

Revelation 2:1-7

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Preacher: Jonathan Lee

[0:00] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. One, two, testing.

Okay. Sorry about that. So as I was saying, I get these messages from Verizon Wireless telling me that it's time to upgrade to a new plan.

[2:05] And it's a message that I ignore, delete it right away. But if I get a message from my wife reminding me, don't forget your son's piano recital tonight.

Now that will stick and I won't forget. So this message is coming from our Lord Jesus Christ. So this letter is coming from Jesus.

Secondly, some messages are time-specific. When I tell my kids to study for the SAT, as much as they don't want to hear it, it is a very time-specific message.

It applies to them for maybe about two years in high school and then they'll never hear it from me again. And you can count on it. But this message, Jesus' letters to the seven churches, it's not a time-specific message.

It's a message that transcends time and culture. These messages were written approximately A.D. 90 and the churches they were addressed to, they don't exist now in present day.

[3:34] But His messages, it applies to us and also the generations to come. This evening's scripture comes from Revelation chapter 2, verses 1 through 7.

It's on page 1028 on your Pew Bible. Page 1028 in your Pew Bible. Page 1028 in your Pew Bible.

Page 1028 in your Pew Bible.

Remember, therefore, from where you have fallen. Repent and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place unless you repent.

Yet this you have. You hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

[5:37] To the one who conquers, I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God. Let us pray.

Let us pray. Lord Jesus, how vast is your love, as vast as the ocean. And Lord Jesus, thank you for bringing us here tonight to worship you, to praise you.

And as we get ready to hear your message, Lord, I pray that you will open our ears and humble our hearts.

And Lord, I pray that you will open our hearts. And Lord, I pray that you will open our hearts. Do not leave any room for resistance in our hearts. Help us to listen to your message and act upon it.

In your holy name, I pray. Amen. So starting this evening and for next six weeks, we will open the letters to seven churches written by Jesus one week at a time.

[6:51] And tonight, this is a letter to church of Ephesus. And for the next seven letters, you will see Jesus describing himself differently seven times.

And he also describes his promise or the reward seven times differently. And then there is a one unchanging theme that he asks us to do, which is to conquer or overcome.

So tonight, we will focus on the three sections of the letter. First, Jesus commends Ephesians. Second, Jesus rebukes Ephesians.

Third, Jesus tells us to conquer or overcome. I'm going to be reading from different parts of the Bible.

So, you know, you can write it down. You don't have to necessarily go to it. You're welcome to write it down and maybe, you know, look them up later on in your spare time.

[8:04] So starting at verse two, it says, I know your works, your toil, and your patient endurance. So Paul talks about his own example in Ephesus, how hard he worked.

Paul was a tent maker. So he worked all day making tents. But every chance he got, he was...

Testing.

Testing Testing Okay, can you hear me now? Testing, okay So Paul Tells the Ephesians Through his own example That how hard he worked And every chance he got He was sharing Word of the Lord Jesus With the people Either at the synagogue Or at the marketplace Wherever he had a chance to share The gospel he did And this is his own Testimony that comes from Acts chapter 20 Verses 33 to 35 I coveted no one No one's silver Or gold Or apparel

You yourselves know That these hands Minister to my necessities And to those Who were with me In all things I have shown you That by working hard In this way We must help The weak And remember the words Of the Lord Jesus How he himself said It is more blessed To give Than to receive I have seen Many of you I'm going to just Mention a couple of Examples That inspired me Over the years This one particular Small group leader I know He has a full time job He sees patients All day And he sees patients Even in the evening hours And then To lead The small group He will rush in

[11:25] Always A snack in his hands And smiling Ready to teach The word of the Lord God sees that Jesus Knows that How hard you work And Our youth group leaders Some of them drive More than an hour Each way And yet they come They spend time With our teenage High school Junior high school students They are role model To them Some of the college Students Even With their busy schedule They come And they teach Our youth group Students So all these things Full time moms Have little children And yet Once a week They are leading Bible study For the women In a small group With a happy heart So all these things Jesus sees And Jesus knows Just like how he Commends

Ephesians For their hard work And then he also Commends Their Patient Endurance Bearing up For my namesake And not Grown Weary In the morning We've been studying Book of Acts And last month We We saw How When the people Of Ephesians Received the gospel And then they start Rejecting these idols Burned them Got rid of them And then the Idol makers Silversmith Basically They got all upset Because they were Losing money They were not They can't sell idols Anymore So they rounded up People And they start Having a protest Against the Believers We don't Have Group of Angry Mobs Outside Protesting Against our Church But In many Different ways

