

Lessons From the Sermon of Jesus on the Mountain Part 44

The Letter of Jesus to the Ephesians church

“14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:14-16 KJV)

Speaking being the light of the world, we need to be put the candle on candlestick ***“Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.” (Matthew 5:15 KJV)*** And the candlesticks are the churches of Christ as we read in the book of Revelation, ***“The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.” (Revelation 1:20 KJV)*** Jesus here was speaking to His disciples and apostles, and intended that His church and ministers to be the light to the world and to the brethren.

From the warning that He warned us, which He also sent to them and to us again through His revelation to Apostle John, the last apostle who was in exiles in the Islet of Patmos, we are led now to study the life of the seven churches that were in Asia and received letters from Jesus. We will study these churches one by one and will find out what the Lord wants us to reflect on in our lives as disciples, workers and minister in His vineyard, and in His church. Jesus said, ***“20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:20 KJV)*** ***We need to study these churches in the book of Revelation so that each and every one of us will see himself or herself clearly, so we will not be left without teaching, rebuke and correction, and in such way we are given mercy, another chance to repent and turn away from being like the Pharisees and the Scribes and do faithfully the work of God.*** We will see in these churches stories the examples of the Scribes and Pharisees that are rejected by God and the examples of the true disciples of Jesus that He ordained for us to live and follow.

1. The letter of Jesus Christ to the church in Ephesus: “1 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; 2 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: 3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. 4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 5 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. 6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. 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.” (Revelation 2:1-7 KJV)

“1 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.” (Revelation 2:1 KJV) Ephesus’ church named first, because it was the largest, most populous, and famous, and was nearest to Patmos, where John now was, and Ephesus was most known to him, it being the place where he had resided; and it was the place from whence the Gospel came to others, and spread itself in lesser Asia, and through that church other churches planted.

The angel of the church of Ephesus in verse 1 is the overseer, the bishop or the leader of the church. Timothy, whom the Apostle Paul sent there, and desired him to continue there, was the first bishop of the church, ***“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. 4 Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.” (1 Timothy 1:3-4 KJV)*** But until the time the letter was sent by John, there was another leader or leaders, for since the beginning that church had multiple elders as we read in the book of Acts, ***“And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.” (Acts 20:17 KJV)***

The letter directed from Jesus to show the strength of the church and the weaknesses of the church and what God wanted to change in the church of Ephesus. Jesus is the one who hold the seven churches in Asia and who hold the servants of each and every church and He is sending instruction because He needs them to do things in accordance to His will and in line with His Word. The letter was sent to the pastor or pastors, to the whole body of ministers, by them to be communicated to the church.

“These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.” (Revelation 2:1 KJV) Our Lord remarkably hold His ministering: servants as stars in His right hand; stars are to give light to the lost world by preaching the Gospel as God ordained for it to be preached. Stars in the book of Daniel are those who lead and turn others into righteousness, ***“And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.” (Daniel 12:3 KJV)***

Jesus held the seven stars mean not only that the church servants are controlled by Him but, as well as they are protected by Him. Jesus protected Apostle Paul for two years in this place of Ephesus, and preserved him and his companions safe in the mid of the uproar raised by Demetrius the silversmith about them. Here also in Ephesus God protected Timothy at a time when there were many adversaries, and kept the elders of this church pure, inspite of the erroneous persons that rose up among them; and last of all God protected Apostle John, who resided in Patmos, and died in peace, inspite of the rage and fury of his persecutors against him. ***Therefore, since He is faithful, we need to trust Him that He can save us and protect us while we continue to serve Him in the place that He ordained for us to stay, live and serve Him.***

“Who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.” (Revelation 2:1 KJV) Christ was not only present with, and took his walks in this church at Ephesus, but in all the churches of that period, which held forth the light of the Gospel.

“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.” (Revelation 2:2 KJV)

“I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience.” (Revelation 2:2 KJV) The church in Ephesus was planted by Apostle Paul; he did the work that God had prepared for him to do. He laboured and persevered to push the Gospel to the whole Asia minor through that church, that is now Turkey, with all patience bearing all the pain and the pressure of the ministry as he said to the elders of the church, ***“18 Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, 19 Serving the LORD with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: 20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, 21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Acts 20:18-21 KJV)*** The service of Paul was with humility of mind, in his mind the plan of God and the purpose of God, praying and crying with many tears, facing trials and troubles, from the Jewish who were opposing him. But he continued declaring to the Greek and the Jews that they need to repent, and he was moving from house to house teaching and preaching, in addition to the public church meetings that he was holding. ***Therefore and in the same way, we as church and ministers of Christ need to do the same, living with a good life testimony and be willing to suffer for Christ in order to bring His Word to others.***

We can read the story of the plantation of this church in the book of Acts. Paul in his first visit to the city of Ephesus it was a short visit, ***“18 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow. 19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. 20 When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; 21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.” (Acts 18:18-21 KJV)*** Later on Paul came back to the city of Ephesus as God led him to do His will, and start more extensive work and with a systematic organized way, and Paul stayed there for two years, ***“1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, 2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. 3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. 4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. 7 And all the men were about twelve. 8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. 9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. 10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.” (Acts 19:1-10 KJV)*** Paul here did the work with perseverance and

