

Our First Love

By Dr. Ronnie W. Wolfe – February 25, 2015

Revelation 2:1-4 *Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; 2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: 3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. 4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.*

I. THE POSITIVE SIDE OF EPHEBUS

A. They Were Faithful In Their Work

1. *Rev. 2:2a I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil*
2. *Rev. 2:3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.*

B. They Were Faithful In Doctrine

1. *Rev. 2:2b and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.*
2. Examples today:
 - a. We know of many preachers today who preach false doctrine.
 - b. Here is some new doctrine that I had not heard until lately.
 - c. "There are nine in the Trinity." God the Father has a body, soul, and spirit; the Holy Spirit has a body, soul, and spirit; and Jesus has a body, soul, and spirit. That makes nine in the Trinity.
 - d. I heard a preacher last Sunday (2-22-2015) say that, when God said "Let there be light," he was bringing light out of darkness, that the light was in the darkness and God simply drew it out. Light never comes from darkness. Truth never comes from error. The light that God brought to view in Genesis was a light that God shone on the darkness to reveal the wonderful work of God in creation.
3. Reading Ephesus 1:1-14, we can notice many doctrines that the Ephesians knew and were taught by Paul himself.
 - a. 1:4 – "were chosen" – doctrine of Election
 - b. 1:5 – "Having predestinated us" – doctrine of Predestination
 - c. 1:5 – "adoption of children" – doctrine of Adoption
 - d. 1:5 – "good pleasure of his will" – doctrine of the will of God
 - e. 1:6 – "glory of his grace" – doctrine of Grace
 - f. 1:7 – "in whom we have redemption" – doctrine of Redemption
 - g. 1:7 – "through his blood" – doctrine of a blood Atonement
 - h. 1:7 – "forgiveness of sins" – doctrine of Forgiveness
 - i. 1:10 – "gather together all things" – doctrine of Second Coming & Rapture

- j. 1:11 – “obtained an inheritance” – doctrine of Inheritance or of Promise
 - k. 1:12-13 – “trust in Christ” – doctrine of Faith
 - l. 1:13 – “heard the word of truth” – doctrine of Evangelism
 - m. 1:13 – “sealed with that holy Spirit of promise” – doctrine of Eternal Security
 - n. 1:14 – “redemption of the purchased possession” – doctrine of Redemption Of the Body and Soul.
 - o. 1:14 – “the glory of God” – doctrine of Doxology, or praising God.
4. These doctrines Paul taught to the Ephesian church through Timothy, who was there.
 5. They were doctrinally sound.

II. THE NEGATIVE SIDE OF EPHEBUS

- A. Paul said to the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 3:10 *Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?*
- B. Evidently some lacked wisdom, for James said in James 1:5 *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*
- C. But Ephesus lacked something greater than the lack of wisdom; they had a lack of love.
 1. They left their first love, the love they had for Christ and his church at the beginning of the work of the church at Ephesus.
 2. They may have begun to love their lives more than the Lord or the church – Revelation 12:11 *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.*
 3. They may have loved the world – 1 John 2:15 *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*
 4. They may have thought their love for God was more important than God’s love for them. This will give us a twisted view of things – 1 John 4:10 *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* (See Rom. 8:37; Eph. 2:4; 5:2; 2 Thess. 2:16; 1 John 4:10-11, 19; Rev. 1:5).
- D. Their FIRST LOVE
 1. The word “first” has two meanings.
 - a. It means “first in time or place.” I am sure the Lord is not the first thing in time or place that these believers loved the Lord.
 - b. It also means “first in rank, influence, or honor.” Now I believe this is where the church was lacking.
 - (1) Christ was not pre-eminent in their lives.
 - (2) They may have their faith in Christ, but that faith was weak and was not being used for the glory of God.
 2. They had LEFT their first love
 - a. This word “left” can have the meaning of “divorce,” so the Ephesians have divorced their ways from the Lord and have gone back to the world, in bondage again
 - b. Galatians 4:9 *But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?*
 3. But how are they to return to their first love
 - a. They are to remember:

