

Sunday Service Sermons

22 August 2021

Renewing the Church's Most Important Quality

"But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first". *Rev. 2:4*

And: "We love him, because he first loved us." *1 John 4:19*

The Revelation passage for today is where God and Jesus address the churches to tell them how they have missed the mark.

This church is at Ephesus and the first verses report the things the church did correctly.

Hard work, many good deeds, tolerating the wicked, much perseverance, testing the claims of others, enduring hardships, not growing weary, but there is one thing lacking.

The church had forsaken its first love.

It had fallen and was told to repent.

If they do not repent God will come to them and remove their lamp stand.

They need to hear what the Spirit has to say to them.

The First John passage is headed with the words: God's Love and Ours.

It begins with love being supreme for love is from God and all who love are born of God and know God.

If you do not love you do not know God because God is love.

And God showed his love among us in his Son that we might love through him.

God loved us first and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Since God loved us we also ought to love one another.

If we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

These scriptures allow us to love those who are difficult to love, who do not agree with our way of thinking.

Anyone who claims Jesus as Lord is part of our heavenly family even when their theology does not mesh with ours.

Anyone who is alive on this earth is a creation of God and deserves our love, a love that will lead them to God.

We who claim God need to be all about love.

Not a weak love, but a strong love that has what is best for the person in mind.

Renewal in the Christian's life must not overlook the renewal of its most important quality, which is LOVE.

Love is essential in the life of a Christian and of the church.

Ephesians 4:15-16 calls attention to our "speaking the truth in love" and "the edifying of the church in love".

Without love there is no true growth.

The church at Ephesus left its first love.

The Lord Jesus Christ reveals how important "first love" truly is.

According to *1 Corinthians 13*, a church may have many things, but without love it is nothing.

If Jesus desires and demands the first love be returned to the Christian's life, how can it be renewed?

The answer is by observing the order of love.

First *John 4:19* says, "We love him because he first loved us."

First love is his love for us.

First love is so full of his love for us that love is our response to him and to others.

How is our first love lost?

By forgetting his love for us.

We begin to think only of our love for him and for ourselves.
This is not enough.
We get the love relationship reversed.
How is our love renewed?
By concentrating on God's love for us.
By thinking, reviewing, and meditating on this first love.
As we do this, we become so full of his love for us that we have a new love inside us.
Our love begins to be renewed and restored.
Notice two basic thoughts about love.
First: God's unconditional love for us.
Anything that is unconditional is not subject to conditions or limitations.
It is not dependent on certain responses being produced.
How does God love us unconditionally?
By not loving us sentimentally.
His love corrects us and disciplines us.
In love he chastens us.
Revelation 3:19 states: "Those whom I love, I reprove and chasten."
God's love is not dependent on our response to His love for us.
God's love has no limits.
For He loves all people everywhere.
His love is not limited to friends; it also includes enemies.
It is not limited as to how long it loves.
God's unconditional love is not based on our performance.
He loves us in spite of our disobedience, rebellion, selfishness and weakness.
God's unconditional love cares for each of us as someone special.
Second: Our unconditional love for others.
If God loves us unconditionally, we ought to love ourselves and others without strings attached.
When we love unconditionally, we do several things.
We love others whatever their response.
We love others without setting limits for our love.
We love everyone.
We refuse no one.
We love constantly, even as Jesus loved his disciples.
He loved them to the end.
We love others based not on what they do but on who they are.
We all make many mistakes.
Our love is not based on another's person's performance.
We love others without expectations.
When we love with expectations and those expectations are not fulfilled, we tend to become inwardly hurt.
So we love according to their needs and not our expectations.
If we yield our expectations of the other person to God, not only are we free to love, but the other person is free to respond.
What if we expressed true unconditional love in our families, in our communities, and in our churches?
This is the way we are supposed to love, but how is it possible?
Let us admit that we cannot love this way.
We must admit our inability yet realize that it is God's command.
The only way we can love as God loves is to have his love in us.
We are to yield ourselves to the Lord to allow his love to flow through us and to others.
This is how his love is perfected in us
His ability is released by our availability.
When we are full of God's love for us, our love is renewed with all its capabilities.
Why not determine right now to let God's love in you love someone else.

Think of those who need your love and let God's love in you tell you how to love that person.
You will be amazed at what begins to happen, in you for that person.
The God of love wants to love through you for you are His agent on earth.
Be love and do love and further the Kingdom of God on earth, For it is a kingdom of love.