joyful conversation, not a chore.

- Recall the joy: Serving, tithing, and sharing the Gospel came from love, not obligation.
  - Identify the gap: Acknowledge how far you have drifted to rekindle the fire.
2. **Repent:** Repentance means more than guilt; it is a change of direction.
- Beyond Remorse: Come to God in brokenness, seeking restoration.
  - Small distractions, not one big sin, diminish love for Jesus (Song of Solomon 2:15).
  - Action: Turn from distractions and seek His presence.
3. **Return:** Jesus asks us to "do the works you did at first."
- Simplicity over Production: Remove layers of performance to find the true Heart of Worship.
  - Focus on the Person: Return to sincere devotion, where Jesus— not music, program, or position is central.

 **Ponder:** Rightness is not Relationship. You can have perfect doctrine and a failing heart. Jesus does not want your resume; He wants your affection.

 **Practical Application:** This week, swap one religious routine for a "First Love" action. If your prayer life has become a checklist, stop the "performance" and spend 10 minutes in silent, undivided conversation with Him. Return to the simplicity of the beginning.

 **Prayer:** Lord, forgive me for exchanging intimacy with You for constant activity. I am weary of just "doing" without truly "being" with You. Spot the small distractions that have drawn my focus away and rekindle the initial passion I felt. It is all about You, Jesus. Amen.