

MAINTAIN YOUR FIRST LOVE

*“And though I have the gift of prophecy,
and understand all mysteries and all knowledge,
and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains,
but have not love, I am nothing.”*

1 Corinthians 13:2, NKJV

Jesus gave one of His harshest rebuke to the church in Ephesus (**Rev 2:1-7**). In the beginning, Jesus gave commendation for the work/service of the church and for their patience in laboring for His name’s sake, and they had not become weary. Nevertheless, Jesus rebuked them because they had left their first love to God (**Rev 2:4**). Why did Jesus have to rebuke them? Is first love very important to Jesus; more than the work/service that the church has done tirelessly?

Love becomes very important to Jesus because it speaks of the Lord Himself. When a person is said to have “left his first love,” it is not just about an emotional feeling, but it has a profound meaning; that the person has distanced himself from the Lord Jesus.

1 John 4:8 says, “He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.” High activity in doing the work/service for God and His church should be founded on the love for Christ; not

founded on the identity of our church, and not because it gives us a pleasant feeling, nor to seek commendation and acknowledgment from others. Our primary motive in working and serving the Lord should be because the Lord Jesus loves us and we love the Lord Jesus. When we lose this focus and foundational motivation, then sooner or later we will distance ourselves from God and eventually focus on our own selves.

In the life of the church in Ephesus, Jesus showed His authority as a spirit-giver and a gift-giver (**Rev 2:1**). He is the one who equipped the church with the strength and the spiritual gift needed to work on this earth. However, it amounts to nothing if the church does that without founding it on the love for God. The same message is also spoken by the Apostle Paul in **1 Corinthians 13:1-4**, that without love, all the work/service that we do in the name of God and His church and all of the gifts that we receive from Him will

be useless. The Lord Jesus reminds us not to forget that the primary reason for us to serve Him is because He has first loved us.

Love becomes so important to God because it also speaks of how we live with His other children. The lives of God’s children must be founded on His love for us. The same love that we receive from God is now put into practice towards the fellow believers. Leaving the first love is a horrible thing for every believer, because without the first love, the relationship will be shallow and conditional. This is something that the Lord despises. In **1 John 4:19-21**, the Apostle John said, “We love Him because He first loved us. If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.” The Scripture speaks straightforwardly, that we cannot claim that we love God and yet hate our brethren and vice versa.

How can we maintain our first love, and even deepen our love for God and for others?

1. Repent

Examine our heart, what is the motivation behind our work/service? Who do we do it for and why do we do it? (**Revelation 2:5**)

2. Live in the Fullness of the Holy Spirit

We cannot live without the Holy Spirit because He is the one who leads us into repentance, He is the one who gives us the ability to serve Him and His church, and He is also the one who makes our spirit burn and speaks to us from time to time (**Revelation 2:1, 5, 7**)

3. Don’t take the grace of God lightly

One of the teachings of Nicolaus is taking the grace of God lightly by thinking that everything we do in life will not affect our relationship with God (Rev 2:6). Instead, we must appreciate the grace of God by living in accordance to His will.

4. Be an Overcomer

Lord Jesus has saved us and made us more than a conqueror. If we walked our lives by leaning upon our strength, we would not be an overcomer (**Rev 2:7**).

5. Always Remember what the Lord has Given and Done for us

We, who supposed to perish forever, by the grace of God and His forgiveness are now waiting for the eternal life with Him forever (**Revelation 2:5**)

Always remember your first love to God and continue to live in Him until the Lord Jesus comes again for the second time. Amen (CS)