

Studying the book of Revelation (11)

Concord Community Church on 04/05/2025

What the Church Can Learn from the Seven Churches of Revelation" Text: Revelation chapters 2–3

Today, we turn to the powerful letters Jesus spoke to seven real churches through the Apostle John. Though these churches existed in the first century, the messages are *timeless*. Jesus wasn't just speaking to *them* — He's speaking to *us*.

Question for us today:

What can the modern Church — what can *our* church — learn from these seven ancient congregations?

1. Ephesus: Remember Your First Love (Rev. 2:1–7)

- Ephesus was doctrinally strong but relationally cold.
- Jesus commended their hard work and discernment — but rebuked them for abandoning their love for Him.
- **Takeaway:** *Truth without love is just noise. Doctrine without devotion is dead.*

Personal Challenge: Is your heart still burning for Jesus? Or have you gotten busy with *good* things but neglected the *main* thing?

2. Smyrna: Stay Faithful in Suffering (Rev. 2:8–11)

- Smyrna faced intense persecution but remained spiritually rich.
- Jesus had no correction for them — only encouragement: "Be faithful unto death."
- **Takeaway:** *The Church must expect suffering, not avoid it. Endurance brings the crown.*

Personal Challenge: Are you prepared to trust & follow Jesus in every difficult situation?

3. Pergamum: Stand Against Compromise (Rev. 2:12–17)

- Pergamum held fast to Jesus' name but tolerated false teachings and moral compromise. **Takeaway:** *Faithfulness to Christ means rejecting compromise — even when it's culturally acceptable.*

Personal Challenge: Where might you be allowing small compromises that are poisoning your soul?

4. Thyatira: Don't Tolerate Sin (Rev. 2:18–29)

- Thyatira was growing in love and service, but they tolerated a false prophetess who led people into immorality.

- **Takeaway:** *A healthy church addresses sin lovingly but firmly.*

Personal Challenge: Are we willing to confront sin in ourselves and our community — with truth and grace?

5. Sardis: Wake Up and Strengthen What Remains (Rev. 3:1–6)

- Sardis had a reputation for being alive but was spiritually dead.
- Jesus calls them to *wake up* and *revive* what was left before it died completely.
- **Takeaway:**
Spiritual reputation means nothing if the reality is hollow.

Personal Challenge: Are you living off yesterday's victories? Or are you actively pursuing a fresh move of God today?

6. Philadelphia: Hold Fast to the Open Door (Rev. 3:7–13)

- Philadelphia was small but faithful. Jesus promised them an open door that no one could shut.
- **Takeaway:**
God honours faithfulness over size, and He opens doors for those who trust Him.

Personal Challenge: Are you ready to walk through the doors God is opening, even if you feel small or inadequate?

7. Laodicea: Rekindle Your Zeal (Rev. 3:14–22)

- Laodicea was lukewarm — not hot or cold — and Jesus said He would spit them out.
- They thought they were rich but were spiritually bankrupt.
- **Takeaway:**
Self-sufficiency is spiritual blindness. We need Jesus for everything.

Personal Challenge:

Are you lukewarm? Are you living as if you don't desperately need Him every hour?

Closing Challenge:

In every letter, Jesus says, "*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*"

Friends — the Spirit is still speaking. Will we listen? Will we repent where needed? Will we endure? Will we love? Will we, today, be a church that shines for Christ?

Prayer:

"Lord, search our hearts. Show us where we've drifted, compromised, or fallen asleep. Strengthen us to love You with all our hearts, to endure with joy, and to walk boldly through every door You open. Make us a church You delight in — not just today but until the day You return. In Jesus' name, Amen."

"The Church That Listens: Lessons from the Seven Churches of Revelation" Text: Revelation Chapters 2–3

Introduction

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

This phrase echoes through Revelation 2 and 3 — not once, not twice, but **seven times**.

Why? Because God is not just speaking to *them*, He's speaking to *us*.

The seven churches of Asia Minor were real congregations with real challenges. But Jesus' words to them are timeless truths for us — the Church of today.

1. Ephesus: Guard Your Love, Not Just Your Theology

 *Revelation 2:1–7* Jesus applauds their hard work, perseverance, and doctrinal vigilance. But then — a piercing rebuke: "You have forsaken the love you had at first."

They were right in their beliefs — but wrong in their hearts.

 **Lesson:** *Don't trade intimacy with Jesus for activity in His name.*

Challenge: Have you lost your wonder? Your fire? Jesus wants more than your service — He wants your *heart*.

2. Smyrna: Stay Strong in the Fire *Revelation 2:8–11*

Smyrna was poor materially but rich in spirit — facing persecution, prison, even death. Yet Jesus gives no rebuke — only comfort:

"Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown."

 **Lesson:** *Suffering doesn't mean you're failing — sometimes it means you're being faithful.*

Challenge: Will you trust Jesus when it's costly? When standing for truth isolates you? When pain visits your doorstep?

3. Pergamum: Beware of the Subtle Slide *Revelation 2:12–17*

Pergamum stood firm in persecution but let false teaching creep in. They tolerated compromise — not open rebellion, but slow erosion.

"You hold to My name... yet you tolerate..."

 **Lesson:** *What we tolerate eventually defines us.*

Challenge:

Is there anything you're excusing today that Jesus is calling you to confront?

4. Thyatira: Love Must Still Draw Boundaries

 *Revelation 2:18–29*

This church was growing in love and service — outwardly vibrant — but inwardly corrupt. They allowed a false prophetess to seduce believers into sin.

 **Lesson:** *Love without holiness is deception. Holiness without love is cruelty. The Church must walk in both.*

Challenge: Are you silent where Jesus is calling you to speak up? Are you excusing behaviour He's asking you to call out?

5. Sardis: Wake Up — Before It's Too Late *Revelation 3:1–6*

Sardis had a great reputation — but Jesus saw past it: “You have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.”

 **Lesson:** *Spiritual reputation means nothing if the spiritual reality is dry.*

Challenge: Are you coasting? Are you depending on yesterday's fire? Jesus says, “Wake up. Strengthen what remains.”

6. Philadelphia: Small Church, Big Faith *Revelation 3:7–13*

Philadelphia wasn't large, but it was faithful — and to them, Jesus says:

“I have placed before you an open door no one can shut.”

 **Lesson:** *Faithfulness opens doors that numbers never could.*

Challenge: Will you be faithful where you are, with what you have — trusting Jesus to open the right doors?

7. Laodicea: Lukewarm Is Not Neutral — It's Offensive

 *Revelation 3:14–22*

Laodicea was wealthy, self-sufficient, and completely unaware of their spiritual poverty. Jesus said:

“You are neither hot nor cold... I am about to spit you out of my mouth.”

 Lesson:

The most dangerous place to be is lukewarm — where you think you're fine but have shut Jesus out.

Challenge:

Jesus is still knocking. Will you open the door again and let Him in?

Conclusion: One Church. Seven Messages. One Spirit.

In every message, Jesus ends the same way:

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

That includes *this* church.

It includes *you*.

Let the Spirit search you today:

- Is your love cold?
- Your faith shaken?
- Your walk compromised?
- Your heart asleep?
- Your fire fading?

Hear the call. Return. Repent. Rekindle. Revive.

Let us be a church Jesus would commend — not just in form, but in *fire*.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, awaken Your Church.

Where we've grown cold, rekindle love.

Where we've grown proud, humble us.

Where we've grown lazy, stir our souls.

Let us be a church with ears to hear and a heart to obey.

In Jesus' name, Amen.