

Seven Letters to Seven Churches

Revelation 2-3

Preamble

Who is John?

A close disciple of Jesus

Took care of Jesus' mom after ascension

Last of the apostles

Wrote the Gospel of John, 1,2,3 John

Pastored 7 churches in Asia Minor probably based in Ephesus

Why did he write revelation?

He had been exiled to a penal island of Patmos

Jesus appeared to him and told him to share what he saw with the church.

The letters to the 7 churches are not from John but Jesus.

How is this relevant to us today?

A. There is Diversity in the Church

There are all kinds of churches today.

A veritable smorgasbord.

Different styles, different traditions - different people.

B. There is no perfect church. Never was.

C. Jesus speaks to his people still today.

We need to listen.

Ephesus - First Love

Ever fall in love?

Ever fall out of love?

This is Ephesus - going through the motions without the heart.

Like a relationships that has no spark

Forgetting why you are together.

Are you still curious about Jesus and his Kingdom?

Or are you going through the motions?

Smyrna - Suffering

The illustration of leprosy

Sometimes it seems the greatest evil in our culture is pain.

Perhaps even inconvenience and discomfort.

We do everything we can to avoid it.

We think it is good to save others from it.

We save our kids from it or even our friends.

But pain in a fallen world is to be expected.

What we do with pain is where our character is formed.

When people say Jesus came to make you happy they lie.
Jesus came to transform us and take the evil out of us.
Not all suffering is good nor does it make sense,
but it does not have to destroy us
it can be redeemed.
In a world of suffering and death we believe in resurrection.

Pergamum - Discernment

Discernment is the ability to know what is wise and what is unwise.
It is the ability to discriminate between the healthy and the unhealthy.
Do you know the difference between the world's values and God's values?
Abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality, premarital sex, divorce, greed, lust,
pornography, lying, stealing, jealousy, bitterness, unforgiveness, rage,
falsehood, deception, bribery, arrogance, fear, identity,
the meaning of life...
Do you know?
This is what we are to ask, always ask.
Or we lose our compass bearings and capsizе.
This is why we study the Bible
to be able to discern with the help of the Spirit.

Thyatira - Holiness

Frogs in a hole illustration.
Holiness is not just about good ethical living.
It is about marching to the beat of a different drum.
Believing differently and therefore acting differently.
The opposite of passion and conviction is tolerance.
Tolerance doesn't really care.
Holiness does care.
Not about others but ourselves - do we wink at evil or run from it?

Sardis - Remnant

Sometimes we feel like we're alone
That there isn't anyone who is willing to believe there is hope for change
Even when everything goes wrong
God will always keep a group that is faithful to him.
It may cost them but they will be his and they will honour him.
The remnant is made up of those who go against the grain
in their life with God.

Philadelphia - Faithfulness

Big things come in little packages
One voice, one man at the right place at the right time
This church was small and weak but it was faithful.
It endured.

Laodicea - Pride

One of the deepest sins is pride.
This is because pride lives in a fantasy about oneself.
There is very little reality to pride.
It thinks itself spiritual when it is nothing but.
It thinks itself rich when it is not.
It thinks itself faithful when it is not.
This is because it has different values than the ones Jesus has.
The proud church is lukewarm - careless.
The humble church is warm - caring.
Jesus wants a church that is warm towards him.
Pride doesn't come from reality or security but fear and strutting.
Humility comes from a place of truth, trust and care.

What About Us?

Ephesus - Are we still in love with Jesus?
Smyrna - Do we have the courage to live for Jesus even when it isn't popular?
Pergamum - Do we want what God wants or what we want?
Thyatira - Do we make excuses for our little sins or do we confront them?
Sardis - Are we willing to live against the grain?
Philadelphia - Do we want the spotlight or do we want to be faithful?
Laodicea - Do we think more of ourselves or do we think more of Jesus?