

# “The Message to the Church at Ephesus”

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Sunday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Giving honor to God, who is the Head of our lives. Giving honor to our Savior, our Master, He Who is the Giver of all good and perfect gifts. Giving honor to the One who went to Calvary's mountain, He who didn't leave anyone out, didn't hold a single thing against us, Who let His blood flow from His body that our sins might be washed away, that we might join Him in deliverance. Giving honor to that Lord, Savior, Master. Giving honor to all of His servants in this ministry. Our founding pastor, he and his family, their labor, their efforts. Our pastor, he and his family, their labor, their efforts, on whose shoulders the ministry now stands. Giving honor to all those who have stood in the gap to make up the hedge, who say, “Lord, I'll answer the call, I'll do what You tell me to do, I'll go where You tell me to go.” Giving honor to all of them. And, giving honor to all of y'all, who have prepared your hearts, and come before the Lord, and say, “God, you know I want You to do something for me. I want that reigning in me that we sing about. In my darkest hour, I want You to reign in me. Over everything, Lord. Just keep doing it.” What do you do when you just get filled with that awesome Spirit of God? When you just get a touch from God, and you know that nobody can give you a touch like that but God Himself.

Tis is, of course, the summation, for our last Sunday for the Time of Sanctification. Of course, our scripture for this time has been from the Book of 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles, chapter 7, and verse number 16:

**2 Chronicles 2:16** *For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.*

Us being God's House. Us being God's House, that His name may be over our lives perpetually. We've taken this time to go through the Book of Ephesians, and our prayer, of course, is that it has been nurturing, that it's been instructional, and that it has been a benefit and a profit to our lives. As we subject ourselves to the will of God, and the Word of God, that the nutrition will come in, builds us up to a viable, stronger person, because God truly has something for each and every one of us. It's amazing. It is amazing, how he is able to separate everybody, and give us each exactly what we need. Everybody could pray at the same time, and He could answer them all at the same time; what kind of God is that? Amen.

Our Scripture text for today is going to be from the Book of Revelation, chapter 2.

**Revelation 2:1-7** *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; 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: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.*

If we could bow our heads for just a moment. Lord, truly we come before You, and what could we possible bring, for, God, we are humbled in Your presence. You're such an amazing and wonderful and awesome Lord unto us. We thank You for everything that You have done for us, God; for the things

that we even forget. We would call them little, but, You put them in our lives just the same. If we were missing them, God, we would complain about them. We don't know, God, You've been good to us over and over and over. We thank You for this time to praise and lift voice to You, to let all the world know that You are the God over our lives. We thank You for that. And, we ask at this time that You would add a blessing to the reading of Your Word, that You would teach us what You have for us, because, surely, as you have said in Your Book, that Your Word would not return unto You void, but accomplish that to which it was sent. God, we ask that You would perform the doing of it, that we might all benefit from it, and go on to be even more pleasing in Your sight, to offer up more praises and more wonders unto You Holy and precious name. This we do come, and pray, in Jesus' name, and everyone said, amen.

Well, here we are, and it is the end of the month; it is the end of our Time of Sanctifi—well, I'm not going to say that, because truly, we hope that, although this might be the end of the time that we do it as all one body, to come together—anybody receive a blessing from the Time of Sanctification? I know that many people have prayer partners, accountability partners—I want to thank my accountability team so much for holding my feet to the fire, and for sharing, and never letting the candle go out. It's always wonderful when you're able to do something with somebody else; it's like a team effort. Here we are, the last Sunday of October, as we go on to wrap up all that has gone on before.

We've gone through the Book of Ephesians, chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. Chapter 1, if we could do just a brief recap: In chapter 1, the Bible talks about, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world..." (Ephesians 1:4) He hath chosen us. Thinking about us long before we came on this earth. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins..." (Ephesians 1:7) "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance..." (Ephesians 1:11) "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward..." (Ephesians 1:19)

In Chapter 2, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ..." (Ephesians 2:4-5) Amazing. Amazing. He made us to live, not alone, but it says He hath quickened us together with Christ. "... (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:" (Ephesians 2:5-6) Amen, amen, amen. And then it goes on to say, "For we are his workmanship..." (Ephesians 2:10) We are the Lord's workmanship. Just point to yourself, and say, "God made me." We are His workmanship. Imagine Him fashioning—before you were ever born, saying, "Hey, this is My child, I'm forming him, I'm forming her. I'm going to make them specially for a purpose." We are His workmanship. "...created in Christ Jesus unto good works..." (Ephesians 2:10)

