**Revelation 2:1-7**

Overview of the Seven Messages (Ch. 2-3)

I. Jesus is speaking to 7 actual churches in Asia Minor, but in choosing 7, he is also speaking to the complete church (7 is a number of completeness)

II. Jesus speaks to the angel of the churches

A. Apparently, God had assigned guardian angels over nations and people groups

B. But clearly the message is meant for the people in the churches

III. Jesus follows a similar pattern in each message

A. Reminds them of who he is (using a description of himself drawn from chapter 1)

B. Speaks into their specific situation

1. Affirms them

2. Corrects them

C. Reminds them of the blessing that waits for those who overcome (drawn from the description of eternal life in chapters 21-22)

IV. Notice how many problems these churches have

A. It is tempting to romanticize the early church, but the church has always had problems from its very beginning

B. The perfect, glorious Lord is present with his imperfect, ordinary church

The Passage

I. Jesus reminds them of who he is (v. 1)

A. The 7 stars in his right hand

= He has them in his hands, in his control

B. In the midst of the lampstands

= The priests in the temple were responsible for the care and maintenance of the lampstands so that they stayed lit (refill the oil, trim the wicks, etc.). Likewise, Jesus is the priest responsible for the health of the churches so that they can continue to be a witness in the world (he cares for them through affirmation and correction)

II. Jesus affirms them (v. 2-3)

A. “work” = they are laboring faithfully for him

B. Purity of doctrine and lifestyle

1. Purity of doctrine (v. 2b). They have exposed these supposed “apostles” as the false teachers they are

2. Purity of life (v. 6). They hate the practices of the Nicolaitans who permitted idolatry and sexual immorality

C. “endurance”

They persevered through the suffering and persecution brought on by their commitment to purity

III. Jesus corrects them (v. 4-5)

A. You’ve lost your first love (v. 4)

1. First love is a love of affection, intimacy, joy, and passion

2. We know what first love is like in human relationships

= a desire to just be together, a willingness to sacrifice to be together, creativity, pursuit of each other, affection, etc.

3. Can you remember your first love with Jesus? Or can you remember seasons in your life of a closeness and passion for Jesus?

4. We know what it’s like to lose that first love in marriage

= life responsibilities take over and you lose that passion and active pursuit of each other

5. We know what it’s like to lose that first love with Jesus

-You don’t set out to lose that first love, it just happens

6. 2 Corinthians 11:2-3: a pure and simple devotion to Christ

7. Luke 10:38-42: Martha and Mary

B. What he calls them to do (v. 5)

1. Remember: they’re called to remember those times of affection and intimacy

2. Repent: they’re called to recognize they’ve lost that love and make changes to regain it

3. Do the things you did at first

a. Not “feel the things you felt at first.” He doesn’t call them muster up some emotions, but rather to do the things they did at first.

b. As with marriage, you can’t just fall in love again by trying to feel in love, but you can go back to the actions that fostered your love in the beginning.

Conclusion

I. Notice what we learn about Jesus

A. He is not just a king who wants obedient subjects, he is a groom who wants a close relationship with his bride

B. His first miracle was performed at a wedding reception, and Revelation ends with the wedding supper of the Lamb

II. Notice what we learn about ourselves

A. We are not just created for our usefulness, productivity, or service but for a close relationship with our creator.

B. We will find our deepest fulfilment in the simplicity of that relationship

**Discussion Questions**

1. Consider the statement made on Sunday: Jesus is not just a king who wants obedient subjects, he is a groom who wants a close relationship with his bride. How does that statement square with your own relationship with Jesus at this time?

2. Jesus calls the Ephesian church to “remember” that first love (v. 5). When you consider your first love with Jesus, what season in your life comes to mind? Describe a bit of your experience at that time.

3. Jesus calls the Ephesian church to “do the things you did at first” (v. 5). What comes to mind for yourself when you consider doing what you did at first? What is one specific thing you want to do to pursue your relationship and enjoyment of Jesus in the next week or so?

4. Husbands and wives, is there anything specific you want to do to pursue your relationship more intentionally in the coming weeks?