



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Revelation 2: 1-7

Fall 2025

"Cold Orthodoxy"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you, Joe. Thank you for those stories...I loved the story about Chuck.

[Laughter]

But the 'Agape Story' is very good too, because it's the message of our text this morning, which is Revelation chapter 2, verses 1 through 7,

2 "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:

² 'I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them *to be* false; ³ and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary. ⁴ But I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love. ⁵ Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent. ⁶ Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. ⁷ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the

churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.'

Revelation 2: 1-7

May the LORD bless this reading of His Word, and bless our time of study in it together. Let's bow together in a word of prayer.

What a privilege it is, LORD, to bow together as Your church in a word of prayer... What a thought that is!

It becomes routine, [I think so often here perhaps, but probably many places], to begin with prayer, and we do that. But if we stop and think, 'What are we doing?'... Well, we are entering into the very throne room of God! We are before You, and You are hearing us, the God of the Universe! What a thought...the Almighty God, who hears and who answers.

And so we thank You, Father, that we have this great privilege in Christ to come and enter into Your presence as righteous saints, with the righteousness of Christ that's been imputed to us through faith alone—and we thank You for that.

And we pray, LORD, for ourselves, that You would bless us. Give us 'ears to hear', and may we see the importance of all that is written in this letter, to this first church of the seven, and see the good things that they did—but see where their failure may be a reflection of our own; bring conviction, bring encouragement. So we look to You to bless us, LORD, spiritually in this hour.

And we pray for ourselves materially, LORD; there are people who are away and traveling—and we pray, LORD, for the friends and family of Bob Campbell. What a privilege it is to have known him, and to have participated in his service yesterday. It's never easy to say goodbye to a friend...and so, when we do, when one of our members dies, we grieve. But, as Paul told the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 4, (vs13), we do not, "grieve as do the rest who have no hope."

We have hope. We of all people, we only, of the people of this world, have hope...and it's in Christ. And we thank You that we know where Bob is, and that we will someday join him by Your grace.

Now LORD, bless us as we continue our service. Use this hymn to prepare our hearts for our time of study together...and may our study together be one of worship together. We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

(Message) I like that line, (in the hymn we just sang), that, 'Every day is a gift that is given by the King'; that is true. Daniel told Belshazzar, the evil Babylonian king who was mocking the LORD with a banquet, that 'every breath of life is a gift'. (Dan 5:23)...He gives every breath of life, so every moment of our existence is a gift from God—which speaks of His great love for us...and which is something we should remember as we consider our passage this morning.

People love a love story. *Romeo and Juliet*, I read that Shakespeare's play 15 years ago, (the first time I had read it, I had *already* seen the movie), and I was very touched by it, surprisingly. People love a love story. —But love is more than romance; it is commitment in hard times...it's commitment even when affection is not shared.

The greatest love story of the Bible is the Book of Hosea. It's the story of the prophet's unconditional love for his wife when she loved others. *Hosea* is the sad story of 'unrequited love'—and that is the story of our text; Revelation chapter 2, verses 1 through 7;

"But I have *this* against you,..." the Lord said, (vs4a), "...that you have left your first love.", (vs4b)...and become cold toward the Lord. That's always a problem in the Church, becoming cold.

Chapter 2 begins a new section of the book, the second section, when John writes to the "seven churches" of Asia Minor. It is what the Lord referred to in chapter 1, verse 19, when He told John to, "Write...the things which are...". These letters give us

insight into what is happening in churches today...and have always happened. These "seven churches" signify all churches—but still, these are historical churches. They were located in the western part of the Roman province of 'Asia', (and 'Asia' is today's modern nation of Turkey).

They formed an irregular circle, and are listed in the order in which a messenger might have visited them coming from the island of Patmos. He would have traveled first to Ephesus, then north to Smyrna, on to Pergamum, and then around, what the British archaeologist William Ramsay called, "The great circular road that bound together the most populous, wealthy, and influential parts of the province."

The first church addressed is "the church at Ephesus", the most important of the seven cities. It wasn't the official capital of the province, Pergamum was, but it was the greatest city. Ephesus was a port city, a commercial center. The trade routes from the east and the south terminated at Ephesus, so it was a wealthy city—a materialistic place.

It was also the center of pagan worship. The cult of Artemis, (or Diana), was there. 'The Temple of the Goddess', (*Artemis*), was one of 'The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.'