We also Face Persecution I know Students Who come From Different Background Telling us That Their parents Are not Christians Matter of Fact Their parents Practice Different Religion And they Are not Happy About Them Practicing Christianity Or when You share The gospel In workplace Sometimes They Look at You Like you Have three Heads Sometimes They Isolate You Calling You know You By Names Narrow Minded Intolerant How can You believe Something like That In this Age Of Science So In In our Own ways We also Face Persecution But Apostle Paul I mean Apostle John Tells Us That we Need to Not Grow Weary And

Keep On Doing What We're Doing I Meet With A Young Man In This Congregation Regularly And We Share What We Are Reading We Share Our Prayer Topics And Then One Day He Shared With Me How Hard It Was To Share The Gospel Amongst These Workers And I Said Me Too You're Not The Only One I Face That Too My Agnostic Atheist Friends You know They They Don't They Really Don't Like When I Start Talk About Jesus So We Were Able To Share What We Go Through As Christians Encourage One Another And Pray For One Another And This Brother Told Me That I Encourage Him I Said To Myself No You Encourage Me Because I'm Seeing How God Is Working In Your Life And As We See That As I See That I

Get So Much Encouragement So Again Apostle Paul In His Own Testament In Acts Chapter 20 Verses 18 To 21 He Says You You You You You You You Know How I Lived Among You The Whole Time From The First Day That I Set Foot In Asia Serving The Lord With All Humility And With Tears And With Trials That Happened To Me Through The Plots Of The Jews How I Did Not Shrink From Declaring To You Anything That Was Profitable And Teaching You In Public And From House To House Testifying Both To Jews And To Greeks Of Repentance Toward God And Of Faith In Our Lord Jesus Christ So We

[16:26] Know People Who Face Persecutions Maybe Not In New Haven But When You Receive Letters From Our Mission Missionaries That We Support How Often Do We See Someone So And So Got Killed We Recently Got A Letter From Stanley Colzar And This Missionary Who Is In India Not Stanley But His Former Coworker He Was Just Murdered By His Own Family The Judicial System Found Him Not Guilty But His Own Family Took His Life Just Because He Accepted Jesus And He Was Teaching The Gospel Jesus Also Commends Ephesians That You Cannot Bear With Those Who Are Evil False Teachers Teachers And I'm

Hate The Now How Does The Bible Describe False Teachers Second Corinthians Chapter Eleven Verses Thirteen To Fifteen Apostle Paul Says For For such Men Are False Apostles Deceitful Workmen Disguising Themselves As Apostles Of Christ And No Wonder For Even Satan Disguises Himself As An Angel Of Light So It Is No Surprise If His Servants Also Disguise Themselves As Servants Of Righteousness Their End Will Correspond To Their Deeds So Apostle Paul Tells Us False Teachers They Deceive Us They Disguise Themselves As If

They Are Teaching The True Gospel But At The End We Will Know They Are False Teachers Because Of The Fruit They Bear The Deeds At The End We Will See That These Are False Teachers Another Example From The Bible Comes From Second Peter Second Peter Chapter Two Verses One To Three But False Prophets Also Arose Among The People Just As There Will Be False Teachers Among You Who Will Secretly Bring In Destructive Heresies Even Denying The Master Who Brought Them Who Bought Them Bringing Upon Themselves Swift Destruction And Many Will Follow Their Sensuality And Because Of Them The Way Of Truth Will Be Blasphemed And In Their Greed

They Will Exploit You With False Words So Here Apostle Peter Tells Us These False Teachers They Deny Jesus They Promote Sensuality Which Later On We'll See How The Nicolaitans They Were Practicing Sexually Immoral Acts And Then They Exploit Believers With Greed And Now Let Us Look At Some Specific Examples Of These False Teachers In The Bible In First Timothy Chapter One Verse Twenty Mentions Hymenius Alexander And Then Later On It Also Mentions Person Named Philetus According To Early Church History I Guess They Were Claiming That They Were Living In A Post

Resurrection Time And They Saw Themselves As They Already Have The Resurrected Body Clearly A False Teaching And How Often Do We Come Across These Groups They Claim That Oh Jesus Is Coming Back At Such A Such A Day Such A Day Such A Year A Specific Time When God Clearly Told Us That The Time Is Only He Knows And Yet These False Teachers They Predict These Things All The Time And The Other Example I Would Like Us To Look At Is From 1st Timothy Chapter 4 Verses 1 To 3 Now The Spirit Expressly Says That In Later Times Some Will Depart From The Faith By Devoting Themselves To Deceitful Spirits And Teachings Of Demons Through

