

## ***Lessons From the Sermon of Jesus on the Mountain Part 45***

### ***The continuity of the letter of Jesus to the Ephesians church***

***“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)***

Paul at Ephesus was persecuted when his preaching had affected certain business of temple makers to decline due to the conversion of the people in that city who were buying the product of that business as a mean for worship that god. When they came to Christ they stop buying that idol. Money is the first idol people worship after God, and when we preach one of the idol that will be greatly hit is money. The Pharisees hated Jesus because they were afraid of Him, that all people will follow Him and finally they will be thrown out from the temple of God. When we preach that idol of money will be hit; the cheating will be hit, and greed will be hit. This idol of money will be hit by directing the attention to give what is due to God, to save, to avoid wasting, and not to spend on idols and programs and projects that is against the will of God. With all these aspects the idol of money will be hit.

Let us continue to read here the details how the wide spread of God's Word had incited the persecution against the church in Ephesus: ***“21 After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome. 22 So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season. 23 And the same time there arose no small stir about that way. 24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; 25 Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. 26 Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: 27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. 28 And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. 29 And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre. 30 And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. 31 And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring***

***him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre. 32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused: and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together. 33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people. 34 But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. 35 And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter? 36 Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly. 37 For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess. 38 Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another. 39 But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly. 40 For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse. 41 And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.” (Acts 19:21-41 KJV)*** That event when it happened, Paul took the decision to leave Ephesus, ***“And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia.” (Acts 20:1 KJV)*** He left but the church continued to function. When that idol of money was hit and had affected the income of certain people that raised a persecution against Paul and against the church at Ephesus.

Even now where God had planted his church on earth the idol of greed and love of money is prevalent, and when we are challenged to choose between God or money, we need to choose God.

Paul came back again and met the elders of the church, ***“And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.” (Acts 20:17 KJV)***, and here in that meeting he warned them about the persecution that they will face and come across, ***“28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. 31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.” (Acts 20:28-31 KJV)*** As Paul told them, what really the church in Ephesus will passed through, the church was persecuted by those wolves and false teachers who came from outside and entered the flock, as well as from those who rose up from among them, speaking perverse things, and caused to pull and draw away disciples after them. That caused the church to suffer long and repeated battles fighting against false teachers who continued to pull disciples after them by speaking perverse things, and that is a heartbreaking things and so discouraging matter, and that church was known by that suffering, and stood against such, as we read, ***“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)*** They claim they are apostle and sent by God, they pretend that they are followers of the Holy Spirit of God, but they are proved later on that they are liars,

***grievous wolves***, they are not after doing God's will, but after their own selfish ambition; they joined the church with wrong and evil motive. The church had suffered much of those and stood firm to bear their bites and the damages that was inflicted on to destroy the church. More dangerous than that are those who raised from inside because they know the church and they know the members and they will harm more than those who are coming from outside.

***"And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted."* (Revelation 2:3 KJV)** The church continued to persevere for years to bear all that pain and pressure and labor for Christ's name. Labor is a strenuous work, and that what Jesus was testifying and commending for this church of good work that they had borne and they fainted not. They continued to keep the lamp lightened, to continue to give the light that is God's Word, to the lost souls, and to the whole house, the brethren of the church, directing it in the way that God ordained for, in details to feed the flock and disciple the members. *God wants us in the same way to continue to do the work of God with love, with perseverance, and with perfection as Paul did in Ephesus.*

***"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."* (Revelation 2:4 KJV)** The church in Ephesus was sound in doctrine and stood firm to defend the teaching that they received from the Lord through Apostle Paul. But the repeated and the aggressive attacks of the wolves had caused not only damage but discouragement and daunting in their attitude toward God, toward the brethren and toward God's work and ministry. That what Jesus meant by ***"Thou hast left thy first love."***

***"Thou hast left thy first love."*** means your love is less than the love that you had before 20 or 25 or 15 years, ... . Thanks God that He did not say that you lost your first love, but you left your first love, it means you can and you need to go back to it and take it; it means still you have it and you did not lose it. It means you can do the same as before if you want. This took place, the first love was left, because of the increasing wickedness and the disobedience that took place around them from the liars who called themselves apostles but they are liars. Notice: The meaning of apostle is to be sent of God.

Now, I can see the liars very clearly when they leave the church and how they go to celebrate the worldly events and they move on and do what they were prohibited to do and how they go back to the old life of wickedness and the love of money and material things. That wickedness and the enticement that those liars bring caused the love of the brethren at Ephesus church, to become cold, ***"And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."* (Matthew 24:12 KJV)** They love the world that is why they forsake the church and ministry as Demas did, ***"For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica."* (2 Timothy 4:10 KJV)** Such people like Demas when they leave the church they will bring enticement to others who want to follow God.

If I need to describe our church today, the Church of God United Arab Emirates, we are like the church in Ephesus, we had labored, we had worked, we had not fainted, we fought a good fight, we traveled, we preached, we baptized, we planted, we had planted Bible studies and congregations, we did a complete work, we are afflicted with many false apostles who came to the church with wrong motive, looking for living, and members who rose up and pull others after them and caused many divisions. We had

members who their heart was only after collecting living and not to serve Christ. Therefore when we preached, the idol of money was hit as what had happened with Paul in Ephesus and he was persecuted. *This idol will be hit when we rebuke the members and asking them to direct their finances to serve God and not to spend on things that are not of God and not in the will of God.*

We as church had passed through the same and we were afflicted repeatedly and along the years, and caused pain, discouragement, and decrease in our love toward God because the hurt we received, and caused us to be less in prayer, less in reading the Bible, less in love to the brethren, and less love to the work of God and less love for evangelism.