This was the city Paul visited on his second missionary journey. He spent over two years there, and during that time there was a great revival, and the Gospel spread from Ephesus throughout the province of Asia. Later, after he left, Paul sent Timothy to the church to supervise the work—and according to tradition, the Apostle John lived there in his old age.

Now in exile for the truth, John writes a letter to the Ephesian church which is dictated to him by the Lord Jesus Christ. The greeting is not directly to the church but, ".to the angel of the church...". (vs1). Still, the message is clearly meant for the church, and it is a message from Christ, (not from John), and He is described as, "The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands...". (vs1b).

The "stars" are *angels*. We saw that last week in the last verse of chapter 1, (verse 20). It doesn't explain who these angels are or what they do. I take them to be angels like all of the angels in the Book of Revelation...as angelic beings, heavenly beings; and perhaps they are 'the guardians' of these churches, (and each one has an angel that looks over it). And if that is the case, they are effective in what they do because they are in 'the hand of Christ', and that makes them *effective*.

Now, He holds them, "in His right hand", (and I take it to mean not just the angels, but the church itself), and the right hand is the Almighty hand—the hand of power of God. And that's what it speaks of when it refers to 'the right hand' ...that's the hand of power.

And the verb here is actually stronger than the one that was used in chapter 1, verse 16, that says, 'He holds the angels in His hand.' This one (*the verb in verse 20*), suggests, 'a firm grip' ...and now, He's not standing, (as He was described earlier among the lampstands...among the churches), now He is *walking*. (vs1).

Christ is constantly patrolling the churches. He knows the situation at every moment. He is with us, and I don't think I'm being too bold, or cavalier if I say, 'He is with us now, He is in our midst.' That's the encouragement that this greeting gives. As He said back in chapter 1, verse 18, "...I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore...", we have a living Savior who walks among us.—He is here. (And I think we are to understand, really here through the Spirit...but He is here.)

And His eyes are described as, 'penetrating eyes, full of fire.' (*Rev 1:14b*). What does that mean? Well, it doesn't tell us, so we reflect upon it...What does fire do? Fire gives light. But fire also *refines*, it separates silver from the dross—and His eyes distinguish between truth and error; and His eyes shine light into the dark corners of the church, or the dark corners of our heart...so, He sees all. He knows our hearts, and He knows our needs.

In Hebrews chapter 13, verse 20, He is called, "the great Shepherd of the sheep". He is our pastor. (We don't have 'a pastor' here...we have 'under-shepherds'). We have people who do pastoral work, but our pastor is Christ. He is "the great Shepherd",

the 'great pastor of the sheep'. So, He is the One the church is to look to for guidance and protection.

And His message for the church at Ephesus, a message that is now nearly 2000 years old, is a message for us today in the 21st century...He is speaking to us in this letter; He is speaking directly to us in these words, (verses 1 through 7).

He began by praising the Ephesians for the great things that they had done...their *deeds*, their *orthodoxy*, (their purity of doctrine), and thirdly, their *perseverance* under very difficult circumstances. Verse 2, " 'I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them *to be false*.' "

"I know", He says. Don't think that any good thing you do goes unnoticed. Now, it may not be noticed by people; it may not be noticed by the people here...it may be your prayer life that no one knows but you, it may be other things that you do that people don't see. But the Lord sees it, the Lord knows it. He knows it all, He sees it all...and He 'notes it down', as it were. And He will bless you for it. That's the most important thing— what the Lord sees and what He knows.

And He praises the Ephesians for their "deeds" and their "toil". (vs2). They were an active church. They were a busy church doing the Lord's work: teaching, caring for the sick, visiting the lonely and the aged. John Stott called the church, "A beehive of industry." And they were fighting the good fight of faith...defending the faith.

They were evidently exposed to some fierce opposition, for Ephesus was a dark place. When Paul preached in that city, and the Temple of Diana emptied out and the church filled up, the silversmiths, (the idol makers), rioted and they threatened Paul. He told the Corinthians that he, "fought with wild beasts at Ephesus". (1Cor 15:32). The Ephesian Christians evidently faced "wild beasts", as well. They knew what it was to be hated, to be snubbed in public, ostracized at work, suffer financial loss, and be physically persecuted.

