

First Love Never Dies, Hopefully!

May 10, 2013
Don King Evangelista
FRIDAY PRAYER MEETING

Text: Revelation 2:1-7

1 *"Isulat mo sa anghel ng iglesya sa Efeso:*

"Ito ang ipinapasabi ng may hawak ng pitong bituin sa kanyang kanang kamay at lumalakad sa gitna ng pitong ilawang ginto. 2 Nalalaman ko ang mga ginagawa mo, ang iyong mga pagpapakahirap at pagtitiyaga. Alam kong hindi mo kinukunsinti ang masasama. Sinubok mo ang mga huwad na apostol, at napatunayan mong sila'y nagsisinungaling. 3 Alam ko ring matiyaga ka, nagtiis ng maraming hirap alang-alang sa akin at hindi ka sumuko. 4 Subalit may isang bagay na ayaw ko sa iyo: ang pag-ibig mo noong una kang sumampalataya ay nanlalamig na. 5 Alalahanin mo ang dati mong kalagayan; pagsisihan mo at talikuran ang iyong masasamang gawa, at gawin mong muli ang mga ginagawa mo noong una. Kapag hindi ka nagsisi, pupunta ako diyan at aalisin ko sa kinalalagyan ang iyong ilawan. 6 Ngunit ito naman ang napupuri ko sa iyo; kinapopootan mo ring tulad ko ang mga ginagawa ng mga Nicolaita.

7 *"Ang lahat ng may pandinig ay makinig sa sinasabi ng Espiritu sa mga iglesya!*

"Ibibigay ko sa magtatagumpay ang karapatang kumain ng bunga ng punongkahoy na nagbibigay-buhay na nasa paraiso ng Diyos."

FIRST LOVE!

A topic which is very very very CLOSE to my heart.

A Very Don King trademark: Cell groups na "love" ang topic.

We love receiving letters.
Lalo na siguro kapag ang sulat – galing sa pinakamamahal mo...

What if? Si Jesus. Sinulatan ka?

Actually, meron. Yung Bible, Love letter niya sa'yo yan!

This is a letter in the book of Revelations

Give quick background of Revelations

We will see a very familiar church here – the church in Ephesus – where Paul writes his letter to the Ephesians- and we'll see some truths in here that will guide us in our walk with Christ. We will dissect the letter!

- This letter was addressed to the Church in Ephesus.
 - o This church was founded by Paul, disciplesd nina Aquila at Priscilla, tinuruan ni Apollos, pastored by Timothy.

- A very influential church, and through the tone of the letters of Paul sa Ephesians, it was doing good.
- This letter was written by Jesus.
 - Who *walks* over the lampstands – in short, sa church, si Jesus, lagi tayong binabantayan!

This letter gives us two very striking truths.

1. PERFORMANCE OVER LOVE / RELIGIOSITY OVER RELATIONSHIP

- ➔ Ephesian church was very good - 2 *Nalalaman ko ang mga ginagawa mo, ang iyong mga pagpapakahirap at pagtitiyaga. Alam kong hindi mo kinukunsinti ang masasama. Sinubok mo ang mga huwad na apostol, at napatunayan mong sila'y nagsisinungaling.* 3 *Alam ko ring matiyaga ka, nagtiis ng maraming hirap alang-alang sa akin at hindi ka sumuko.*
- ➔ Ephesians church was very good in doctrine and work of ministry! They refused to compromise their moral or doctrinal purity. (unlike Galatians with syncretism etc.)
- ➔ Approx. 40 years after founding – they were still standing stil.
- ➔ They were a dynamic ministry. They were hardworking – continuing to serve Christ.
- ➔ **HOWEVER.**

Subalit may isang bagay na ayaw ko sa iyo: ang pag-ibig mo noong una kang sumampalataya ay nanlalamig na.

Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. (NIV)

They have left their “first love.”

The statement does not suggest that they no longer love Christ – however, the quality of their love for Him has weakened – NANLAMIG.

Gk word for “forsake” – apheimie – meaning to leave alone, forsake, neglect.

When you lose your car keys, where are they? When you lose your sun glasses, where are they? If you think real hard about it, when you lose your car keys or your sunglasses, they’re right where you left them! And that’s the way it is with your first love for God. If you’ve lost it, guess where it is. It’s wherever you left it. Jesus says, go back and find it. Wherever it is, it’s still there because God hasn’t moved! He’s waiting for you to come back.