The scribes and the Pharisees in the church of Ephesus are those who refuse to pray, refuse to persevere, refuse to evangelize because they are still pondering on their previous wounds and enticed with the worldliness of those liars, and false apostles who left the church and are now enjoying the worldly life, but sooner or later judgment will reach them. *We need to come out of such despondency and a trap that devil had set to hinder us from serving God.*

***"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."* (Revelation 2:5 KJV)** Here the message of Jesus to the church to look on their path and trace their deteriorations along the time, and how they were failing God, that will make them realize that they need to repent, and how they will repent, by doing the work first they were doing. *Let us look to our good achievements in the past and what we are now and go forward and do what we were doing before.*

***"Or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."* (Revelation 2:5 KJV)** Here Jesus gave solemn warning against that church, that if they will not return back to their previous state and do the work of God in love as before, they will bear the consequences of their disobedience. How God will remove the candlestick, or the church? By allowing a heavy persecution and will not allow the church to stand because they are not willing.

***"6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate."* (Revelation 2:6 KJV)** Here Christ after His rebuke to them, He is coming to them to encourage them so they will stand again and come back to their first love. Christ was happy with their stand to hate sin and to hate the acts of those who keep and perpetuate sin and immoralities in the body of Christ. What are the ***deeds of the Nicolaitanes***, and who are the ***Nicolaitanes***? The Nicolaitans had committed fornication, adultery, and all uncleanness, and had their wives in common, and also ate things offered to idols. They were so called, as some think from Nicolas of Antioch, one of the seven deacons in ***Acts 6:5*** ***"And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch"* (Acts 6:5 KJV)** Though to Nicolas himself, it is said that he lived with his own lawful married wife, and no other, and that his daughters continued virgins all their days, and his son were non corrupt; and that these men, so called, only masked themselves under his name, and abused a saying or action of his, to patronize their wicked deeds. Nicolas had used to advise restraining of all carnal and unlawful lusts; but these men allowed and lived in indulgence in them, and so gave themselves up to all uncleanness. That is bad thing when people twist and abuse

some good testimonies of honest and well know people and use their names to do evil things to justify the wicked lives that they would like to live. *The church in Ephesus, was standing firm against such wickedness. That was pleasant to the Lord, but they needed to go back to their first love and do the work of God as they were doing before, in prayer, fasting, reading the Scriptures, in evangelizing and in discipling.*

*Here we are today as Church of God, we need to continue to stand firm against all the waves of false teaching, the false apostles, we need to stand firm against immoralities, we need not to be discouraged and stop doing the work if we are persecuted and had been bitten and attacked by grievous wolves. The Lord wants us to continue, because the more the message will be genuine when we persevere in such a time as this.*

***“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 2:7 KJV)*** God wanted the church in Ephesus to overcome. And the way to do that is by repentance, and repentance will start from the minds when they will decide to continue to serve God inspite of all the pain and hurt they received while they are serving the Lord. *God in the same way, He wants us to overcome our despondency and our reluctant to serve the Lord because of the pain we received before in reaching out people and disciple them for Christ. It is starting from our mind, to take a decision and be willing to go and evangelize and extend our love once again to the lost souls.*

***“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” (Revelation 2:7 KJV)*** *God in the same way wants us to overcome our despondency and our reluctant to serve the Lord because of the pain we received before in reaching out people and disciple them for Christ. It is starting from our mind, to take a decision and be willing to go and evangelize and extend our love once again to the lost souls.* This is what the Lord is speaking to us as a church. Ever since my prayer for myself, is to go on and continue to evangelize and to reach new people. Let is be also your prayers that you will go and reach new people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and with the Word of God.

***“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 2:7 KJV)*** Here the Lord promised reward to those who overcome. He promised that they will eat from the tree of life, which was present in the midst of the paradise of God, and that we can read about that in *Genesis 2*, ***“And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.” (Genesis 2:9 KJV)*** The tree of life, is the salvation of God to those who believe and receive Christ as Lord over their lives. We can read about the tree of life in the New Jerusalem that is going down from Heaven from God, ***“In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” (Revelation 22:2 KJV)*** The tree of life are the following gifts of God to those who live their life for Him to serve, evangelizing, and doing His will, as we can read in the following Scriptures:

***1. Wisdom: “She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.” (Proverbs 3:18 KJV)*** Here the tree of life is the wisdom of God. God will give us His wisdom if we overcome. To overcome is to repent and that will start

when we will decide with our minds to go and do the work of God as we were doing before.

***2. Fruitful life and winning souls: “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.” (Proverbs 11:30 KJV)*** The tree of life here and its fruit are new souls won for Christ. God will lead us to new souls when we are willing to do the work of God and His will in reaching new people.

***3. Desires fulfilled: “Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.” (Proverbs 13:12 KJV)*** Here the tree of life is the fulfilled desires. God shall fulfill our desires as we obey Him. As we delight in the Lord, then He will give us the desire of our hearts.

***4. Wholesome tongue: “A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.” (Proverbs 15:4 KJV)*** Speaking the wisdom of God is the tree of life. As we decide to abide with the will of God, the Lord shall give us a wholesome tongue that can give convince others.

These promises of God are promoting facts to help us to go on in serving the Lord and in doing the will of God in reaching new people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.

***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. Lord I surrender my 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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