

RETURN TO YOUR FIRST LOVE

One of the seven churches of Asia Minor during biblical times was the church at Ephesus. Ephesus was a port city situated at the mouth of the Cayster River, a very important city full of life and activity. At one time, its population was estimated to be 250,000 people. It was a very busy city and the church there was also very busy. John wrote of the church at Ephesus: *“I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for my name’s sake,”* Revelation 2:2-3. The church was full of activity.

FIRST LOVE LOST

However, this church had a serious shortcoming which the Lord needed to address. He declared to them, *“You have left your first love,”* Revelation 2:4. Although this church was busy and full of good works, yet in their personal lives they had lost their beautiful relationship with their first love, Jesus Christ. Paul had experienced revival at Ephesus for a length of time, yet now the wonderful communion between the true believers and Christ had been broken. It was broken by all of the lesser responsibilities of life and even the lesser things of the kingdom. Jesus established the priorities of the kingdom to busy Martha when she complained about how Mary just sat and listened to Jesus. Christ told Martha, that, *“Mary has chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her,”* Luke 10:42.

To put it simply, the church at Ephesus had lost sight of this. The result is that no matter how much “good” activity they had, without remaining connected to the life giver, they began to die inside. My dear friend, this too can be where you are today—busy, yet inside you know you are empty.

THE HISTORY OF EPHEBUS

This truth is explained further when you understand the history of the city. Ephesus was an active port that had a slow but constant flow of silt coming down its river. Silt is the very smallest visible particle of earth, much smaller than a grain of sand. Daily this extremely fine earth was being deposited in the harbor of the city. This silt was more of a threat than anyone could have imagined, because eventually the entire harbor and economy of Ephesus was completely buried by the multiplied tons of earth that had slowly washed in. Today the city of Ephesus is only empty ruins.

THE LESSON FOR LIFE

So what can we learn from the church at Ephesus? Simply put, it is this: we can start out in our walk with the Lord full of life and with a wonderful relationship with the Savior. Yet as time progresses, we can become busier and busier, even while it seems harmless. In fact, it may even be that we are working for the kingdom. But for whatever reasons, our relationship with Jesus can begin to be slowly blocked, like what the grains of silt did to Ephesus. Small things get in the way. If we continue on this path, eventually we will completely lose our communion with Him. Our original walk with God then becomes reduced to a lifeless ceremony.

Dear friend, I encourage you to evaluate your spiritual life today. If you feel the silt of business blocking the love relationship you once had with the Lord, stop this dangerous progression. Begin to seek the Lord with fresh purpose, and let the flow of life come back again. I pray you will not end up like Ephesus, overcome and buried by all of the little things of life, with nothing left for the Savior.

-by Frank Anderson, a pastor and teacher from Erie, Pennsylvania, USA.