

REVELATION

A LETTER TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

Session 1: Church of Ephesus - “Abandoned Love”

Ice Breaker (optional)

If you could instantly become an expert at one hobby or skill — no practice required — what would you choose and why?

Sermon Summary

In Revelation 2:1-7, Jesus gives the church in Ephesus a spiritual evaluation, affirming their hard work, perseverance, and strong commitment to truth. They were a theologically sound and morally courageous church in a deeply corrupt culture, and Jesus clearly saw their faithfulness. Yet despite all their strengths, something essential was missing — they had drifted from their first love. Their service for Christ had slowly replaced intimacy with Christ. Jesus lovingly confronts them and calls them to remember where they started, repent of their drift, and return to the practices that once fueled their love for Him. This passage reminds us that Jesus cares not only about what we do, but about the condition of our hearts. He corrects, but He does not cancel — He always provides a path back to closeness with Him.

Group Objective

Tonight we’re focusing on heart-level faith, not just outward activity. The goal isn’t guilt, but awareness — asking Jesus to show us where love may have cooled and how we can return to a vibrant relationship with Him. Be honest, be humble, and encourage one another as you discuss.

Study Questions

1. Jesus begins by reminding Ephesus that He is present and walking among His churches (Read Rev. 2:1). How does remembering that Jesus is near and attentive change the way we live and serve? Does the thought of Jesus being attentive scare you, intimidate you or encourage you?

Further Scripture: Matthew 28:20; Psalm 139:7–10; Hebrews 4:13

2. The Ephesian church was commended for hard work, perseverance, and discernment (Read Rev. 2:2–3). Which of these strengths do you see in your own life right now? Which one do you want to grow in?

Further Scripture: Galatians 6:9; James 1:12; Philippians 1:9–10

3. Jesus commends the Ephesian church for rejecting false teachers and hating corrupt practices (Read Rev. 2:2c, 6). What does healthy spiritual discernment look like today, and how can we stand firmly against false teaching without becoming harsh, cynical, or unloving people?

Further Scripture: Acts 20:28–31; Romans 16:17–18; 1 John 4:1; Jude 3–4; Ephesians 4:14–15

4. Jesus says, “You don’t love me or each other as you did at first!” (Read Rev. 2:4). What are some subtle signs that a person can be doing the right things spiritually while their love for Jesus and others is cooling?

Further Scripture: Matthew 22:37–38; 1 Corinthians 13:1–3; Jeremiah 2:2

5. Jesus gives a clear path back: Remember, Repent, Return (Read Rev. 2:5). Which of those three steps feels most needed in your life right now, and what could that look like practically this week?

Further Scripture: Psalm 51:10–12; Luke 15:17–20; James 4:8

6. Jesus warns that a church can continue functioning outwardly yet lose His active presence (Read Rev. 2:5b). Why is it possible to maintain religious activity without spiritual intimacy? How do we guard against that?

Further Scripture: John 15:4–6; Isaiah 29:13; 2 Timothy 3:5

7. Jesus promises eternal life and restored fellowship to those who overcome (Read Rev. 2:7). How does keeping eternity in view help us stay spiritually warm and faithful today?

Further Scripture: Colossians 3:1–2; 2 Corinthians 4:16–18; Revelation 21:3–4

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, we thank You for loving Your church enough to speak truth to us. Thank You that You see our faithfulness, our effort, and our desire to follow You — and that You also gently show us where our hearts need renewal. Help us not just to do things for You, but to walk closely with You, keeping our love for You fresh and alive. Holy Spirit, stir in us a deep affection for Christ again. Show us where we need to remember, repent, and return, and give us the courage to take real steps this week toward greater intimacy with You. Protect our hearts, guard our church in truth and love, and make us people who reflect Jesus in both conviction and compassion. In Jesus’ name, amen.