Ephesus was the center of emperor worship. The penalty could be harsh for not honoring Domitian as 'lord and god'—but the Ephesians refused; they accepted hardship. The Lord praised them for it. He said in verse 3, "...you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary."

The Lord knows what it is to be rejected; He endured that also:

"He was despised and forsaken of men,
A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief..."

Isaiah 53:3

He sees it all and honors us for it. When Stephen was stoned, Jesus stood up from His throne and He received him into Heaven, (*Acts 7:55-60*), and so here, He praises the Ephesians for their *perseverance*, their endurance.

And, thirdly, he praised the church for its "*orthodoxy*", for its purity of doctrine. They were grounded in the truth and they defended the faith: "...you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who called themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them *to be* false." (vs2b).

How did they find them to be false? They found them to be false with the truth. They knew the truth...this was a well-taught church. They had been under the ministry of the apostles, of Paul and John—and under Timothy's instruction as well...and Apollos also ministered in Ephesus, (we were introduced to him there, in Acts 18). Few churches have ever been as blessed with good teaching like the church at Ephesus...and they received it.

Not all churches do. Many churches can't stomach strong doctrine, pure doctrine—the Ephesians could...and they did; they listened and believed. They were orthodox and defended the faith.

And they tested those who came through the church. They were visited by some self-styled apostles. They were visited by the "Nicolaitans". (Not much is known about them, they're mentioned in verse 6, and then they're mentioned again in verse 15, but what we do know is they were heretics.)

Paul had warned the Ephesian elders of that during his last visit with them, (and that's recorded in Acts 20, when he met them at Miletus). It was the last time he would see them, and so the things that he said to them, the warnings and the admonitions he gave them, were heartfelt and urgent, (and they apply to us, as well). But there he told them to "be on the alert", (Acts 20:31), and that warning is for all of us.

The Ephesians heeded it; they would listen carefully to the teachings of these men. I suspect it would have been in a situation very much like we have when we celebrate the Lord's Supper after this meeting, in which various men, gifted men, are allowed to stand and speak. (Ours is rather brief here—but it would have been a long meeting then.) They would have listened to these men, or whoever came in to speak, and they would listen very carefully and give a fair hearing and test their teaching by the Scriptures. And when it was off the mark, they rejected it—they did not tolerate it.

They hated heresy; that's what Jesus says in verse 6, "...you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate." Now, they didn't hate the Nicolaitans, but they hated their deeds, their doctrine, their error—and Christ does as well. He hates error—and we must hate error! And if that sounds too strong...error is **poison**. It's deadly, it's lethal.

But what a magnificent church this was. They had the Book of Ephesians. They had that book that extols sovereign grace, and they believed it—believed it all. They were orthodox. They were, (to use Bunyan's name of one of his great characters), 'Valient-for-Truth'. They had weathered the storms, they had fought the battles, they had suffered for Christ, and they persevered in the faith. What a wonderful church; what a safe church.

But in fact, it was not so wonderful; all was not well. Jesus had a complaint, "But I have *this* against you...", He said, "...that you have left your first love." (vs4). In fact, the Lord's complaining is much stronger than that. The idea is that they had '**abandoned** their first love'...(that is the meaning of the word).

Now, I have to say there is some ambiguity in that statement. Love always has an object, and it's not clear whether *the love they had left* was, 'for Christ', or, 'for the

saints', or, 'for the world'. But the fact is: 'If it's one...it is the others.' As believers cool, and grow tepid and cold in their love for the brethren, they also become indifferent toward the lost of this world because they have grown cold in their love for the Lord.

Things were very different earlier in their history. At the beginning of it all, (that's recorded in Acts 19 during Paul's ministry, 30 to 35 years earlier), they had experienced the grace of God. God poured out the Spirit on that city, and they had been saved out of darkness, and it was an amazing story to read of the great revival that took place in Ephesus.

They knew what they had been saved out of. They knew what they had been delivered from...from sin and evil. They repented of their evil practices, (of the black magic and of immorality), and they loved the brothers and sisters in Christ...all because they knew the Lord Jesus Christ, who was their Savior—and they loved Him.

But for some reason, and we're not given the reason for this, but for some reason, they had lost their enthusiasm. As I thought about it, I thought, 'Well, they were worn down by the challenges that they faced.' You see that in the Book of Hebrews, for example, those Jewish Christians in Rome had been beaten down—and it just got to them and they were beginning to drift. But that's not the testimony that the Lord gives here. They are of "perseverance", they are a determined people and He's praising them for that. So, what is it?

