

9/10/2023- I LOVE MY CHURCH!

PASTOR LEE

We Love
Our Church!

- We are celebrating what God does through the local church! Pastor Lee: I love the Church, everyone, servers, Kidz, Worship, Senegal/Mexico missions, bible study groups, etc. - - teams of ALL kinds coming togetherdynamic/ spiritually blessed /prayer-oriented environment...., generous, mission-based and Christ-first driven. Every week, people come to this Church and newly put their trust/faith in Jesus. Bold initiatives all over ...eg. Great Valley. An atmosphere that encourages each of us to live for Jesus. So, I LOVE MY CHURCH!

Would
Jesus?

- With Rev 2/3 as a backdrop (ie. Seven Churches).....question is:..... DOES JESUS LOVE THIS CHURCH? He walked the seven Churches (modern day Turkey) and he walks the churches today. *We may think* our Church is awesome ((for our needs and by our standards)....but would Jesus???
- In the ancient churches of Rev., Jesus had some good (encouraging) and some harsh (calling for repentance) things to say. It is truly humbling to think that Jesus is walking around/sitting with us in this room today! We, as a Christ-first church (in every area of our lives.....not just in this building) want to please Him...are we?

Both then &
Now--Jesus
Knows Our
Churches!

- Rev 3:8.....to the Church of Philadelphia:....."you have kept My word and not denied My name." To the Church in Ephesus, He said (Rev 2:3): You have persevered and endured hardships for My name and have not grown weary."To the Church in Thyatira (Rev2:19): I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance....."
- However and using Thyatira as example...as He's walking around...He also said (paraphrase): you're not hot...you're not cold...**YOU'RE JUST LUKEWARM**.....but certainly NOT on fire. To the Church at Sardis, Rev3:1), He said: ".....you have the reputation of being alive **BUT YOU'RE DEAD.**" Back to the Church at Ephesus He said (Rev2:4) "Yet I hold this against you: **YOU HAVE ABANDONED YOUR FIRST LOVE**". ...**LOST YOUR PASSION FOR JESUS.** Church of Pergamum: (REV 2:14).... actually **BROUGHT IN PAGAN PRACTICES!** In V 16, He says (paraphrase) 'Repent or I will fight you with the sword of My mouth.'

Jesus:
"Who Am I"
Peter:
"The Christ"

- Jesus' words to Peter about the Church: Math 16:13.....".....when people hear my name, who do they say I am? Disciples throw out answers.....He repeats question. Most critical question...for the apostles then.....and for us now. The answer serves as foundation of why we would even be interested in wondering what Jesus would think of our Church.
- In V16, Peter responds:"**YOU ARE THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD.**" Jesus responds approvingly (V17) and attributes it to "my Father who is in heaven."
- V18, Jesus acclaims: "....you are Peter and upon this rock I shall build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Pastor Lee: let's re-frame this conversation to today....back to shirt slogan: "I LOVE MY CHURCH". When Jesus said, in V18, that **HE WILL BUILD HIS CHURCH** we

Peter's Faithful Rock/ Foundation

need to understand....THIS IS JESUS'S CHURCH!! That's why we care about it so much...and His 'walk-around assessment'.

- THE WORD "CHURCH"...used by Jesus, was new....spoken in Aramaic by Him, translated to Greek, was 'Ecclesia'....ie... an 'assembly'....a group called into a common mission/task...and something which He said 'the gates of hell could not prevail against it.' He is, then, calling us into something greater... into His work/ministry! (Not to a building!)
- The "Rock" in all this is Peter's confession.....and foundation of faith/love it represents. And nothing no enemy, not even death) will stop this group's mission of faith going forward. V21:Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders, chief priests and scribes and be killed, and on the third day be raised. So, Jesus says 'I going to go die' BUT, the gates of hell will not prevail!

The Church: Through Christ's His Death/ Sacrifice

- Acts:20:28- - Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the Church of God, which He attained with His own blood. His death would not be the end but the beginning of victory....and laying the foundation for our salvation. Jesus died because we were sinners....our sins hung Him on a cross....that separation from God could be atoned for/satisfied no other way...and by no amount of good works..... only by His sacrifice on the Cross. Then He rose from the dead to say 'victory over death'....victory over sin. This verse says...the Church of God exists because of Jesus' blood/sacrifice.
- Scripture gives us two things to help us remember Jesus: 1. Baptism....a public declaration of our trust in Jesus and acclamation to be part of the 'Church'. (Next Calvary Baptism: 9/24); 2. Last Supper- - Communion- - gathered together in remembrance of Him, His love, and sacrifice....and we do so, not as a ritual, but in a personal/intimate way.

Christ's Bride: The Church

- Another picture to describe His intimate relationship with us....the Church being the 'Bride' (of Christ).
- Re 'bride', Eph 5:25-27- - Husbands, love your wives, AS CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF UP FOR HER, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word, so that He might present the Church to Himself in splendor without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. So God used our perception of marriage to describe the bride/bridegroom relationship of Jesus to the Church. Ie: HIS LOVE FOR US! (Its also descriptive of His instruction re: how husbands should love wives.
- See V. 28-32: In the same way, husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the Church because we are members of His body. Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. THIS MYSTERY IS PROFOUND, AND I AM SAYING THAT IT REFERS TO CHRIST AND THE CHURCH. Men: in the same context, we sacrifice our own desires for our wives....cleanse your relationship just as the Church is cleansed as we read/study/abide by the Word.....perfect metaphor.

View Church With Love & Contriteness

- AS JESUS WALKS AROUND THIS PLACE, WE SHOULD BE CONVICTED OF OUR SINS.....WE ARE NOT (in the vernacular) "ALL GOOD"COMPROMISING FOR CURRENT CULTURE IS NOT ACCEPTABLE.....REALLY SEE HIM WHO GAVE HIS LIFE FOR YOU.....AND REPENT!

You... a
'Living Stone'

- 1 Peter 2:4-5 - As you come to Him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious. You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Ecclesia:
We Are
The Church!

- The building is NOT the Church.....You are!.....when we do things that God has called us to do....eg. worship/praise to Him, preach God's word, partake of communion, get baptized repent, serve, give, etc.then we share Jesus in the outside world...all becoming a powerful force that the term 'ecclesia' represents. Peter says we are a holy, royal priesthood!
- 1 Cor: 12-27 - You are the bodies of Christ and individually members of it. So, you can't say you love Jesus but not the Church (an oxymoron). You cannot speak against His Bride. Love Jesus- - Love the Church. Also, we are not a place of information.....it is so much more. **TREAT THIS PLACE AS A HOME...NOT A HOTEL. BE A PART OF THIS HOME.....part of the 'ecclesia'.**

THE ROCK— --LIVING STONES— -- THE CHURCH

THROUGH JESUS