

When The Church Gets It Wrong Week 1 - Ephesus

SAY THIS: In this week's sermon we learned the church at Ephesus was busy doing good things but had drifted from their first love. Faith became duty instead of delight. We also learned how easy it is to lose passion for God and how to find it again.

ASK THIS: Share a season in life or experience where you lost your love for something. A hobby, a relationship, a job etc. If it ever returned, how did it return?

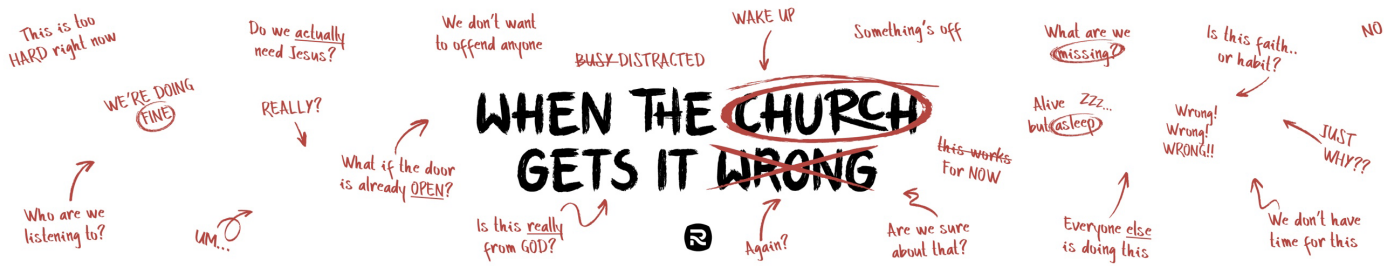
HAVE SOMEONE READ: Revelation 2:1-7

Discussion

(Choose the questions that fit your group best)

ASK THIS:

1. When you hear the words "you have forsaken your first love," what stirs in you? Grief, defensiveness, recognition, or something harder to name? Where does that phrase land in your own story?
2. Ephesus is praised for its endurance, its discernment, its refusal to tolerate falsehood, and yet something essential has slipped away. Where in your life have you kept doing the right things while quietly losing the fire that once gave them life?
3. There is a difference between *love that compels* and *duty that constrains*. Share with the group a time when your faith felt alive, even wild? What did it look like, and when did it begin to cool?
4. Jesus does not rebuke their theology or their effort but instead rebukes their love. What does that tell us about what God values most? How might that reorder the way you measure your own faithfulness?
5. "Remember... repent... return." These are not harsh commands but a kind of invitation home. What might it actually look like for you to return to your first love? Not in theory, but in practice.
6. The warning is sobering in verse 5: a lampstand can be removed while activity continues. Where might you be mistaking movement for life, or faithfulness for mere busyness?
7. The passage ends with a promise: the tree of life which is rooted in paradise. How does the vision of restored intimacy with God reshape the way you think about repentance...not as loss, but as recovery?



PLAY THIS SONG:

Lord, Are the Gates Still Open by Arthur Hayes on Album: Gravel & Grace

<https://youtu.be/DQeB6xiizjY?si=HPwO-AquoUY2nt1p> (audio only)

ASK:

1. Where in your life are you quietly wondering if the gates might be closed to you? What has made you believe it?
2. If you truly trusted that the gates are still open, what would you do differently this week?
3. Are you more afraid that God might reject you or that He might actually welcome you back? Why?

HAVE SOMEONE PRAY THIS:

Gracious God, we have learned how to move our hands while our hearts grow quiet. We have kept the rhythms, said the words, carried the weight of faith...and still, something in us has wandered. Call us back Father. Not with shame, but with a remembering. Not with burden, but with beauty. Take us again to the place where love was simple and alive...where we did not have to try so hard to want You. Breathe on our hearts. Make us come alive once more. Wake what has slept. And lead us home again to delight.

Amen.

SAY THIS AS A FINAL BLESSING ON THE EVENING:

May you go with less noise and more noticing.

May the God you have served become again the God you love.

May the road back not feel like failure, but like finding a long-lost door still open.

And when you falter...and you will...may you remember: the first love you seek has been seeking you longer.