In Chapter 3, "Wherefore I desire that ye faint not... (Ephesians 3:13) At the tribulations of Paul, that you faint not. That was the prayer that he had for all the people that were in the church at Ephesus, that they would not faint. He goes on to say, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named..." (Ephesians 3:14-15) Everybody who is part of the family gets the same name. And then he says a Scripture that could be the theme forever, and, as Brother Chris was preaching on this, it was just astounding. I use it, I love it, I thought I had memorized it, but it's amazing how, when somebody else shares about the blessing—they could talk about anything—and the same incident, they talk about a blessing, and you share what you got from it, and they share what they got from it, and it just adds to the blessing. "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us," (Ephesians 3:20) Amen, amen. You can take that one to the bank, nail it up over your little bureau, put it on your mirror where you brush your teeth, and just know, he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask, even above all that we think. What kind of God is that? Amen.

In Chapter 4, "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Ephesians 4:3) Endeavoring. Trying hard, as he admonished the Ephesians. It's all about being together; it's all about being united. Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit—don't let things get between and break you up, cause divisions. It's amazing how, when the Lord came, and He taught, His disciples, they all had that

understanding, and we fast-forward to 2014, two thousand and some-odd years later, and we have churches by the dozens. Get enough of them in a room, and you're going to have nothing but an argument. It's amazing. But he asked that we would endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. He went on to share with them how, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;" (Ephesians 4:4.) Everybody has a calling. I've heard people say, "I'm just waiting on the Lord." Yes, truly, that's a good thing to wait on the Lord for what He has for you. Each one of us is called. Each one of us, as we were formed, He has something or some things us, specifically, and us alone, for us to do. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism," (Ephesians 4:5.) "And He gave some..." the Scriptures go on to say, "...He gave some..." He put a structure in the church. "And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;" (Ephesians 4:11.) He gave some in the ministry, and you notice, not everybody does the same thing in the ministry. You know, I had aspirations, but not everybody can do the same things, because, going along with that calling, God knows what He's doing in His church, and He wants every joint to supply. It's amazing, you find that some people have that whole gift of comfort. I've seen some people, not even say a word, just able to give a hug, or just a semblance of a bowed head, and it's amazing what you can feel, just coming from them, because God has given that to them. Other people are able to come, and they share, and they talk loud, and maybe sometimes you want to put some earplugs in, but you know the direction its going in, and from it, you're able to remember what they say, over and over, because God has put that in them. Others are able to just crack open the Word, or just see every soul—anybody know a good evangelist? I know some. I know some good evangelists right here in this room. It seems that, no matter where you drop them, they see an opportunity to share the greatness of that great Lord above. They see a soul, and then, "You, you, you, you could learn to love Him; He's so wonderful." I've been in the company of some really good evangelists. I've seen some here do it, and I wondered, "How did I get left out?" I'd love to be able to do that. Those are the things that the Lord gave to the church, it says here in the Book of Ephesians, chapter 4.

Going on to Chapter 5, as Jesse talked last week... Chapter 5, where it went on to say, "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us..." (Ephesians 5:1-2) Before Jesse got to the part where it talks about the husbands and wives together—that was awesome, that was awesome—but, before it got there, it says, "Submitting yourselves one to another..." (Ephesians 5:21) Back to that unity thing. Back to that humility thing. We're living in a day and age, honestly, where it's almost every man and woman for themselves. Hey, you know how it says do unto them as you would have them do unto you? This is, "Do unto them and then split!" "Do unto them and then get out of the way!" "Do all that you can and then get gone!" That is not the case that it said in the Book of Ephesians Chapter 5. Submitting ourselves, one to another... Then it went on to say, as the scripture said, and as the brother preached it last week, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands..." and, right with that, "...as unto the Lord." (Ephesians 5:22) "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ..." as the Lord and Master, "...also loved the church, and gave himself for it;" (Ephesians 5:25.) You know, there were so many things that came to mind, and I thought, "Good gugga mugga! I'm 53 years old, and I feel like I'm about 5." Man, there's so much to learn in the Lord. Amen.

