2020 The Greatest Threats: Week 2

Revelation 2:1-7

1. Intro
   1. The Greatest Threats:
   2. These messages will not apply to all of Christianity, or even most of Christianity, but Biblical Christianity
2. Text
   1. Some believe that these letters are indicative of eras in church history.
      1. 1. Ephesus represents the apostolic church from AD 30 to 100.
      2. 2. Smyrna represents the persecuted church from AD 100 to 313.
      3. 3. Pergamos represents state church from AD 313 to 590.
      4. 4. Thyatira represents the Papal church from AD 590 to 1517.
      5. 5. Sardis represents the Reformed church from AD 1517 to 1790.
      6. 6. Philadelphia represents the Missionary church from AD 1730 to 1900.
      7. 7. Laodicea represents the apostate church from AD 1900 to (?).[i]
      8. This is a fascinating study, and it could be true, but not certain
   2. The Nicolaitans
      1. Scholars believe this to be a group derived from the Nicolas mentioned in Acts 6:5 And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch.
      2. This name becomes synonymous with loose moral character.
         1. Nicolaitans became known for trading the legalism of Judaism with a license to sin.
         2. It is believed this group tried to introduce into the Church a false freedom, that is, license to sin; this was a reaction in the opposite direction from Judaism, the first danger to the Church combated in the council of Jerusalem, and by Paul in the Epistle to Galatians, and Romans.
   3. Verse 1:
      1. To the Angel: Messenger to the church, most scholars believe this to be in reference to the pastor/teacher
      2. Sovereign God who holds all things …including the church, has a message, write it down.
   4. Verse 2-3: Words of Affirmation
      1. Hard working, patient, pious, discerning
      2. Endured for the sake of Christ
   5. Verse 4: Words of Correction
      1. Abandoned your first love
      2. The love you have for Christ is what compels us to serve
   6. Verse 5: Words of Truth: hope and correction: Repent!
   7. Verse 6: Affirmation of Hope: Phil 1:6: There is evidence you still have it!
   8. Verse 7:
      1. He who has an ear: God gives the message, listen
      2. To the one who conquers: this is the same word found in Romans 8

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

* + 1. Tree of Life…Paradise of God…THAT’S WHERE I WANNA BE!

1. Points: The Good, Bad, Ugly or Good Works, Great Love, Ghastly Punishment
   1. The Good
      1. List: Positive affirmation of a job well done.
         1. Labor, patience
         2. Cannot bear evil
         3. Stand for truth (against nicolatans)
      2. EX: Good Works are absolutely Important!
         1. We are created in Christ for Good works! Eph 2
         2. We are to be patient and wait on the Lord
         3. We are to stand for truth no matter the cost!
      3. App: Works are important, but not the point
         1. The point is Christ
         2. The works of our life are the overflow of that which God is doing.
   2. The Bad
      1. EX: Never the less, I have this against you!!!!!
         1. Scalding words from SOVEREIGN GOD
         2. If he is holding something against the church we had better ask two questions: What is it? How do I fix it?
      2. EX: Losing your first LOVE
         1. Forgetting that which you have learned from the beginning
         2. The basics of the FAITH
            1. “They tell you you’re educated when you complicate the simple truth”
            2. Love God, Love People!
            3. Serve God by Serving People
            4. Study to show thyself an approved workman
            5. Deny yourself and take up your cross
            6. I have been crucified with Chirst…It is Christ who lives in me
            7. I beseech you therefore brethren…
            8. Faith hope and Love…
      3. Illus:
         1. Homework as a kid
         2. I would do the work so fast that I didn’t learn anything.
         3. Find the answers, write the down, oblivious to the point
      4. App: Let us not lose out first love church
         1. There are bad things that happen to churches that lose their first love
         2. No Unity
         3. Ineffective
         4. Consumed with negative.
            1. It is so easy to be negative
            2. Negativity spreads like the plague that it is.
         5. Never seeing the movement of God in the midst of the church.
            1. A way of saying this is, “I know God is moving in our church, but I still am mad as a hornet that the tile is brown.”
            2. I know great things are happening around here, but I just don’t like this thing.”
      5. What are characteristics of a person that lost his first love?
         1. Sometimes we get the misunderstanding that the church exists for our benefit and well being.
         2. Sometimes we forget that we are the Wretch that is mentioned in Amazing Grace.
         3. We say things like:
            1. I don’t like how this building project is going, so I’m not gonna give to it.
            2. I just don’t feel like I’m getting fed…
         4. When confronted with the truth of God’s word, the person that has lost his first love will get angry with the messenger rather than conform to the truth.
         5. This person doesn’t weep over souls
         6. This person doesn’t long for the gathering of the saints
         7. I goes very quickly from Bad to Ugly.
   3. The Ugly
      1. EX: REPENT of I WILL REMOVE THE LAMPSTAND
         1. This church is not a church because of the brick and mortor
         2. This church is not a church because of the people
         3. This church is not a church because of the BIBLE or the HYMNAL
         4. The Church is a Church because GOD MADE IT A CHURCH!
      2. Ill:
      3. App: The problem had a severe penalty:
         1. God will remove the lampstand…therefore it would no longer be HIS CHURCH.
         2. There are many buildings around our country with no lampstands, but are beautiful buildings with people who gather.
            1. I would rather serve at North Park, with limited space, but the lamp stand of God!
            2. With not enough room, but the presence of Christ
         3. The Lampstand is what makes a church HIS church
            1. It is the LIGHT of the gospel,
            2. The lighthouse of warning
            3. The lamp unto our feet
            4. And the shekinah glory of a Holy God!
2. Close: The threat:
   1. lose your first love,
      1. lose your lampstand,
         1. lose your power,
            1. lose your church,

lose your impact,

lose.

* 1. How do we stop the trend: Simple…serve, love, teach, give, preach, disciple, submit, lead, love!
  2. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, strength, and love your neighbor as yourself!