We don't know, and I think that there's, maybe, a lesson in that: It can be anything that draws us away from the Lord and our love for Him.

I might suggest that it is this: They were devoted to their *deeds* more than they were devoted to their *being*...to their condition *spiritually*. They were still Bible students, they studied the Word of God—but in doing so, they evidently had cooled in their love toward the God that they studied.

Now, their condition was serious...but not unique. This was a problem that the prophets addressed in Israel. Hosea described the nation as, 'an unfaithful wife'. He described the nation as a "harlot", (*e.g. Hos 4:12*), a prostitute...and so did Ezekiel.

And it is a present problem for the church. Christians face it personally, individually, privately, constantly, daily...growing cold in our relationship with Christ. And it happens in the midst of very good things. The Ephesians ministered, they were active, they had service—but without appreciation, without affection, for Christ. They substituted 'the good' for 'the best'.

So the Lord gave three steps to recovery. *First*, He said, "Remember from where you have fallen." (vs5a). 'Remember those early days of joy and the love that they had for the Savior, because they had fallen away from it.'

A.T. Robertson translated, "Down in the valley, look up to the cliff where pure love is, and whence thou hast fallen down." The idea is, 'Look back! Look at it...remember it and keep remembering!'

Memory is important. A fall like this is usually gradual. Not just all of a sudden, it is a gradual thing. It is hardly noticeable at the time...*gradually*, we slip away. So we need to continually, keep on remembering the goodness and grace of God, and what our Savior has done for us—what He went through...to go to the cross and that at the cross, what He suffered there for us.

Well, I began with the story of Hosea and his wife: He loved her as his wife...but she went off after other lovers. She, 'left her first love', *but* he didn't leave her. In fact, during her infidelities, without her knowing it, he provided for her needs. He supplied her with grain, and wine, and oil, and silver and gold—and he paid off her debts. And then he again married her...married her again! His love for her triumphed. So the picture presented in this great Book of Hosea, (and it is a picture, this relationship that Hosea had with his wife), is a kind of parable of God's love for Israel—and likewise, a picture of Christ's love for His church. "For while we were still helpless...", Paul told the Romans, (Rom 5:6), "...at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly." ...And He will never let us go, never *abandon* us.

If He loved us when we were in rebellion and ungodly, what will He do now that we are His brothers, His sisters, His children, His saints? He will never abandon us. Nothing "...will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom 8:39).

Those are Paul's great statements from the Book of Romans. That is love that saved us *when* we were ungodly, and *from* our ungodliness...*out of* our ungodliness. It is constant love, and even when we drift away from Him, it is constant...He still provides. Why would we want to leave such love, such amazing grace?

But we do, all of this applies to us. It's an everyday kind of thing that we need to measure ourselves by. We are easily distracted by 'the good' in place of 'the best'— 'prone to wander'.

So, we need to "remember", (*vs5*)...that's the first step to recovery, and then, 'Keep on remembering'. John Newton did that...he made sure that he remembered. You know John Newton...if we know one hymnwriter, it is probably John Newton, (or Martin Luther), but John Newton probably wrote the most popular hymn in Christendom, and that's, *Amazing Grace*.

After being saved out of the ungodly life of the slave trade, (in which he at one point became the slave of an African woman in Africa...he was a slave, chained to her table, and so he was saved out of all of that), and so that he would never forget,

what the Lord delivered him *from*,
what the Lord had done *for* him,
and, the Lord's constant *love* for him,

he had the words of Deuteronomy chapter 15, verse 15, written in large letters in his house over his mantel:

"Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt,
And the LORD thy God redeemed thee."

We were all slaves, saved by grace, and we must keep *remembering*...that's the *first* step to recovery.

The *second* step is to “*repent*”. (vs5b). It's a command that has the force of, ‘Begin to do it now!’ It expects immediate response, a definitive break with the past with what is wrong in their lives...and what is wrong in our life. There was no reason to delay; it was urgent...they were to, “*repent*”!

And that doesn't mean to feel bad and weep. —That's sorrow, it's not repentance. [Now, it may accompany repentance and be a work of repentance, but it's not repentance.] *Repentance* is, ‘a change of mind leading to a change of direction’.