perfection and did everything in love. He travelled and came to the city, met the disciples that God sent him to them to hear the correct message and what they needed to do. Paul preached to them about the Holy Spirit Baptism the thing that they never heard before and that was the right message for them. ***We need always to discern to give the right message that the people needs to hear in accordance to the will of God.*** Paul started with them from where they are. They were just baptized by the baptism of John, so Paul explained to them that the baptism of John was only for repentance and then they needed to be re-baptized into Christ in the name of Jesus, so Paul re-baptized them again in water in the name of Jesus, then he laid his hand on them and they received the gift of the Holy Spirit, ***and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.*** Then after, Paul continued to preach boldly in the synagogue for three months. So Paul was diligent and a man of perseverance that He did the work of God in a complete way. ***We in the same way need to be diligent and persevering in reaching others and persistent in giving them the teaching that they need to receive.*** Paul was also spoken evil by other people, but he did not give up, he separated the disciples and started to teach them in other place. ***We too need to do the same, even if we are persecuted and attacked we still need to separate the disciples from the other evil doers, and continue to teach them God's Word.*** Paul continued for two years to teach the disciples, ***so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.” (Acts 19:10 KJV)*** And God did great miracles on the hands of Paul and healed many, ***“11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: 12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.” (Acts 19:11-12 KJV)*** When we persevere as Paul persevered God shall do many miracles and heal many people and that will help us to spread God's Word.

“And how thou canst not bear them which are evil.” (Revelation 2:2 KJV) Paul preaching in this city caused the exposure of the false teachers of the Jewish in that city and brought them into Judgment, ***“13 Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the LORD Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. 14 And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. 15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? 16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.” (Acts 19:13-16 KJV)*** Such when happened cause the fear of God to fall on the Jewish and the Greeks and many repented, confessed their deeds, turned to the faith, and the Word of God spread, ***“17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. 18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. 19 Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.” (Acts 19:17-20 KJV)*** Here we can see and read clearly the repentance of those who practice magic art who brought their books and burned them. ***So what we can conclude here is that as we persevere in doing the work of God in a correct way, the Lord shall combat false teachers and expose them and put them to silence and will cause others to repent and come to the faith that we live and preach.***

The false teachers even at the time of Timothy were there as we can read, ***“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. 4 Neither give heed to fables and endless***

genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.” (1 Timothy 1:3-4 KJV) Here Timothy was again called to face those who were opposing the truth, who were teaching other doctrine. *We too are called today to face the false teachers and the false pastors whom devil had placed around us using the right message and the Godly example of life that God wants us to persevere in keeping in our lives.*

“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.” (Revelation 2:2 KJV) Paul inspite of all the pressure that he was in, and the abuse that he was passing through did not stop his effort to evangelize to reach the lost and to make disciple. He truly loved God, and in love and compassion he reached the lost souls. Paul said that he will continue to stay in this city and preach because many they were opposing him and was against Him, ***“8 But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. 9 For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.” (1 Corinthians 16:8-9 KJV)*** His staying in Ephesus was not a picnic but a real ministry, and he faced troubles, however, inspite of all that he continued his mission. The opposition that Paul was facing, considered as an open door for him to preach the gospel. He wrote, ***“If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die.” (1 Corinthians 15:32 KJV)*** That was done to Paul, for he was asked to fight the beast. To fight the beast is to be put in a real ring space with beasts, an animal, like a tiger, lion, or dogs, and you are called to fight with them. They were doing that either by putting them naked to be devoured, or armed to give them chance to overcome if they can. Possibly Paul was given chance to overcome; some they say that this only a figurative one and what Paul means in this writing is that he was fighting against persecution. However, Paul was put in such, but he continued to bear the pressure and continued to evangelize and do the ministry. Sure he was bad infront of all his adversaries; however, he continued to serve God in that city. *Therefore, we in the same way, inspite of all persecution, troubles and pressures that Satan may put on us we need to continue to do the work of God in the prescribed way that God wants us to keep.*

My dear and beloved: Jesus said in His Word, ***“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.” (Revelation 2:2 KJV)*** *Jesus expecting from us to continue to stand firm in faith, living a holy life unto Him, and preaching the right message that He want us to spread to the lost souls.*

Jesus expect from us to continue to evangelize reaching new areas and new people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Scribes and the Pharisees are those who are not willing to suffer to live in holiness and are not willing to suffer in facing the false teachers. *But, Jesus wants us to persevere in living in holiness, and refuting the false teachers and the liars who spread false teaching and compromises and are misleading others by condoning their sins.*

Therefore, as we persevere in living in humility and in doing faithfully His work He will be the one to combat the evil doers and their forces and He will do wonders and miracles that will confirm the word that we are preaching and teaching.

My prayer: Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins, who was buried and rose from the dead on the third day to give me eternal life. Lord, thank you for your Word that made me see clearly the way that I need to live and serve you to bring your Word to others.

Confess to God your sins and renounce them. Ask God forgiveness for your lack of perseverance and your non willingness to suffer in combating the false teachers around you.

Confess your sins to God. Lord forgives me the following sins
_____.

Lord I commit myself to abide with this Word of yours that I receive in this message and to abide with. Lord I surrender your life and my will fully to you. Lord I commit myself to evangelize reaching new people for Christ. Lord I commit myself to be a good example to others that people may see you through my life. Lord give me strength and patience to endure the pressure of the persecution. Lord fill me with the Holy Spirit and have me fully to you. Lord give me the gifts of the Holy Spirit so that I can go and serve you and evangelize and reach others and spread your Word and teach those who are willing to follow you.

Lord, I pray for my Brothers and Sisters who accepted your Word and are willing to live their lives and serve you in the way that you ordained for us. Lord protect them and provide all their needs. Lord work miracles for them and enable them to achieve the projects that you ordain for them to do.

Lord bless us and sustain us as a church. Lord help us, protect us, and provide for us to go on in serving you and do your work and your will. Lord give to us more of the Holy Spirit gifts to evangelize and to reach new people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and with the message of the Word of God. Lord, we pray that you will enable us to plant new Bible studies and new congregations for the church. Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us, and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus' name, Amen.

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