ILLUSTRATION:

May mag-asawang nagdadrive galing church. Yung asawa nasa back seat, at yung asawa- nasa driver's seat. May malaking gap sa gitna nila. Habang nag-iisip isip at nalulungkot, tinignan ng babae ang lalaki, "Honey, naaalala mo pa ba nung una tayong nagkita, kung gaano tayo kaclose umupo sa kotse? Inaakbayan mo pa nga ako habang nagdadrive ka e. Anong nangyari?" Habang nakakapit sa steering wheel, sinabi ng lalaki, "Hindi naman ako gumalaw." Ang distansya ay hindi dahil gumalaw ang driver, pero dahil gumalaw ang pasahero. She left her first love.

- The Ephesians church distanced themselves from their first love. They no longer loved the Lord as they did when they first came to Christ. They not only took their eyes off the Lord but they lost fellowship with Him.

Ang prinsipyo, kahit gaano pa ang alam natin sa Bible, gaano pa tayo kagaling sa ministry, gaano kagaganda ang mga programa natin, hindi natin kayang mabuhay sa mundo nang hindi natin Siya minamahal. GOD IS A JEALOUS GOD. The first sin that grieves Him the most is a LOSS OF AFFECTION for HIM.

➔ **Have you loved Jesus more today than yesterday?**

Parang ganito. Mag asawa kayo, at sasabihin sayo, "Di na kita mahal, pero walang magbabago. Ako pa rin ang magtatrabaho at magbabayad ng bill ng Meralco, Tubig, Telepono, DSL at iba pa. Uupo pa rin tayong magkatabi at matutulog pa din ako sa tabi mo. Ako pa rin ang magiging magulang sa mga anak natin. Hindi na lang talaga kita mahal."

Matatangap mo ba yun? Hindi no? Maloloka ka. Pero parang ganyan tayo minsan e. "Jesus, I don't

love You like once I did. But I'll still come to church. I'll still serve You. I'll still witness for You. I just don't love You."

He wants a relationship, not a performance. If our love for Christ is cold, it doesn't matter how we faithfully serve Him, or how we rightly believe, or how we strongly stand. Yung service, important pa din kay Jesus, pero gusto niya ang ating pagmamahal sa Kanya.

"Beware of anything that competes with loyalty to Jesus Christ. The greatest competitor of devotion to Jesus is service for him."

He wants a personal relationship, not a performance.

Our number of programs, etc, doesn't define our relationship with God.

Check the motivation of our service. Baka religious tayo rather than relationship.

12 Signs that We Have Lost our First Love

1. When our delight in the Lord is no longer as great as my delight in someone or something else, we have lost our first love.
2. When our soul does not long for times of rich fellowship in God's Word or in prayer, we have lost our first love.
3. When our thoughts during leisure moments do not reflect upon the Lord, we have lost our first love.
4. When we claim to be "only human" and easily give in to those things I know displease the Lord, we have lost our first love.
5. When we do not willingly and cheerfully give to God's work or to the needs of others, we have lost our first love.
6. When we cease to treat every person we meet as we would the Lord, we have lost our first love.
7. When we view the commands of Christ as restrictions to our happiness rather than expressions of His love, we have lost our first love. (BURDEN NA ANG PAGSUNOD SA KANYA)
8. When we inwardly strive for the acclaim of this world rather than the approval of the Lord, we have lost our first love.
9. When we fail to make Christ or His words known because we have fear, we have lost our first love.
10. When we refuse to cease a non-Christian behavior that we know is a stumbling block for fellow believers, we have lost our first love.
11. When we become complacent to sinful conditions around us, we have lost our first love.
12. When we are unable to forgive another for offending us, we have lost our first love.

2. THE WAY OUT

A. REMEMBER

"Remember where you have fallen."

B. REPENT

"Repent" – a change of thinking.

Repent from the pride of busyness.

C. REDO – Have we forgot our "honeymoon" times with God? – doesn't mean that we cease all that we do, but we remember the motivation why we're doing it.

Check question:

- Yung bang ginagawa ko increases or grows our trust/relationship to God or para lang bang isang checklist?
- Minsan sinasabi natin, "mainit nung 70s..." baka naman kasi we're trapped in a cycle of just "simbabwe- simba uwi." At wala na yung love kay God and it became just a "part of the week."

... *Do this in remembrance of me...*

³⁹ You study^[e] the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, ⁴⁰ yet you refuse to come to me to have life.
(John 5:39-40)

Jesus talking to the Pharisees.

Reading the bible, ministry, fellowships are not bad. But the motivation of that?
Is what we do increases our love for God, or is it just like a bundy clock?

Conclude: The church in Ephesus today ceased... Because they lost their first love. How about us?

REKINDLE THE FIRST LOVE!