And then, as Chris had preached from Ephesians Chapter 6, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord..." We got a lot of amens on that. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right." (Ephesians 6:1) It went on to say, "Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise);" (Ephesians 6:2) "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." Then it went on to say, to make sure you put on, and take God's protection with you every place you go. "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day..." (Ephesians 6:13)

So, that was really quick, wrapping up the Book of Ephesians. However, that wasn't all that God said to the church of Ephesus. From the Book of Revelation, Chapter 2, if we could go to verses 1 and 2 just quickly:

**Revelation 2:1-2** *Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, [How in the world do you hold a star? This ain't no comic book; how do you hold a star, let alone seven? You must be some kind of awesome. We know that God's number of completeness is seven, so actually, what it's saying is He holds everything in His right hand. That's the kind of God that we come before.] who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, [What a wonderful statement our Lord says to us.] 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:*

So, He says, to the angel of the church... Is this saying that churches have angels? Well, yes. Yes, they do, but this isn't specifically about that. This is unto the messengers of the church. This is unto the messengers of the church. God gives the message to the messenger, to that angel, specifically, of the church. He says write these things down. Now, if we've been around for any length of time, I mean, you don't have to go across the country, you could stay right here; you don't even have to go across the county; you don't even have to go across the whole city; you could just go in this little neighborhood, and you can see that we've got a lot of churches around here. Well, one of the things that you're going to find out about churches, if you've been around for any length of time, is that they all seem to have some kind of identity. They all seem to have some sort of makeup, you know, some churches are really good at evangelism. Yeah. Some churches, they have a hundred voice choir, or a two-hundred voice choir, and they put a lot of time on their singing, and it's wonderful; so majestic. Some churches are very good at their outreach program, and I've seen churches that would have the homes for unwed moms. I've seen churches that would have homes for the under-privileged kids. I've seen churches where they would have programs where they would send missionaries out, and they support them as they send them out. So, truly, we see, if we've been around for any length of time, that many churches have some sort of identity. This church did, too, have an identity; the church at Ephesus. He says, "I know your works, your labor, I know what you've done." This church at Ephesus, it was a church of zeal. It was a church of wanting to get things done. It was a church of not getting cold in God. It tried those that said they were apostles, so, it was a church of standing to the Word, letting the Word have dominance over everything. You might say that you're doing such-and-such, but the truth is, when we try you with the Word of God, how do you stand up? Yeah, the church at Ephesus had a lot of things going on, here. It went on to t=say that this church didn't mind rolling up their sleeves and getting to work, whatever the issue was. And we know that the church of Ephesus—Ephesus, as we've said before, was the second largest city in the Roman Empire. It wasn't just one location, because it was a big city and there were these small gatherings around Ephesus. Yes, they would get together when they had the opportunity, but they didn't wait for the one day a week, for the Sabbath, because they knew that God was a God of every day. So, this church was a church of gathering; this church was a church of trying, and Lord turns around to them, and, at the end, He has this message for them—and, if any of us are here today, we could say that God has a message for us. That message would be that God knows your labor. He knows what you do. He knows all your efforts; He know every time you cry. He knows when you get your feelings hurt. He knows when you go to do something for somebody and it doesn't seem to come to fruition; He knows that. He knows when you go to pray for somebody and it feels like, "Maybe my prayer didn't work," God knows you prayed, and He knows every effort that we have put forth. That's why He tells them, "I know your labor, I know your effort, I know your work." God knows, after all, it's a wonderful thing that God knows all these labors and efforts that we do—none of it ever falls to the ground. Never think to yourself, "Nobody sees what I do!

Nobody knows what I do! God, I feel like it's a wasted effort." He knows all the things that we do. It's precious, it's precious, it's precious, because He doesn't forget a single one. And, after all, the Bible says that, not only was there the Book of Life, but there were other books, and those books were opened up, and written in, and what was written in those books is what we were judged by. So, that book was the Book of Works. Amen.

