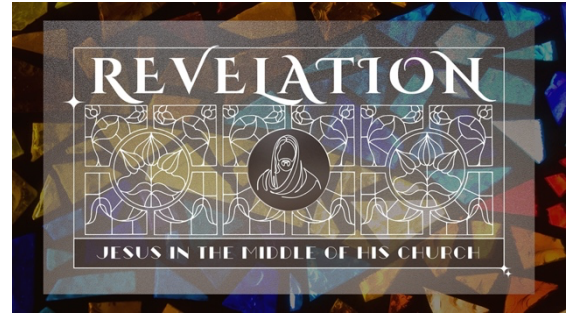


REVELATION

JESUS IN THE MIDDLE OF HIS CHURCH

Return to Your First Love



Big Idea:

Jesus invites us to return to him as our first love.

Opening Question:

Share a story about one of your first crushes (ie: that middle school or high school boy or girl that captured your attention)

For many, the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ has been twisted into something the original author never meant it to be. It has become a book of speculation rather than revelation.

1. What do you think the difference is between speculation and revelation?

First century people would have seen the word Revelation as “Apocalypse.” And for them the word apocalypse would have been less about gloom and doom and more about a special unveiling like the pulling back of the curtain or the lifting of the lid off a box to reveal something special inside.

Revelation is timeless theology not specific prediction, and the moment it turns to specific predictions it loses its timeless message. This is a book about how we can be discerning, dissident disciples in the face of corruption and violence.

“Revelation is not about prediction but perception.” – Eugene Peterson

We can use the words of Revelation as a way to perceive what is going on and make adjustments accordingly.

READ Revelation 2:1-7

2. What do you notice about these verses? What questions do you have?

Jesus is full of high praise for the church of Ephesus. They are energetic in their service, patient in their suffering and orthodox in their faith. Yet The lord looks with a piercing eye of flame and discovers a great flaw. They have forsaken the love that had at first.

3. Think about one of your closest relationships with a best friend, a work partner or a spouse. What were those first couple of weeks or months like as you learned more about them and began to care for them.
4. Did your “love” ever fade, become routine or difficult?

Jesus says that for all of their hard work, patient endurance, and orthodoxy, the Ephesians were no longer in love with him. Their affection and intimacy were drained away.

5. As Jesus stands among you and your community, or among Restore as a church, do you think he would share this same critique? Why or why not?

What if Jesus said to us, *“You have lost the child-like attentiveness, the tenderness, the extravagance of your first love. I don’t want just Kingdom impact from you, I want your heart and that’s what I don’t have right now. I didn’t create you just to be useful to me, you are the beloved. Have you forgotten that truth?”*

6. How do you think we lose the passion of the love we had at first?

Luckily Jesus tells us what we can do about it:

“Remember the heights from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first!”

Revelation 2:6

7. As a way to remember, go around the group and share how you felt when you first met Jesus. If you are still finding your way back to God or exploring, just say *“I’m still exploring.”*
8. What does it look like for us to repent and do the things we did at first?

MICRO GROUP

Get into smaller micro-groups of 3 or 4 for the remainder of this discussion guide. Keep these same micro groups throughout this series.

9. What specific things can you do this week to remember your love for Jesus? Make a plan and share it with the group

Pray for each other.

H2O – Habits to Outcome

Spiritual habits (Bible engagement, prayer, community, journaling, serving, sabbath, silence and solitude, etc.) help us to encounter Jesus. Every encounter with Jesus has the potential for **Character Transformation*** and **Calling Activation***. This series will focus on the spiritual habit of **Obedience to Jesus**.

Challenge:

Practice listening to God and doing what he says. Set aside a few minutes a day to sit in silence and ask God to show you something he wants you to know and or do.

***Character Transformation** means that your character is demonstrating the fruits of the Spirit as you become more like Jesus. (Galatians 5:22-23)

***Calling Activation** means that you are living out your primary calling as a disciple maker. (Matthew 28:19-20)