



Letters to the Church

Sermon-Based Study Guide
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church

Revelation 2:1-7 | April 24, 2022

Prepared by Joy Scarpuzzi
joy@gspc.org | 562/493.2553 x102

I. Introduction to this Study

This week we will be kicking off our new series: Letters to the Church. In the coming weeks, we will study the seven letters that Jesus wrote to the seven churches of Asia. This week, we will focus on the first letter to the church of Ephesus.

II. Connecting with One Another

When was the last time you received a handwritten letter in mail? How did it make you feel?

III. Study the Text

- a. John is exiled to the island of Patmos. It is there on this Island that Jesus appeared to John giving him this Revelation that he recorded for the churches and for us today. **Read Revelation 1:1-3**

- b. Read **Revelation 2:1**

The word used in Greek for holds the seven stars and seven lampstand is: kratein. It's a stronger word than Jesus just picks up the stars and lampstand. It is describing Jesus' strength. His hands are strong enough to hold all of these in his hands.

Have you ever tried to hold a basketball? (Hold a basketball with one hand without using the other one to help) It takes a large hand to hold the basketball in its entirety. How does the idea of Jesus being able to hold the seven stars and the seven lampstands help us to understand Jesus? Is it a comforting thought?

- c. Read **Revelation 2:2-3**

Ephesus was an important town. It was at the mouth of a river (that no longer exists) that poured into a larger sea. While the town was known for commerce, it was also known for being where the temple of Artemis was. Temple worship was very much a part of the culture of the town. So, when Jesus applauds their deeds, He had seen their struggles in a world that was becoming more and more hostile for Christians. This church was standing firm in a world that was pressuring them through things like boycotts of their stores and trades to even being hunted down to be killed for their faith.

In what ways have you felt going against the culture around us has been difficult?



- d. Jesus then praised their conviction to right theology. They knew their Bibles and could discern if a message was theologically correct. Understanding theology is not just for Pastors or Elders or people who go to seminary. We all should know what right theology is.

Share a time when you felt your theology grow. Maybe you changed your belief on something after taking the time to read the Bible on a topic.

- e. **Read Revelation 2:4-6**

Jesus just showered the church with praise, but he had something to hold against them. "You have forsaken the love you had at first". Paul writes to this same churches years before praising them as he has heard about their faith and their love for God's people. Yet, years later, Jesus calls out their lack of love for each other and for Him.

Did you ever have a collection of something growing up? (ex. Baseball cards, stamps, coins, or figurines) Do you still treasure those items? If yes, what keeps you still fascinated with those items?

- f. As humans we can often be fickle. We love one thing one day and then next day could not care less about it. Jesus begs his church to not forget about our first love: Him. Have you ever felt like the Ephesian church, that you were doing all the right things, but you had lost your love for Jesus and whose you around you? If yes, don't worry we all do. Jesus doesn't want you to feel guilt or shame in the same way he didn't want the church at Ephesus to. Instead, He wants us to be aware of it so we can repent, turn around and head back to Him.

Have you discovered habits or disciplines that help you to not grow weary in your relationship with God?

IV. Pray

- a. **Read Revelation 2:7**

Thank Jesus for His love for you. That He doesn't just see you going the wrong way and not tell you. But he cares enough to tell you.

Ask Jesus to let us be like the one who has ears and listens for what the Spirit is saying to us.

V. Digging Deeper

- a. Want to know more about what Paul said to the Ephesian church, check out Ephesians 1:15-23. The story of Mary and Martha helps demonstrate the pitfall we often find ourselves in, doing and not loving, in Luke 10:38-42. Curious about the founding of the Ephesian church look up Acts 18:18-28. Wondering what love looks like check out 1 Corinthians 13.

