

# **When Jesus Comes To Church**

**2) Don't Leave Your First Love**

**Ephesus had two epistles from two authors.  
Paul wrote to the *saints* and John to the  
messenger. The Greek word for angel is *aggelos*,  
from *aggello*, meaning to tell or announce**

***'To the angel of the church of Ephesus write,  
"These things says He who holds the seven stars  
in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the  
seven golden lampstands: I know your works,  
your labor, your patience and that you  
cannot bear those who are evil. And you have  
tested those who say they are apostles and are  
not, and have found them liars; and you have  
persevered and have patience, and have labored  
for My name's sake and have not become weary"'***

**(Rev.2:1-3)**

## They were commended for:

- ✓ Their works
- ✓ Their labor
- ✓ Their patience in suffering
- ✓ Their doctrinal soundness. They tested those who said they were apostles and were not. *'For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears' (Acts 20:29-31)*
- ✓ *'But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate' (Rev.2:6)*  
*nikao = to conquer; laos = the people*

**Obviously they weren't backslidden, apathetic or devoid of good works. So what was the problem?**

***'Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love'***

**(Rev.2:4)**

**The word 'left' *aphiemi* is a strong word in the Greek meaning to leave alone, to depart from or forsake (see Mk.1:18; Jn.4:28)**

**The word for first is *protos*, meaning first in order, foremost in time, as in the beginning, etc.**

**The same word is used in the next verse,  
*'Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works'*  
(Rev.2:5)**

**This is the key**

**The problem is not that they stopped doing works, but their motive for doing them had changed**

- **What characterized our first works?**
- **They were purely a response to the love of God we had just discovered. *'In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another... We love Him because He first loved us'* (1 Jn.4:9-11,19)**
- **We love, not in order to get God to love us but because of His love to us**
- **They had fallen into the trap of mercenary love. Giving to get, loving to be loved**

- ✓ **First love is the fruit of the revelation of His love to us.** *'...that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height — to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God'* **(Eph.3:17-19)**
- ✓ **When the Bible speaks about the root of love, it is His love to us.** *'As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith...'* **(Col.2:6-7)**



- ✓ *'But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles'* (Matt.13:20-21)



- **When the Bible speaks about the root of love, it is His love to us. Example. Peter and John.**
- **Peter has a lot to say in John 13. John only has one thing to say and that is because Peter asked him to say it! But John refers to himself as 'the disciple whom Jesus loved.'**
- **He knew He was loved. Peter didn't. Peter built his relationship with Jesus on the fruit of his love to Jesus, not the root of Jesus' love to him. John remained at the cross – Peter didn't**
- **John knew he was loved, Peter thought he had to perform to be loved. He was building on a wrong foundation. A crash was inevitable. Jesus foretold his denial**
- **Jesus allowed his house to fall so that he could rebuild it on a firm foundation**

- ✓ **We leave the foundation of grace whenever we seek to build on the strength of our love and works.** *'For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them'* **(Eph.2:8-10)**

**When we do this we turn Christianity into religion and our works become a means to an end, i.e. mercenary works**

**\*Authentic Christianity is where faith works through love.** *'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God'* (Rom.12:1-2)

**\*A servant says, 'I serve my master.' A bondservant says, 'I love my master.' He serves because he loves**

**\*Throughout the NT, the word *bondservant* is applied to someone absolutely devoted to Jesus because of love**

**\*Paul, Timothy, James, Peter, and Jude all describe themselves as 'bondservants of Christ'**

- ✓ *'Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent'* (Rev.2:5)

**Remember** – a present active verb; to keep on remembering. To be mindful or, and ever fix the mind upon. 'It is profitable to all Christians to be often calling to mind the very beginnings of grace' (John Bunyan, in Grace Abounding)

**Repent** – to change one's mind. 'I'm coming back to the heart of worship...' They didn't lose their first love; they left it

**Do** – Grace doesn't stop us doing...it just corrects our motive for doing so