



## Sermon Notes from 6 January

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### Recapturing Your First Love (*Revelation 2:1-7*)

by Pastor GL Wong

*Agape* is a Greek word referring to the highest form of love – unconditional and sacrificial love. It is how God loves and also how He wants us to love one another.

v4 God wants to rekindle the *Agape* spirit in the church in Ephesus for love had weakened in the church over time. *As a church, do we embody the Agape spirit that God so desires? Have we abandoned the spirit we had at first?* We the church are called to reflect *Agape* love!

**Context:** Revelation, the last book in the Bible, which contains, among other things 7 letters to 7 historical churches, was written by John the Apostle (the sent out – chosen messenger of God) at the end of 100 AD in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey). While banished by the Roman authorities to the Greek island of Patmos, God revealed visions to John.

v1 *Him* refers to Christ who is lovingly caring and maintaining the spiritual life of the churches. He *walks* – is present among the churches. He holds on to each of us (no one can snatch us from his hands), and He dwells among us (He vigilantly watches over us).

The 3 things that Jesus gives to the church in Ephesus to rekindle their first love:

1. A Commendation (vv2-3) for sound doctrine, and endurance under persecution for not bowing to the goddess Diana or the emperor.

v6 The Nicolaitan sect was heretical, and propagated sexual immorality and idolatry. The church in Ephesus however was serious about purity before God. Jesus showed grace even though their obedience was flawed.

Mat 25:23 Neither the prideful achiever nor the self-absorbed slacker has correctly understood the gospel of

grace. The Spirit-led yearning for God's commendation will keep us faithful. No condemnation from Christ does not mean no commendation from Christ. Christianity is about the good news - sinners saved by grace through faith in Christ who died for us. A true understanding of grace always fuels a life of loving obedience.

2. A Rebuke (Rev 2:4-5; Pro 27:7) He loves us enough to tell us the truth! We are of no eternal good when we depart from love! Christ and His Church are meant to be in intimacy – you know He is so clearly for you (Rom 8:31) that you are able to hear what he has against you! They had abandoned their love for Jesus - an active departure from love, beginning with the heart! The love they had at first was for both Christ and His Church! Repent of the coldness of heart (v5). Resume the works you did out of love – prioritize the Christian Ordinaries.

3. A Promise (v7; Gen 2:9; Rev 22:2) What Adam and Eve forfeited through sin, we regained through Christ. *Paradise* means 'beautiful garden'. To overcome or conquer, in Greek has an athletic, military metaphor connoting superiority and victory over a vanquished foe. Jhn 16:33; Rev 19 Jesus overcame at the cross and there is a last end-time fight between the defiant devil and Jesus.

#### 3 applications

1. Deepen your devotional life. Fight with the word of God (Eph 6). We are here for a mission.

2. Deepen your evangelistic fervor. Pray with expectant hope, and reach out to the lost to come to faith in Christ.

3. Pray for Pastor Guna and his family. Pray against the wiles and schemes of the wicked one.