If we could go on to verse number 3, we could see that the Scripture says:

**Revelation 2:3** *And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.*

If I could speak for just a second, if any one here feel like that maybe what you do doesn't really amount to whole lot. If I could speak to anybody to say, "You know, maybe the judgment that you feel that other people have of you is that whatever you do is small, and minimal, and really doesn't amount to much; God says, 'I know your labor. I know what you do. Everything! I know your heart is poured out to Me. I know it! Don't worry about everybody else. I know you better. Your labor, your work, what you do in God.'" Now, the truth is that we, as human beings, place all kinds of value and estimates on things. The fact of the matter is, if a person were to, if they were to build a big building, and put their name on it, that has a lot of value, some in our society might say. Maybe, if we were to climb a high mountain, plant a flag, "I've done it!" That has a lot of value. We esteem them so great. There's a lot of value being placed on the size of a person in our society today. If you're thin, you got it going on, yeah! I don't got to worry about that one. But, if you're thin, you know you're in. That might be the case in this society, but on the other side of the world—I had the opportunity to go to Samoa. I had the opportunity to go Tonga. It ain't that way, there. No, no, if you're stout, if you're big, if you're thick you got it going on. That's prestigious; that's awesome; that's wonderful in that particular culture. We have other things that we place value on. Cars. If you have a big, expensive car—one of my relatives, he bought a Lexus, the top-of-the-line Lexus, and everybody as talking about it. "It's not just a Lexus, it's a top-of-the-line Lexus." We place value on things because we're taught certain things have value. Yeah. Yeah. Well, society and cultures and families, yes, we tell what has value, but we aren't the only system, the only entities that place value on things, because God Himself places value on things, too. God Himself places value on things, also.

**Revelation 2:4** *Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love*

So, God says to these people who roll up their sleeves, and they try those who say they are apostles and found them to be liars, God says to them, "Yeah, I do still have something against you, because you have left your first love." That had to be stunning to say, "All this that they do, and they still ain't doing enough?" It's, I'd rather—you know, when you take a test, you want to know. If you get the answer wrong, you don't want to stay wrong. You ask, "What's the right answer?" Once you find the right answer, you say, "Oh." God gives His people the right answers when you're doing something wrong. Now, God, here He says, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." So, we see that God places value on love. God places value on love. Yes, God—the originator of the relationship—He, this God, places value on love. Yeah, he made Adam, and he and Adam had a relationship. Then He made Eve, and then Adam and Eve and Him had a relationship. Then the kids, and then they had a relationship. Then a small society, and they had a relationship. God, the originator of relationship, places value on love. Make no mistake, He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6) You seek Him, you seek God out, and you say, "God, I want more love," and God says, "I'm with you! Let's make it happen!" Why, why, why, why would it say, 'first love?' I mean, you can have a lot of loves, right? I used to think it was, you know, like when a guy gets his first girlfriend, he's like

a puppy at a doggone bone factory. He don't even know what to do; happy all the time. I've seen it. Every thought that they have is all about the girlfriend. I haven't so much seen the other side where the girlfriend—well, I'm sure it exists. I haven't so much seen the other side where the girlfriend, well, they're giving the whole thing, but they tell me—I've got five sisters—I've seen, they do it real subtly, where they do that whole make-up, and the hair, and that whole thing. They were telling me, "I'm spending a lot of time in the bathroom because I've got to get this thing *right*." That's what my five sisters said. I used to think it was like that, but, you know what? when you talk about your first love, it's really easy, because you've got to ask yourself, if you were to name your top ten things that you're really crazy about, that are really special to you, what's number one? Then you are able to see, "You know what? That's not my first love." When I was born again, I had one thing on my mind when I came up. When I came up, it was all about, "God, I'm giving myself to You! God, show me—I don't know what's ahead, but I know I just want You to be with me. My first love. God, I know You're going to take care of everything else. You're going to enrich my relationship, You're going to enrich my well-being. You're going to enrich my rest, my health. God, You're going to take care of this whole thing if I just trust You." So, the Bible goes on to say, in verses five and six:

**Revelation 2:5-6** *Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.*

"Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent," In other words, come back, because I'm making room for you. "But I know that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans..." If you want to know who these people of Nicolas were, which is where the word, 'Nicolaitans' come from, the people of Nicolas were people that said that the deeds of the body have no affect on the state of the soul, because, how can flesh affect the soul? It doesn't happen like that. That's what the Nicolaitans were. Laying out that doctrine for people to follow, and they had some followers. This Nicolas guy had some followers, and his followers were called the Nicolaitans. The Christians, the people of Ephesus, hated that doctrine. They would tell them, "Don't you know? Everything you do, the God that made you and loves you is watching." So, they were trying to tell the Nicolaitans, "That's a lie! That's a lie!"

