

A WORD ON WORSHIP

REVIEW OF MESSAGE FROM AUGUST 2, 2015

BY PASTOR ANDREW KIKKERT, SUNRISE COMMUNITY CHURCH

Hear Sunday Sermons at www.SunriseTC.org

Revelation 2:4-5

“But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. ‘Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place - unless you repent.’”



As a disclaimer, both here and in the message, any discussion about the churches in the Book of Revelation requires the reader (as all Scripture should do) to examine themselves. Self examination is never a pleasant process, which is why so few people approach the Scripture with an attitude of humility, asking the Lord to search their hearts and their will, to allow the Spirit to show them deficiencies in their heart so they may walk with the Lord. This is even more necessary in Revelation 2 and 3. There is a spiritual pride that gives us the ability to see splinter in the eyes of these churches, but blinds us to the log in our lives and in our church.

You may have houseplants to decorate your house that you simply forget to water- not because you decided you did not like the plants anymore but rather you get busy doing other things. We all take such simple things for granted. Time goes by and our day continues to fill up with all the activities that must be completed. By default, watering the plants ends up being ignored. The same is true of love. I don't think anyone sets out to stop loving, but out of neglect love grows cold.

The issue with the church of Ephesus is that they have left their first love. The question for the scholars and those of us who are more pragmatic is, what is first love? Is it a matter of first in priority or first in a sequence? Is it our love for God or is it our love for others? Some have suggested it is our love for the lost who need to know the gospel. I think all of these are true, but it still does not answer the question: what is our first love?

As I study this passage, let me tell you my definition. Our first love is the love we experienced and then expressed when we came to faith. What it means is all dimensions of love - not just our love for God and not just our love of others and not just our love to see people saved - but every facet of love. This is what I see lived out in the Book of Acts when the Church was started. With this as a working definition of first love, I want to challenge you to go to the Lord and ask Him to show you where you have left your first love. Is it in how you worship? How well do you love others, not just in words but in attitude and action? How concerned are you for the lost? I believe the Lord has many things to tell us if we are willing to listen and learn the lessons to the seven churches of Revelation.

Sunrise Community Church
Come acknowledge the Lord in our midst
EVERY SUNDAY BEGINNING AT 8:45 A.M.

9642 Live Oak Ave. • Temple City, CA 91780

(626) 287-6120 • PastorAndy@SunriseTC.org • www.SunriseTC.org

AUGUST 2015						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	1	2	3	4	5

The Hymns We Sing

COURTESY OF THE CYBER HYMNAL™

<http://www.hymntime.com/>

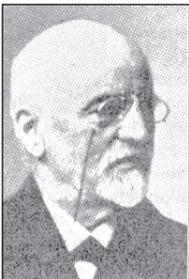
Thine Is The Glory

Thine Be the Glory

<http://www.hymntime.com/tch/htm/t/h/i/thineist.htm>

http://www.hymntime.com/tch/mid/j/u/d/judas_maccabeus.mid

“He will swallow up death in victory.” – *Isaiah 25:8*



Edmond L. Budry
(1854-1932)



George F. Handel
(1685-1759)

Words: Edmond L. Budry, 1884 (*À Toi la Gloire*); first appeared in *Chants Évangéliques* (Lausanne, Switzerland: 1885). Translated from French to English by Richard B. Hoyle, 1923.

Music: Judas Maccabaeus, George F. Handel

Thine is the glory, risen, conqu'ring Son;
Endless is the victory, Thou o'er death hast won;
Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
Kept the folded grave clothes where Thy body lay.

Refrain

*Thine is the glory, risen conqu'ring Son,
Endless is the vict'ry, Thou o'er death hast won.*

Lo! Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;
Lovingly He greets us, scatters fear and gloom;
Let the church with gladness, hymns of triumph sing;
For her Lord now liveth, death hath lost its sting.