You have it, for example, in Jeremiah 31, verse 18, with the Hebrew word ‘*shub*’. It's a simple word...it means “turn”. And in the translation, you see it best, I think, in the King James Version where the prophet speaks to the LORD, “Turn me, O LORD, and I shall be turned”...and that is *repentance*.

The Lord didn't want them to wait but to act immediately, ‘Repent now!’ And that is something that Christians should be doing constantly. Every day, we need to be ‘repenting’ and *turning*.

The *third* step also requires an immediate response, “...and do the deeds you did at first...”, (vs5c). That is, *the deeds of love: attending the Lord's Supper*, (where we're reminded of what the Lord did for us); *reading His Word*, (and being in it continually); and *being a blessing to the saints*.

‘Service’ was still important; ‘study’ is still very important...those were all good activities, they were necessary activities.—But they were to be done as they were originally done, (back in those early days), ‘*Out of love for the Lord*.’

And again, there was an urgency about this. None of these steps are suggestions...they are divine commands! So, they are not options for us, (and were not options for them), they require quick obedience. Abandoning Christ for other things, ‘growing cold’ in our love for Him, (and for the saints), is every bit as serious as Hosea's wife going after other men...what the Bible called “harlotry”!

The consequence of not obeying is given in the last part of the verse: 'repent', He says, "...or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place— unless you repent." (vs5c). The "lampstand" is the church, and the threat is its termination, its destruction. Jesus promised that, "the gates of hell" would not prevail against His church, (Matthew 16, verse 18), and that is a promise for 'the church universal'...but local churches come and go.

Christ is here...He is among us, now. He is patrolling the church, guiding us, protecting us. He knows our hearts, He loves His people—and He is patient with us, He is kind.

But a loveless church can continue only for so long...and then Christ comes and He removes it. The building may remain, and there may be people in it, and there may be a man in the pulpit...but the church is gone.

There is a beautiful chapel in Paris, Saint-Chapelle, and it is considered one of the greatest architectural masterpieces in the Western World. Every day, it is full of people... but there is no teaching there, there is no evangelism, no Truth at all. Tourists gather silently inside to see sunlight filter through the 15 magnificent stained-glass windows that surround them...and 'It is spectacular!'

It is beautiful, but it is lifeless and meaningless. Light comes in, no light goes out; it's just a museum piece.

There are churches like that, beautiful buildings filled with people. They have a preacher, they may have a choir, it may be all interesting and nice—but there is no Light inside...and no life, just a shell. So, 'Why do I say all of that?'

Well, I think this is what He is speaking of here—what the Lord is speaking of here. But really, it's because Believers Chapel can become like that. This is a message for us! It is telling us what is really important...what the Lord values most. It is not service, (good as that is), but love for Christ. And that's a personal thing. It is a personal walk with Him—like Enoch, who walked with the LORD for 300 years. (Gen 5:22).

Love is the characteristic attitude, or virtue, of the Christian. Jesus told the disciples in John 13, (verse 35), that it was, 'By their love for one another that all men would know that they were His disciples.'

But now in verse 6, there is something of a change. He has told them they 'lack love', (vs4b), and they, 'need to repent', (vs5b)...but now He has some praise for them, too. His praise is for 'hate'. They, 'hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans', (vs6a), "which...", (Jesus said), "...I also hate." (vs6b).

Hate, like love, can be a virtue...it naturally follows love. A person cannot love truth and love error. A person cannot love righteousness and love sin. If we love the Light, we will naturally hate the darkness, (that is, 'hate spiritual darkness').

These Nicolaitans were purveyors of darkness. Again, little is known about them, but it is speculated that they were an *antinomian cult*—meaning, they rejected the Law, all moral principles, and lived without moral restraint. And I think support for that idea is, 'the praise given to the church here for hating their deeds'. And the fact that the Ephesians hated lawlessness, (*present in the Nicolaitans*), was evidence that they did have spiritual life, and they only needed to rekindle their love for the Lord.

So, the Lord ends His letter to them with encouragement to do that. And I think that's one of the great ways to promote, (and most effective way to promote), a correct response. It's not just an admonition...a warning, (as important as that is), but it's encouragement.

