

Small Group Notes – 29 Sept 2019

Welcome

Get people to share a time when they received a special or important letter. How did it make them feel?

Word – Revelation Chapters 2&3 ‘Hear what the Spirit says to the Churches’

Chapters 2 & 3 consist of seven letters, one written to each of the churches that were mentioned in Rev 1:11. These letters are written to specific Churches at a specific time but each message is as relevant for the Church in general today as it was then. Each letter has a common structure.

- An address - To the angel of the Church in....
- A description - These are the words of him....
- An awareness - I know... Jesus tells them what he knows about the town and the congregation
- An appeal, a call to pay attention – let him hear what the Spirit says...
- A promise for those who overcome

- **Ephesus 2:1-7 – A Loveless Church**
- **Smyrna 2:8-11 – A Suffering Church**
- **Pergamum 2:12-17 – A compromising Church**
- **Thyatira 2: 18-29 – A Corrupted Church**
- **Sardis 3:1-6 – A Dead Church**
- **Philadelphia 3:7-13 – A Consistent Church**
- **Laodicea 3:14-22 – A Lukewarm Church**

Revelation chapters 2 & 3 give us a glimpse of what Jesus thinks and feels about His Church. We can see that each Church is diverse, with different strengths, weaknesses and struggles. There is no perfect church, perfect leaders and perfect people. However, there is one who is perfect and without sin – Jesus! Jesus is the head of his Church, and he loves his Church, and he gave his life for his Church and one day he is coming back for his Church, his beautiful Bride. Will we be ready? Will we remain faithful to his Word to his commands? Will we receive the many promises he has made to those who stay faithful? Let him who has ears hear what the Spirit says to the Churches.

Questions

- Why was the Church at Ephesus accused of losing its first Love? How does that happen? Revelation 2:4
What do you think it means for their lampstand to be removed if they did not repent? Revelation 2:5
How do you keep your love for Jesus real and passionate?
What can we do to renew our love for Jesus and his Church? How can we motivate others?
- The Church at Pergamum was accused of compromising the truth Revelation 2:14-15.
In what ways did they do that?
Is there such a thing as absolute truth? In what ways do we compromise our faith?
- The Church in Thyatira was accused of being too tolerant of evil. Revelation 2:20.
What was it they were tolerating?
In what areas are we tempted to be too tolerant today and why?
In what ways does the Church resemble the surrounding culture?
- The Church in Sardis was accused of being Dead! Revelation 3:1. They appeared successful.
How can you tell if God has left the house and it is just a hollow shell?
- The Laodicea Church was accused of being Lukewarm. Revelation 3:16
What causes a Church to become Lukewarm?
- Which of these seven churches most resemble NMBC? Could it be more than one? Or none?

Prayers

Darken the room and then light seven candles and get different people to hold them. Say that the candles represent the seven churches. Ask the candleholders to imagine that they are the guardians of their flame. How would they feel if their flame was blown out? Blow each flame out in turn and note how dark it has become without God's Church shining brightly. Pray for the Church worldwide to shine brightly. Smyrna & Philadelphia were the only Churches not to be condemned by Jesus. They both experienced great opposition, hardship and persecution for their love and faith in Jesus. Pray for those Persecuted around the world today.

Pray for the UK Church to hear what the Spirit is saying to the Churches. Pray for NMBC & MMCC