

Session 9 Jesus' Primary Message to the Seven Churches (Rev. 2-3)

I. THE CALL TO LOVE GOD WITH ALL OF OUR HEART

- A. The book of Revelation is called the **revelation of Jesus** because it reveals the majesty of His heart and leadership. Second, it reveals events that will occur in His end-time plan to purify the Church, bring in the harvest, replace all the governments on earth, and transition it to the age to come.
- ¹The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him [Jesus] to show His servants... (Rev. 1:1)***
- B. In Revelation 1-3, John shared a vision highlighting *30 descriptions of Jesus' majesty, ministry, and personality, and 22 eternal rewards*. Each description and reward is a necessary aspect in equipping the end-time Church to overcome all sin as she is transformed into a "prepared Bride" (Rev. 19:7).
- ⁷...for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. (Rev. 19:7)***
- C. Engaging with Jesus in context to these 30 descriptions of Him will lead the Church to cry out to Him, being established in her spiritual identity as a cherished Bride (Rev. 22:17).
- ¹⁷The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!" (Rev. 22:17)***
- D. ***The Bridegroom revival***: Jesus will come to His people as a Bridegroom who wants all of their heart. The end-time "*Bridegroom revival*" will be far more invasive than any revival in history. Jesus will reveal and impart His love in an unprecedented way that will transform the Church.
- E. Jesus' statement in Matthew 22:37-38 is one of the most significant statements in Scripture.
- ³⁷"You shall love the Lord...with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'
³⁸This is the first and great commandment." (Mt. 22:37-38)***
1. ***First***: The Spirit's first priority and emphasis is for God's people to grow in love for God.
 2. ***Great***: It has the *greatest impact* on God's heart and our heart, and it is the *greatest calling*.
- ¹⁹...whoever does and teaches them [commands], he shall be called great in the kingdom... (Mt. 5:19)***
- F. Jesus defined loving God as being rooted in a spirit of obedience (Jn. 14:15-21). We are to love God on God's terms. To "keep His commands" includes setting our heart *both* to obey and pursue Jesus diligently *and* not to quit in our divine assignments, even in times of delay and difficulty.
- ¹⁵"If you love Me, keep My commandments." (Jn. 14:15)***
- G. ***Loving God with all our heart***: With zeal, we engage our heart with Jesus in pursuing and obeying Him. Some are dutiful in serving Him without engaging their heart with Him. We "set our love" on God by determining that the *primary dream* (purpose) of our life is to pursue walking out the first commandment by grace. Other blessings—family, vocation, ministry—flow from loving God.
- ¹⁴"Because he has set his love [heart] upon Me, therefore I will deliver him." (Ps. 91:14)***

H. **Loving God with all our mind:** We express love for God with our mind by putting things into our mind that inspire love for God instead things that diminish our capacity to love Him. What we do with our mind affects our ability to receive and express love. We show love for God by taking time to fill our mind with His Word and refusing to feed our mind on lust (Job 31:1).

¹***"I have made a covenant with my eyes; why should I look upon a young woman?" (Job 31:1)***

I. **Loving God with all our strength** (Mk. 12:30): We express love for God in the way we use our strength and natural resources (time, money, energy, talents, words, influence). We love God with our strength as we do the things that Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7): *servicing, giving* (6:1-4, 19-21), *praying* (6:5-13), *blessing, forgiving* (5:44; 6:14), etc.

J. **Loving God with all our soul:** Our primary success and identity is found in being ones whom God loves and who love God. We confess, "I am loved by God, and I am a lover of God; therefore, I am successful." Our identity is determined by the way that we define our success and value and by how we see ourselves. When our identity is rooted in what we achieve and who applauds us, then we burn out. We express love for God *with our soul* when we exert the emotional energy to realign our heart to base our identity on our relationship with God instead of on our accomplishments, recognition, etc. We must often realign our thinking to agree with the truth of who we are in Him.

II. JESUS' CALL TO RETURN TO THEIR FIRST LOVE (2:4)

A. Jesus corrected the church of Ephesus for neglecting to love Him in the way that was initially so prominent in the great Ephesian revival (Acts 19). Service and doctrinal purity are very important, but they can never replace taking time to cultivate our love for and communion with Jesus.

¹***"To the angel of the church of Ephesus write...²'I know your works...³you have persevered... and labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. ⁴...I have this against you, that you have left your first love. ⁵Remember from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works."*** (Rev. 2:1-5)

B. The church in Sardis had a reputation for its dedication to Jesus, but had become spiritually dead. They were dead or asleep in their spiritual life as evidenced by their lack of hunger for His Word and being weighed down with things like fear, shame, despair, depression, or compromise, etc.

¹***"To...the church in Sardis write, '...you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. ²Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die... ³Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent."*** (Rev. 3:1-3)

C. Jesus promised the church of Laodicea deep fellowship and honor both now and in the age to come. He required that they repent of lukewarmness in their relationship with Him.

¹⁴***To the...Laodiceans write...¹⁵"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot... ¹⁶you are lukewarm... ¹⁷Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'— and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked'—¹⁸I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire... ¹⁹As many as I love, I rebuke...be zeal and repent."*** (Rev. 3:14-19)