[21:32] The Insincerity Of Liars Whose Consciences Are Seared Who Forbid Marriage And Require Abstinence From Foods That God Created To Be Received With Thanksgiving By Those Who Believe And Know The Truth And Today We Have Some Preachers You Know When You Listen To Their Message Sometimes It Sounds Like They Are Nutritionist They Talk About Food Some You Know So In In The Days Of Early Christians And Even Today There Were All Kinds Of This False Teaching You Know Focusing On Money Focusing On Success And Wealth And We Hear Them Today Also Now How Can We Discern The False Teachings At Our Present Time

In First John Chapter Four Verses One To Three It Says Beloved Do Not Believe Every Spirit But Test The Spirits To See Whether They Are From God For Many False Prophets Have Gone Out Into The World By This You Know The Spirit Of God Every Spirit That Confesses That Jesus Christ Has Come In The Flesh Is From God And Every Spirit That Does Not Confess Jesus Is Not From God This Is The Spirit Of The Antichrist Which You Heard Was Coming And Now Is In The World Already Apostle Paul Also Commended The Barians In Acts Chapter 17 Verse 11 So The Barians They

Study Scripture Daily Even After They Hear The Message From Apostle Paul They Went Home And They Examine The Scripture To See Whether It's According To The Scripture So We Need To Test The Spirit And Also Study Read The Scripture And Meditate On It And Then Lastly Because We're Living In A Society With So Much Information We Are Just Getting Bombarded With Information Books Sometimes Your Coworker May Just Give You A Book If One In Doubt If You're Not Sure Ask The Pastors Ask The Pastors For Guidance Ask The Pastors And Elders You Know So And So Gave Me This Book And I'm Not Sure Whether This Is A True Teaching Consult With The Pastors And Elders That's One Way To Also

Discern Whether This Is False Teaching Or Not And Then The Second Part Of The Letter Jesus Now Rebukes The Ephesians We're Looking At Verses 4 To 5 But I Have This Against You That You Have Abandoned The Love You Had At First Remember Therefore From Where You Have Fallen Repent And Do The Works You Did At First If Not I Will Come To You And Remove Your Lamb Stand From Its Place Unless You Repent Why Is Jesus Rebuking Them Because Just Before He Commended Them For All Their Good Work Enduring Patiently You Know Not Tolerating

The False Teachers And False Prophets And Now He's Rebuking Them And Sometimes It Feels Really Harsh Like Why Is He Being So Harsh Well When I Was When I Was Practicing A sermon With My Kids I Know I Tell Them To Study SAT And Then On Top Of That I Practice Sermons On Them I Said To Them Look If You Drive And Text At The Same Time You Will I Will Be Very Angry And If I Catch You Second Time There Will Be A Fury And If You Don't Listen And If You Keep Drive And Text At The Same Time Guess What I'm Going To Take The Car Key Away From You Why It's Not Because I Want To Be A Mean Dad Or Try To Make Your Life Miserable It's Because I Love You It's Because I Don't Want You To Get Into An Accident I Don't Want You To Get Killed I Don't Want You To Hurt Other People So When I Tell You Not To Text And

[26 : 34] Drive It's Because I Love You Now You See Jesus Is Rebuking Ephesians Not Because He's Just Trying To Be Hard Because He Loves Them He Died For The Church He Died For Us So Sometimes Jesus Uses A Stern Warning To Get Our Attention And What Is He Rebuking About He's Saying You Guys Abandoned Not Just You Know Accidentally Lost You Guys Abandoned The First Love Abandoned Is A Willful Action That You Do Intentionally Early On Paul Commended Ephesians For Their Faith In Jesus And Also Their Love Toward All Saints But Along The Way They Started To Abandon

This Love Love Towards Christ And Also Love Towards One Another So Jesus Is Saying You Need To Regain The First Love Now If You Think About It Love For Christ And Love For One Another Where Do We Hear This Theme Isn't This From The Greatest Commandment Love Your Lord God With All Your Heart With All Your Mind With All Your Strength And Love Your Neighbor So Ephesians They Stop Keeping This Most Important Commandment So Maybe They Were Just Doing The Work For Doing The Work Sake While There Was Really No Love Towards Christ Or Love Towards One Another In The Church Apostle

Paul Tells Us To Examine Our Selves In 2nd Corinthian Chapter 13 Verse 5 He Says You Need To Examine Where You Have Fallen Just Like Here Examine Yourself Is There Love For Christ In You Is There First Love And The Importance Of First Love I Would I Like All Of Us To Find This Passage It Comes From In Your Pew Bible It's 1023 Page 1023 1st John Chapter 4 Verses 7 To 12 And You Can See Why Jesus Is Putting So Much Emphasis

