

Changing the Way You Think

“If You Love Me, You Will Keep My Commandments”

2 Timothy 4:1-5

I solemnly urge you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who will someday judge the living and the dead when he comes to set up his Kingdom: ²Preach the word of God. Be prepared, **whether the time is favorable or not**. Patiently **correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with good teaching**. ³For a **time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear**. ⁴They will **reject the truth and chase after myths**. ⁵But you should keep a clear mind in every situation. Don't be afraid of suffering for the Lord. Work at telling others the Good News, and fully carry out the ministry God has given you.

Having Ears to Hear What the Spirit is Saying to the Church

1. Examine the Genuineness of Our Love for Christ
2. Consider the Influence and Pressures of Cultural Values and Morals of this World and How They May Have Blinded Us from Truth
3. Search Our Hearts and See if We Have Made a Place for Sin & Self to Thrive
4. Take Inventory of Our Commitment to Following Jesus, Carrying Our Cross Behind Him

Revelation 2:1-7

“To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this:

²I know your deeds and your labor and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil people, and you have put those who call themselves apostles to the test, and they are not, and you found them *to be false*; ³and you have perseverance and have endured on account of My name, and have not become weary. ⁴But I have **this against you, that you have left your first love**. ⁵Therefore, **remember from where you have fallen, and repent, and do the deeds you did at first**; or else I am coming to you and I will remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. ⁶But you have this, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. ⁷The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who overcomes, I will grant to eat from the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.’

“You Have Left Your First Love”

- Many ways we could attempt to unpack what Jesus means

Jeremiah 2:1-2

The Lord gave me another message. He said, ²“Go and shout this message to Jerusalem. This is what the Lord says: **“I remember how eager you were to please me as a young bride long ago, how you loved me and followed me even through the barren wilderness.**”

“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments” (John 14:15)

John 14:15-18, 21, 23-26

¹⁵ “If you love me, obey my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. ¹⁷ He is the **Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth**. The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you... ²¹ **Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me**. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them.”

“**All who love me will do what I say**. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them. ²⁴ Anyone who doesn’t love me will not obey me. And remember, my words are not my own. What I am telling you is from the Father who sent me. ²⁵ I am telling you these things now while I am still with you. ²⁶ **But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.**”

- **3 Times Jesus Relates Defines Our Love for Him As Our Obedience to His Teachings**
- **He Also Validates the Coming Teachings of the Holy Spirit As His Official Representative**
 - Who Will Lead His Disciples into “All Truth”
 - These Disciples Record These Truths in the New Testament

What I fear as a Pastor, and what I have feared for many years now, is the constant, unrelenting, desensitizing hum of culture that is slowly eroding the confidence of Modern’s Christians’ faith in the Word of God.

I passed out a survey several months ago regarding some of the essential traits of an authentic disciple of Jesus. The answer options included Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree.

- *I believe the Bible is full of wisdom and good advice, but it is outdated in some of its moral standards and restrictions.*
 - **15% Agreed with this statement**

³ **For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear.** ⁴ **They will reject the truth and chase after myths.** ⁵ **But you should keep a clear mind in every situation. Don’t be afraid of suffering for the Lord. Work at telling others the Good News, and fully carry out the ministry God has given you.**

Lampstands

- **1:20** (The Churches) **2:5** “I will remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.”
 - Lampstands were symbolic of spiritual light shining out to a spiritually dark world.
 - Churches are Mission Posts -- examples of faithful lives, Single-Mindedly Following Jesus
 - Even through a “barren wilderness”

The Authority of Scripture (the Teachings of Jesus and His Representative, the Holy Spirit)