



Ephesus – “Rekindle your First Love” – Rev 2:1-7

Christ wants a church that is consumed by a **first love** for Christ that motivates faithful service and infiltrates everything it does.

Characteristic of Christ (1):

The one who has power and authority over the church and sees every aspect of His church

Commendation (2-3, 6):

- Diligent and hardworking
- Knowledgeable with a love for moral purity and doctrine.
- Solid and grounded.

Criticism (4):

- Abandoned first love
- They were the church with everything except the greatest thing!
- Their loss of love for Christ probably affected their love for each other as well.

Command/Correction (5):

Remember what first love was like, Repent, Re-do your actions – or else Removed

Evaluate: You might be a member at Ephesus if . . .

- You feel like you are going through the motions of Christianity
- You are stagnant in your walk
- You are serving out of duty rather than a passion for Christ
- You are more concerned about correcting others than enjoying Christ

**Rekindle and be consumed by your first love for Christ
that becomes your motivation for all you do.**

Smyrna – “Fearless Faithfulness” – Rev 2:8-11

Christ wants a church that remains completely **faithful** to Him even in the face of trials, ridicule, and persecution.

Characteristic of Christ (8):

The one who alone is sovereign over all (first and the last) and understands persecution (died and came to life)

Commendation (9):

- I know what you are going through: your tribulation, poverty, and slander
- You are enduring through tribulation

Criticism:

- None

Command/Correction (10):

Do not fear - Be faithful even through the most extreme difficulties because God knows

Evaluate: You might be a member at Smyrna if . . .

- You feel attacked because you have stood for Christ and biblical values
- It seems like life keeps hitting you hard and you wonder if God is still at work at times
- You are passed over for promotions or lose opportunities because of your faith
- You are tired of the fight and feel like giving up

Overcome your fear of trials or ridicule and stay faithful to our Eternal God who knows and understands what you are going through.

Pergamum – “Standing, Slipping, and Rationalizing” – Rev 2:12-17

Christ wants a church that will **guard against false teaching** as they boldly stand for Him without compromise.

Characteristic of Christ (12):

The one who has ultimate power, judgment, and discernment (sharp two-edged sword)

Commendation (13):

- They did not deny Christ or their faith even in the face of death
- They stood for Christ!

Criticism (14-15):

- Some were accommodating a sinful culture
- Allowing false doctrine to coexist
- Rationalizing compromise

Command/Correction (16):

Deal with it or I will!

Guarding against the beginning of compromise . . .

- Are there areas where you have allowed compromise or voices of compromise in your life?
- Can you publically acknowledge your faith and stand for Christ?
- Do you know doctrine well enough to smell a false teaching?
- Have you grown comfortable with this world?
- What are your friends like? Do they struggle with worldliness?

Stand firm for Christ’s truth without a hint of compromise

Thyatira – “Into the Ravine” – Rev 2:18-29

Christ wants a church that will **not tolerate compromise and immorality** so that it can do His work

Characteristic of Christ (18):

The one who is the Divine, all-seeing judge

Commendation (19):

- The core was growing in God’s work
- They had a love for God and each other
- Knowledge of and trust in God

Criticism (20):

- They have not only allowed compromise, but they have embraced it
- Accommodation leads to acceptance which leads to participation
- Participating in sexual immorality and idol worship

Command/Correction (21-25):

God will purify His church even through extreme means.

- Tremble at His response to compromise
- Be open to correction
- Never give up vigilance

Questions from Thyatira

- Am I showing love to God and others?
- Am I committed to knowing what I believe?
- Is serving God important enough to me to give up personal desires?
- Are there areas in my life where I have hidden or unconfessed sin?
- Can Jesus or someone I respect join me in everything I do?
- Do my entertainment choices pass the Appalled or Accommodating test?
- Does everything I do bring glory to God?

Do not be disqualified from service because of compromise and immorality

Sardis – “Where Are You?” – Rev 3:1-6

Christ wants a church that **wakes up** to sin in their own lives and repents, not relying on external appearances for life. He wants a **holy** church!