And He gives that here. It is incentive, in verse 7, with both an exhortation and promise, "He who has an ear...", He says, "...let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (vs7a). That's a personal challenge...'You all hear, but do you really hear?', is what He is saying. 'Does it really make a difference to you?...

Those who have the capacity to understand spiritually, as well as hear physically, will respond—and those who do, are true believers. They are children of God—and they

have a great promise: "To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God." (vs7b).

Paradise is a Persian word, a 'loanword' that means *garden* or *park*. It is a place of life, it's a place of beauty, a place of rest and comfort, a place of refreshment from heat, and rest from work...and it's a picture of Heaven. Paul used it in 2 Corinthians 12, verse 4, where he stated that he, "...was caught up into Paradise, and heard inexpressible words."

I make this point, (and I made it not too long ago when we were in 2 Corinthians, and I made it yesterday when we were at Bob's memorial service), that, 'Heaven is so wonderful, so beyond our imagination, that there are no words to describe it.'

Paul didn't have the words to explain what he saw...the Person he saw there and all that was surrounding him there. And the man or woman who perseveres in faith to the final victory, will enter into that, will enter into Paradise and enjoy unimaginable blessings in it.

So, this isn't a warning that believers can fail to enter Heaven. Every child of God, every elect person will be saved forever, and will conquer. We are victorious because of Christ's victory.

And what does He give us through faith?...He gives us eternal life. It's **eternal life**; it can't be taken from us. This is encouragement to press on because the reward and the blessings that await us are great.

The Book of Revelation prophesized great trials on this earth—of the antichrist to come and the last days...and his dominion over the world, (much like that of Domitian and the Roman emperors.)

But the greater reality of the Book is the promise that, 'God's people will overcome'. We will be victorious through the storms and the warfare of life. Even if we lose our lives, (and the Book of Revelation prophesized a lot of martyrdoms), still, we are victorious. Victory is not escaping death, it is being, "faithful unto death". (vs10).

So, the Lord was urging us on...to love, and loyalty to Him, (and toward one another), which will conquer our fear and encourage our faith. Love is the great motivation for all of that...loving Him.

Well, that's the exhortation here—that is the warning here. Did the Ephesians listen, did they remember the past, and did they repent and do deeds of love? Did they rekindle their love for the Lord?

It doesn't tell us that, it doesn't give us the consequence of His exhortation...but there is indication that they did. Writings from the beginning of the 2nd century praise the church...and so I would like to believe that they responded.

But each generation is responsible for itself. Today, Ephesus is empty. It's just a splendid ruin—no church, no life, just tourists passing through it. The lampstand was removed long ago, and the lesson of history is clear: Even a great church, like that of Ephesus, well-grounded in the Truth...even it can fall. The only defense against that is to rekindle our love for Christ.

And that is the lesson for us. The Ephesian church was 30...35 years old when the Lord warned it that, 'It lacked love for Him'. Believers Chapel is over 60 years old...Have we left our love for Him? Well...that's something we must consider for ourselves.

And what about faith? Are there some here, who have not believed in Jesus Christ? You don't have love for Him if you haven't...you don't have faith in Him.

Have you not trusted in Him as the Savior? If not, then I say this, (not with pleasure, but because it's the truth)...if that's the case, you're lost; and doomed to an eternity of darkness.

We care for you, we care for your eternal soul, and so we call you to *repent* from unbelief, *turn* from unbelief—turn *in faith* to Christ who is God's eternal Son...Who became a man to die in the place of sinners.

If you're a sinner, if you're ungodly, that's who Christ died to save...so, believe in Him and receive forgiveness and eternal life now—and the promise of Paradise to come.

May God help you to do that...

And help all of us to rekindle our love for Christ.

(Closing prayer) Father, we have received a warning in this great text, this first letter addressed to the church at Ephesus, and we confess it applies to us. It's so easy to drift, and we have just sung about the love of Christ for us...may we love Him more...convict us of that.

Love is a gift; it's the fruit of the Spirit; we pray for that, and we pray You would produce it within us. I pray You would pour out your Spirit on this congregation—on the pulpit, on the pews, on all of us...and fill us with love for Your Son, and for one another. And for the world—for the lost...for we have the message of hope for that world.

Now,

The LORD bless you and keep you;

The LORD make His face shine on you,

And be gracious to you;

The LORD lift up His countenance on you,

And give you peace.

In Christ's name. Amen.

(End of Audio)