If we could go to—there's two Scriptures:

**1 Timothy 1:3** *As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine,*

So, Ephesus was a place of teaching sound doctrine. Ephesus was a place where they taught. Apostle Paul put Timothy here, at a point, to make sure that he charged them that they teach the right Word of God in Ephesus. If we were to slide over to Second Timothy, Apostle Paul says:

**2 Timothy 1:18** *The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.*

So, Ephesus is a place of ministering to each other. It's a place of looking to the needs of your brothers and sisters and helping them. It's a place of help. Lastly, of course, in Second Timothy Chapter 4:

**2 Timothy 4:12** *And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus.*

So, Ephesus was a place of help; where reinforcements were sent in. Where people come to help. "I have sent him to come help you, there at Ephesus."

Finishing up, in Revelation:

**Revelation 2:7** *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.*

So, this message is, “If you overcome, Saints, if you overcome, I will give you the right to eat of the tree of life in paradise. I will give unto you the right to eat in paradise of the tree of life.” Does this mean that we won’t fall? no. No, it doesn’t mean that we won’t fall, but it does mean that we will have the opportunity to get back up. Ephesus is a place where you get back up when you stumble. You get back up until you win. You know, I saw this thing on TV some time ago, and, one of the things that I came to realize is that the enemy of progress, and promotion, is just being comfortable. One you’re good and comfortable, you seek to promote; you don’t seek progress. I saw this on TV—I was a kid—and they had this lion-tamer, and he took this lion, and he had like a big leash on it, took him out into the street. Yeah, they were around people, and cameras... It was a big crowd, with a lion there. *A lion*. Out on the street with, yes, a leash. You could look, and the lion was majestic in the way it looked, and you could tell, yeah, that’s a real lion. Then, the cameras were going, and the bulbs were flashing, and all that started happening, and the lion let out a roar: “Raaaaawr!” All of the sudden, everybody got scared. You know why? because they knew that this was a lion roaring. Then the lion broke off the leash and started running. Guess where the lion were to run. The lion ran back to the cage. The lion ran back to the cage, because that’s where the lion was comfortable. Everybody else knew that that was a lion, but the lion himself. Everybody else knew the potential; everybody else knew the strength, the power that existed within that body but the lion himself, who ran back to his cage. It just has to be said that when we find ourselves being comfortable, and shutting down on our progress, and our promotion, we just have to know that we are capsuling our potential and our power. We have to know—they say that people who are in jail for a long time that they get comfortable with it, and when it comes time to be released, many times they say, “I don’t know what to do on the outside, I might as well just stay here.” They don’t see the vibrant potential that still exists within themselves; they’ve become accustomed to jail. It becomes the same way with sin’s prison. Not having the deliverance because we choose the comfort or complacency of wherever we are. You’ll hear people say it: “I’m comfortable where I am.” If anybody just realizes, “It’s time to just shake myself off, stand up, and say, ‘I will be an overcomer, because that is what God gave me!’ He gave that to me. As soon as I overcome, He gave me the power. He said, “To him that overcometh will I give the right to eat the tree of life in paradise.” That’s yours.

Let’s see if I have this right: “You mean God knows when I feel outnumbered, and God knows when I get my feelings hurt, and God knows when I get my heart broken, and God knows when I’m facing something that I just don’t know what to do? You mean that’s the case?” Yes, absolutely. And, absolutely, God knows when we’re sick, and God knows when we’re broke. Yes, God knows everything that we’re facing—He saw it when it was coming, and He knows, on the other side, the victory that’s there for us to win. That’s what he’s given us. We just have to overcome it.

So, as we just wrap up our service of the message to the church at Ephesus... As the Lord said, “I have come to save you by My grace, redeem you by My blood, and I love you, and I will give you an inheritance.” Don’t faint, but come humbly before God. Each of us is called to be with our Heavenly Father. Called, specifically, to be there with God. Don’t allow yourself to be all alone, but allow yourself to be unified. Husbands and wives, love each other like the Lord loves you. Take the protection of His armor with us, every place we go, and take care of that relationship.

Give the Lord a praise.