Characteristic of Christ (1):

The one who gives the Holy Spirit and is over the leadership of the church

Commendation:

- none

Criticism (1b):

- You have a reputation of life, but you are dead

Command/Correction (2-4):

Wake up, strengthen, remember, obey, repent

Questions from Sardis . . .

- Does my spiritual walk in private match what is visible?
- Am I genuine or faking my Christianity?
- Have I actively and with no reservation asked God to reveal sin in my life?
- Am I willing to repent, or do I get defensive?
- Is my Christianity limited to Sunday morning from 9:30 to 12?

Ask God to reveal sin and blind spots so that we can finish the work He has planned for us

Philadelphia – “Don’t Give Up, God Has it Covered” – Rev 3:7-13

Christ wants a church that **sees** His work and **does** it no matter the obstacles

Characteristic of Christ (7):

The one who is holy and true and has final, kingly authority

Commendation (8):

- They faithfully obeyed and stood up for Christ

Criticism:

- None

Command/Correction (9-11):

Don’t give up; hold fast

Lessons from Philadelphia . . .

- Remember that Christ is God and is reliable and unstoppable
- No ministry is insignificant or ineffective when God is behind it and we faithfully follow Him
- God wants us to step out in faith and try God-sized ministry opportunities
- Don’t get discouraged, God provides the victory for the faithful
- Don’t worry, God gives protection and strength to the faithful
- God reassures the faithful with his secure and unending presence
- What would you attempt for an all-knowing, all-powerful, always present God?

Be faithful to try great things for God knowing that He is unstoppable and faithful

Laodicea – “When To Be Needy” – Rev 3:14-22

Christ wants a church that **relies** on Him and needs Him in **every** part of life

Characteristic of Christ (14):

The one who is truth, a faithful witness, and the source and ruler of creation

Commendation:

- None

Criticism (15-17):

- Their self-sufficiency and apathy makes them disgusting to Christ
- Self-sufficiency destroys usefulness
- To be unaware of our need for Christ in everything we do is arrogant, self-sufficiency

Command/Correction (18-20):

Rely on Christ . . . For everything! Need Christ

- Stop trusting in self, rely on Christ
- Accept correction
- Include Christ in the ordinary

Danger signs of self-sufficiency . . .

- Going through a day without asking God for help and wisdom in the situations we face.
- A weak prayer life.
- Spending more of our time thinking about money, things, savings, etc. than we do on how we can serve Christ.
- When we haven't confessed sin yet today.
- Difficulty seeing our own faults or admitting to them. Defensive when confronted.
- A critical spirit – When our first thoughts are focused on the faults and problems in either the character of others or the work of others. Root attitude: “We have it together, our way is best” instead of realizing our own need for Christ.
- An unforgiving Spirit – we haven't seen the depth of our own sin and our absolute neediness before God and haven't experienced the beauty of His grace.
- Over-assertiveness – Feeling like we know the whole situation and have the answer and wisdom that needs to be shared. (lack of humility)
- Difficulty trusting others and letting someone help us.

God wants me to depend on Him for everything and in everything I do with no exceptions

Baptism: Forgotten Obedience Communion: Sacred Remembrance

Christ wants a church that **remembers** and **proclaims** Him

- Matt 28:18-20 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
- Acts 2:41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.
- Rom 6:3-4 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.
- I Cor 11:23-33 For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. ²⁷ Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹ For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. ³⁰ That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. ³¹ But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. ³² But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world. ³³ So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another—
- I Cor 10:16-17 The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? ¹⁷ Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

10 Marks of a Godly Church

Christ wants a church that . . .

1. Loves God above all else resulting in an active love for each other
2. Puts a priority on faithful ministry
3. Knows God’s Word, holding to sound doctrine and confronting false teaching
4. Boldly and publicly stands for God and trusts Him through difficulties
5. Stands for God’s truth without compromise in a sinful culture
6. Stands against immorality and guards against worldliness
7. Is holy, asking God to reveal their own sin with willing repentance
8. By faith, attempts great things for a great God as He leads
9. Intentionally relies on God for everything
10. Remembers and proclaims the Gospel through baptism and the Lord’s Supper

Christ wants a loving, serving, Bible knowing, faithfully enduring, trusting, not compromising, sin defeating, holy, repenting, stepping out in faith, Christ relying, Christ remembering church!