

ACTNow! (Applying Christ's Teaching NOW) follows the weekly sermon series of TPMC, and challenges us to apply and put into practice the biblical truths we hear each week. It is the recommended Bible discussion material for TPMC's Cell Groups, and leader's notes are available to all Cell Group Leaders and at the Information Counter.

## The Seven Churches of Revelation: Ephesus

Revelation 2:1-7

Rev Reuben Ng

### SERMON SYNOPSIS

- The church in Ephesus was about 43-44 years old when the book of Revelation was written. It was established by Paul. It was also the first church that Jesus asked John to address in His letters to the churches.
- The letter starts with an encouraging note. Jesus knows the works that the church has been doing in His name. The good we do in His name and for His name's sake are never lost. Likewise, Jesus recognises the faithfulness of His people under persecution.
- Yet the singular appearance of the word "but" in verse 4 warns against something that could nullify all that the early Ephesian church had strived towards. The works that they had been doing did not compensate for the lack that the church had. They lost their first love. They were faithful in their **deeds** (hands), they were zealous against false **doctrines** (head), but they **departed** from their first love (heart). This is a serious matter as it goes against the greatest commandment in Mark 12:30 to love God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength. Deeds and works do not mean anything without love (1 Corinthians 13).
- Jesus does not condemn but gives a solution to this church and to us. **Remember** what He did when we first tasted His saving grace. **Repent**, turn around and walk back to God. **Reproduce** – Jesus is essentially challenging us (as individuals and as a church) to go back to doing the things we did when we first became His followers, to remember that He is our first love. To those who listen and heed, verse 7 promises an eternal reward.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The Ephesians were commended for their doctrinal and disciplinary zeal as early Christians. However, Jesus pointed out how all that could amount to nothing if they did not return to their first love, Christ Himself. Are there ways in which we could be thriving in our Christian labour and yet be absent from doing these "first works"?

[Children's Activity: Here are some suggested craft that the children could do. Then have them write today's memory verse on it as a reminder to them.

Suncatcher: <https://feltmagnet.com/crafts/Suncatcher-Craft-Projetc-for-Toddlers> or

Weaved heart: <https://tipjunkie.com/projects/valentines-day-bible-craft-for-kids/> ]

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2. The reminder to the Ephesians to remember the first works should not have been news to them. What characterised the Ephesian church's first works? Examine various Scripture to understand the characteristics of the early Ephesian church.

[Verses to help us go deeper: Acts 18:27; Acts 19:16-20; Ephesians 1:15]

3. What are some of the things we used to do when we first came to know Christ that we have stopped doing? What prevents us from doing these things again and how can we restore our first love for Him?

[Verses to help us go deeper: Psalm 51:12; 2 Chronicles 7:14]

### PRAYER POINTERS

- Thank God for His faithfulness, that His love remains steadfast even when we forget our first love.
- Pray for forgiveness if you have forgotten your first love, and ask the Holy Spirit to restore the joy of salvation in your life.
- Pray for perseverance, to do the things that you did at first and continue doing them.

### MEMORY VERSE

"And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." [Mark 12:30, ESV]

### PRACTICAL HANDLE

As we celebrate TPMC's 48<sup>th</sup> anniversary, reflect on how your spiritual walk is. But rather than what more can you do, consider how much more can you love. Think of a person whom you can extend the love of Christ to this week.