Refrain

No more we doubt Thee, glorious Prince of life;
Life is naught without Thee; aid us in our strife;
Make us more than conquerors, through Thy deathless love:
Bring us safe through Jordan to Thy home above.

Refrain

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT SUNRISE

August 2015

Aug. 2	8:45 AM	Revelation 2 verses 1-7 <i>Ephesus: Lost Love Part 1</i>
	10:30 AM	Second Hour
Aug. 7	6:30 PM	Game Night
Aug. 9	8:45 AM	Revelation 2 verses 1-7 <i>Ephesus: Lost Love Part 2</i>
	10:30 AM	Second Hour
Aug. 14	7:00 PM	Friday Night Fellowship
Aug. 16	8:45 AM	Revelation 2 verses 1-7 <i>Ephesus: Lost Love Part 3</i>
	10:30 AM	Second Hour
Aug. 21	6:30 PM	Game Night
Aug. 23	8:45 AM	Revelation 2 verses 8-11 Smyrna: The Suffering Church
	10:30 AM	Second Hour
Aug. 28		Friday Night Fellowship
Aug. 30	8:45 AM	Revelation 2 verses 12-17 <i>Pergamum: Sin City</i>
	10:30 AM	Second Hour
Sept. 7		Labor Day

Chinese Christians defend rooftop crosses, prepare for conflict

By THOMAS D. WILLIAMS • [HTTP://WWW.BREITBART.COM/](http://www.breitbart.com/) • Follow him on Twitter @tdwilliamsrome.

Chinese officials in Wenzhou, a city of the Zhejiang province with a high concentration of Christians, have given Christian communities a deadline to remove rooftop crosses from their churches, but some of the local pastors have responded with defiance, placing guards at their churches to defend the crosses.

It is “likely that there will be clashes,” said a church representative in Tengqiao town.

The government ultimatum is the latest in a long-running campaign against the crosses. Authorities have already demolished hundreds of rooftop crosses from Protestant and Catholic churches, and in May, they enacted new regulations against any placement of the Christian symbol on top of buildings.

The new regulations for religious structures stipulated that any crosses must be affixed to the façade of buildings rather than above the roof, and could not measure more than one-tenth of the height of the façade. Crosses also must fit in with the façade and the surroundings.

Following the government crackdown on crosses, a number of church pastors defied the ruling, going so far as to replace demolished crosses, and in some cases, to put up bigger ones.

The regulations were deemed so offensive that even official state churches began to push back. “The rules make many unreasonable requests for Catholic and Protestant buildings,” said the state-backed Chongyi Church in Hangzhou, Zhejiang’s capital.

“They also excessively interfere in freedom for reasonable use of building interiors, violating the basic spirit of the state’s religious management,” the church said

in an online statement to Zhejiang authorities. On July 10, two official Church bodies in Zhejiang wrote an open letter of protest to the provincial government, demanding that authorities “stop immediately such ridiculous acts that split the party and the people.”

A dozen leaders of the provincial Catholic Patriotic Association and the Church Affairs Commission signed the letter addressed to the provincial Ethnic and Religious Commission, underscoring the gravity of the situation and the leaders’ obligation to speak out.

In the letter, the Church leaders described the cross removals as an “evil act that has to be stopped immediately” and that it had made Catholic priests and laity in Zhejiang “very angry.”

“The cross is a symbol of the Christian faith and some of the buildings are legally approved. It is unexplainable why it has to be forcibly removed,” an unnamed source said at the time.

Provincial authorities in Zhejiang responded to the letter by confiscating the official seal of the local Christian Council, which is necessary to issue valid official documents, understood as punishment for the council’s criticism of the government campaign.

Now, local officials have renewed demands for churches to remove the remaining crosses themselves, threatening to take them down if they did not comply, according to reports from three parishes under Wenzhou’s jurisdiction.

Moreover, Catholics and Protestants in the eastern province of Zhejiang have launched an “ecumenical” campaign to make small wooden crosses, painted red, and carry them everywhere.