

The Church At Ephesus

Series – God’s Score Card

- Image of Bride and Bridegroom
- Letters to Churches – given by Jesus, meant to warn, prepare, make aware
- 2 of 7 – commendation only
- 1 of 7 – condemnation only
- 4 of 7 – mixed reviews
- series that will give us challenge, hope, focus – allow us to use the spiritual gifts to build the brides qualities

The Church At Ephesus

1. Glimpse of the Setting

- Ephesus strategically located
 - port city, 3 trade routes converge, 250000 people, import export center
- Temple of Artemis (Diana in Latin) Fertility goddess
 - immorality celebrated – massive temple & following
 - 425 ft. long, 220 ft. wide, 60 ft. high – wonder of day
- Paul spends at least 2 years here – Acts 19:8
- Timothy pastors here – 1 Tim 1:3-5
- John spends time with them

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"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands: I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices 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 give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God. Revelation 2:1-7

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2. Great Marks on the Score Card

- nice to hear what you are doing well, appreciated

a) Deeds

- picture of Jesus among lamp stands – aware

* Hard Work – not lazy or uninvolved

- called to be participating, go into....., active

- note it is intentional – belief has action

*Perseverance – not giving up in the face of opposition

- stay at the job – finishing well

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b) Committed to the Truth

- warned about false teachers, wolves

 - Matt. 7:15, Acts 20:29

- challenged to test doctrine & advice

 - 1 Thess. 5:21, 1 Cor. 14:29, 1 John 4:1

- * Cannot tolerate wicked men

 - itinerant teachers & preachers, those looking to advance self, taking advantage of body

- * Tested & Found False

 - come through and claim apostolic authority, desire to teach & influence

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- Three Known Groups

- Judaizers from Jerusalem – 2 Cor. 11:13-23

- Nicolaitans – vs.6, 15, 20-21

- self styled apostles

- Note how difficult that confrontation is – finding false, refuting and removing – quality God looks for.

c) Servants Hearts

- * Persevered

- * Endured Hardship for My Name

- * Not Grown Weary

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d) For Standing Against My Enemies

- Nicolaitians – known for eating food sacrificed to idols and sexual immorality – under the guise spiritual liberty

- worked out a compromise with pagan society where they lived and worked

- those who would lead astray the body – invite participation in things that defile, claim freedom - actions hated by God and if our heart matches his – us!

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3. Things You Are Doing Wrong!

a) Forsaken Your 1st Love

- flowers for your wife
 - new love – foolish abandon
 - good works and strong doctrine – not enough
 - not substitute for Heart – Love for God & others
 - John 13:35 – mark of disciples is their love
 - Jeremiah 2:2 -
- *forsaken – turned from, not looked after, ignored

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b) Remember the Heights

- when the gospel 1st came alive
- when you experienced God's wonder in midst
- when God revealed himself – repentance & renewal
- praising with abandon
- giving with freedom & desire
- spending time in the presence of God
- joyful hearts for encouragement & challenge

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c) Return to That Place

- * Repent
- * Do The Right Things
- * Rediscover our Love
- * Renew that with Others

d) This Has Grave Consequences

- removal of the lampstand from it's place
- no longer in the presence of Jesus

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4. Pay Attention

- words that should cause us to pause & focus
 - * If You Have an Ear – Hear the Spirit
 - difference between listening & hearing
 - hearing the message brings response
 - response will bring blessing – now and then

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So What

1. Qualities of the Bride Commended:

- deeds – hard work & perseverance
- dedication to truth – testing, taking a stand, diligent
- devotion – enduring hardship, not growing weary, perseverance
- hatred of those abusing the Body – leading others into sin & consequence, justifying behavior with worldly wisdom.

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2. Qualities of the Bride Condemned

- Forsaken your 1st Love
- Forgetting the Past

3. Correcting Actions

- Hear
- Repent
- Return

4. See the Promise – now & then