

# The Apocalypse of St. John

## Weekly Discussion Group

### Discussion Questions Week 4

- 1) If you could pay for a sermon length like in the introduction, which one would you pick and why?
- 2) How does the idea of Jesus being “in the middle” of his people resonate with you? Does it change how you view his involvement in your life?
- 3) What habits or practices help you feel closer to God or grounded in life?
- 4) The text mentions how love, not just hard work or endurance, is central to faith. How can we balance “doing things for God” with simply “being with Him”?
- 5) The passage compares the loss of first love to a couple growing distant. What do you think causes this shift, and how can it be prevented or healed in a spiritual context?
- 6) Repentance is described as a decision to change, not just feeling guilty. Can you think of a time when repentance led to a positive transformation in your life?

### Sunday's Text

#### Revelation 2:1-7 (NLT)

<sup>1</sup>“Write this letter to the angel of the church in Ephesus. This is the message from the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand, the one who walks among the seven gold lampstands:

<sup>2</sup>“I know all the things you do. I have seen your hard work and your patient endurance. I know you don't tolerate evil people. You have examined the claims of those who say they are apostles but are not. You have discovered they are liars. <sup>3</sup>You have patiently suffered for me without quitting.

<sup>4</sup>“But I have this complaint against you. You don't love me or each other as you did at first! <sup>5</sup>Look how far you have fallen! Turn back to me and do the works you did at first. If you don't repent, I will come and remove your lampstand from its place among the churches. <sup>6</sup> But this is in your favor: You hate the evil deeds of the Nicolaitans, just as I do.

<sup>7</sup>“Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches. To everyone who is victorious I will give fruit from the tree of life in the paradise of God.

## Sunday's Message Summary

Sunday's Message explores the first of the seven letters to churches in the Book of Revelation, the letter to Ephesus. Ephesus was a prominent city known for its worship of the fertility goddess Artemis. Despite its strong Christian beginnings, including enduring hardships and rejecting sinful practices like those of the Nicolaitans, the church was criticized by Jesus for leaving its "first love." This critique emphasizes the importance of prioritizing a loving relationship with God and others above all else, while holding to doctrinal purity, hard work, and perseverance.

Jesus' message is likened to a family meeting where one issue is addressed to guide everyone. The text highlights how the Ephesians gradually replaced their initial passion and devotion with routine and obligation, creating a transactional relationship with God. This loss is not irreversible. Jesus offers a path back through three steps: remembering their initial joy and devotion, repenting by making deliberate changes, and redoing the simple acts of faith they once practiced.

Practical illustrations are used throughout, such as a couple whose functional but loveless marriage mirrors the Ephesians' relationship with God. Without love, even the best actions are hollow, as seen in Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 13. Jesus warns that without love, their influence (lampstand) would be removed, emphasizing that love is the light of the church. He promises a reward for those who overcome—access to the "Tree of Life" in paradise, symbolizing eternal life and closeness to God. The text concludes with a call to self-reflection, prayer, and renewed intimacy with Jesus.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

Next week, November 26th at 5:30pm, we will be holding a potluck before our class. Bring your favourite dish to share as we eat before our session!