On Love Towards God And Love Towards One Another

If Love Love One Another God Abides In Us And His Love Is Perfected In Us And You Could Keep Put Your Finger There Because We're Going to Go to The Next Chapter Shortly So God So Jesus Rebuked Ephesians For Abandoning The First Love And Then He He Tells The Ephesians You Need To Overcome It's In Revelation Chapter 2 Verse 7 He Who Has An Ear Let Him Hear What The Spirit Says To The Churches To The One Who Conquers I Will Grant To Eat Of The Tree Of Life Which Is In The Paradise Of God So Jesus Is

[31 : 42] Telling Us You Need To Overcome Or Conquer In Order To Enjoy And Be With God In His Kingdom So How Do We How Do We Overcome How Do We Conquer What Is Jesus Talking About Just Flip Over To The Next Chapter In First John First John Chapter 5 It's In Page 1023 First John Chapter 5 Verses 1 Through 6 Everyone Who Believes Jesus Is The Christ Has Been Born Of That

Has Overcome The World Our Faith Who Is It That Overcomes The World Except The One Who Believes That Jesus Is The Son Of God So Here Apostle John Tells Us When We Love God And Obey His Commandments One Who Believes That Jesus Is Jesus Is The Son Of The World Because In Jesus Defeated The Power Of Sin And Jesus Conquered Death So In Him We Will Also Defeat The Power Of Sin And Conquered Death So How Does This Apply To Us Today Well Like I Said To You Before Those Of You Who Are Doing Wonderful

Work Don't Be Discouraged Even If Somebody Does Not Notice What You Doing Or If Somebody You Don't Feel You Are Appreciated Don't Be Discouraged Because Jesus Sees Everything That You Are Doing Even The Things That You Do In Secret He Knows And He Will Reward You And Secondly Encourage One Another When You See Somebody Doing Something Hey Tell Them That You Appreciate It Encourage Your Pastors Love Your Pastors You Know Pastor Nick Thank You For Having Lunch With Me You Know I Really Really Needed To Talk To You Today Because I Been Having Trouble Dealing With This Thank You For Listening To Me And Thank You For Giving Me An Advice Thank You Pastor Greg Your Sermon Helped Me To Deepen My Faith Thank You Pastor Matt I Been Really

Struggling With This Issue Thank You For Your Brotherly Advice Encourage Them When You See Somebody Picking Up People From Columbus House Appreciate That Because They Are Going Out Of Their Way You Know And When You See People Doing All Kinds Of Children's Ministry Music Team Encourage One Another Get To Know One Another And Get To Know What Their Prayer Needs Are We All Have Needs That You Can Pray For Pray For One Another Tell Them To Stay The Course Hold On To It So By Encouraging One Another We Can Continue To Do These Good Works That Jesus Was Commending Now For Those Of You Who Are New To Christ Or Who Has Not Experienced Or Tasted The First Love I

Would Like To Borrow Dr. D.A. Carson's Illustration That I Heard At This Conference Imagine Yourself In A Court Room You Are The Defendant God Is The Judge And Satan Also Known As Accuser Is A Prosecutor So In This Court Room Satan Opens This Book And In This Book It List Every Single Sin That You Have Committed So The Prosecutor Is Reading One By One The Court And Then Telling The Judge This Person Is Guilty As Charged Look At All This The Sin That He Committed So He Should Be Punished Eternally In Hell And He's Grinning Because He's Got The List And

[37:00] Then All Of A Sudden The Back Door Fling Opens And This Man Walks In This Man Walks Down And Then He Tells The Judge Your Honor I Have Served His Sentence I Already Took His Punishment And Then The Judge Now Announces In The Light Of New Evidence I Declare The Defendant Not Guilty They Leave Let Him Go And Now The Prosecutor Is Fuming He Says What Do You Mean He's Free To Go Don't You See Don't You See The Book Don't You See All These Sins That He Committed And Then The Judge Leans Over And He Says Yeah I See Something My Son's Blood That Is The Essence Of First Love He

Is Redeeming Love That God Sent His Son To Die In Our Place So We Don't Have To Serve That Sentence In A Moment We're Going To Sing This Hymn And This Song Is All About God's Redeeming Love For Us Redeeming Love Has Been My Theme And Shelby Till I Die So Those Who Have Not Experienced This Love Here's Your Invitation Come And Experience This Love And For Those Of Us Who's Been Following Jesus For Years This Is Time For Us To Rekindle That Fire Love For Christ And Love For One Another Let Us Pray Lord Our Father We Thank You

For Your Love How You Sent Your Son To Die In Our Place And Lord God Your Redeeming Love Is So Great That It Has Been Our Theme And It Shall Be Till We Die Lord We Praise You And Give You All The Honor And Glory In Jesus Name Amen