

Revelations Series

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The Loss Of Greatness- Part I

Introduction: We will be looking at the reverse side of the coin as it concerns greatness and the church at Ephesus. The first three verses of chapter two deals with the Lord's observations of the church of Ephesus' beginnings and why He considered them to be a great church. The word 'nevertheless' indicates that these folks have reached a 'crossroad' for which they are going to have to make a decision. Last week, one of the takeaways from the lesson was our having to make two important decisions:

1. What kind of church do we want to be? (A great church, a mediocre church, or worse a declining church)
2. What type of Believer do we want to be? (The same options as above)

This church which was great in its beginning is no longer in existence and while you may be thinking it's been close to 20 centuries, and even today the typical church that was once fundamental in its beginnings hasn't lasted more than 80 to 100 years. The reason for either is the ever the same, they reached a crossroad in which they had to make a decision as whether they wanted to remain a great church in the eyes of God or they would just fade away in a death-knell of compromise and worldliness.

We can find at least 5 things that need to be maintained to hold on to greatness which is not so much about size as it is obedience regardless of the character of the day and time. Great Christians and great marriages are all characterized by this one commonality, obedience to God. Greatness is lost in compromise! We will preface each slide with the 'Greatness requires'.

I. Greatness requires a _____ spirit – (I) – Revelation 2:4.

- A. Greatness is one of those things in the Christian life which has to be _____.
1. Christ acknowledges their greatness in verses 1 – 3.
 2. Christ is now telling them that He _____ something that doesn't belong in their midst.
 3. That thing that He sees is putting their greatness in _____ if they do not pay attention.
 4. Paying attention to what He is about to reveal because they are on their way to none _____.
 5. So the big question is, "How will they handle this assessment by the Lord."
 - a. Will they be _____ and take issue?
 - b. Will they get _____ and just _____? (Isaiah 40:28-31)
 - c. How will they (or ourselves) _____ the Lord' rebuke? (Pharisees & Sadducees)
 6. There should be no issue so long as the Lord is upfront about one's present or future status.
 - a. He _____ us enough to be honest with us and He is very pointedly specific. (Malachi 3:6-11)
 - b. So the point is that they (as we), are the ones who must make this _____ how they will handle the Lord's.

B. Have you ever felt like a sermon or lesson had you in mind?

1. "How did the Pastor know?" or "Pastor it seemed like you were speaking directly to me!"
2. Simple! It is the Holy Spirit that _____ on the human heart & conscience.
3. Frankly, it isn't always what is said, but how the Holy Spirit _____ to us. (John 16:13)

C. Greatness isn't found in the absence of _____, but how we handle those mistakes.

1. Why was their greatness in jeopardy? (Verse 4)
2. They had left off their first love, the _____ was waning; their _____ was slipping away.
3. Not that they weren't necessarily _____, but their hearts were not it – Isaiah 29:13 & Matt. 15:8.
4. We can be busy and not actually _____ about people or as it has been put, "The ministry would be great but for the people." (Acts 20:28)
5. Everything looked great for the Believers in Ephesus, but in reality they had only been _____.
(Acts 1:8 & Romans 1:16)
6. How many of the Redeemed of the Lord are drifting or coasting along in their Christian lives?
7. Outwardly everything looks good, everything seem in place. But they were only coasting.
 - a. Whited sepulchers – Matthew 23:27
 - b. Make clean – Matthew 23:25 & Luke 11:39.

D. When we _____ being teachable we stop growing, there is no middle ground or reaching a compromise with God. If we are growing we are going forward, if not, then we are regressing spiritually.