



Christ, Stars & Lampstands

- Revelation 1:17-20
- Christ holds (controls) the 7 stars (angels)
- Christ walks among the lampstands (churches)



Walks

- Represents Christ's presence
- Intimacy
- Jesus' concern for his people
- Jesus walks among us/with us in our situations



II. I Know Your Works (v2)

- Jesus knows all about us
- He penetrates our façade and the surface of our hearts
- "the eye" of Tolkien's Lord of the Rings – sees all



Three Affirmations

- 'Your toil' – hard labour/service (v2) – not growing weary (v3)
- 'Your patient endurance' – a favourite word for John – used 3x in verses 2-3
 - Not passive resignation but actively holding firm
 - Courage to face resistance from an oppressing power



Three Affirmations

- 'Your commitment to the truth'
 - Not tolerate evildoers (v2)
 - Reference to Nicolaitians (v6)



Nicolaitians ... a heretical sect, who retained pagan practices like idolatry and immorality contrary to the thought and the conduct required in Christian churches. Broadly speaking, they had worked out a compromise with the pagan society in which they lived.



Robert H. Mounce

III. Jesus' Critique (v4-5)

- You have left/abandoned your first love (v4)
- A love for both God and one another



Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem, Thus says the Lord: I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed me in the wilderness, in a land not sown.



Jeremiah 2:2

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

John 13:35



- We have become attached to other things
- Perhaps a form of compromise like the Nicolaitans
- Instead Jesus instructs the church with a 3-fold imperative (v5)- remember, repent, do.



1. Remember

- Your first love
- Love pictured as a height from which we fell
- Prodigal son (Luke 15:17-18)



2. Repent

- Turn around
- Keep your new perspective in mind – your everyday mind



3. Do

- Practice care for one another and service for God
- This practice will shape your emotional response



If not ...

If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.
(Revelation 2:5b)

- The lampstand of your church will wither and die



A church can continue only for so long on a loveless course. Continuing on that course means ceasing to be a church. Its lampstand is removed.

Leon Morris



IV. The Promise (v7)

Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. To everyone who conquers, I will give permission to eat from the tree of life that is in the paradise of God.



Listen well (v7a)

What is the quality of our listening?

- Consider the parable of the sower (Mark 4:1-9)
- Different soils = varying ways of listening



The problem is selective listening

Conquer and Inherit Life (v7b)

- Conquer for John means patiently endure
- We will inherit life – eat of the tree of life – allusions to Genesis 2:9; 3:22-24
- Enjoy the paradise of God



Persevere

Let us not be dismayed and give up on the church

- Churches are messy places as the seven letters of Revelation will demonstrate
- Yet we are called to come to maturity through participation in the people of God



We are ardent after God but cool towards the church. It is not irreligion or indifference that keeps many away from the church, but just the opposite: the church is perceived and experienced as a carcinogenic pollutant in the pure air of religion.



Many people, wanting to nurture faith in God, instead of entering a company of saints who still look and act a lot more like sinners, take a long walk on an ocean beach, or hike a high mountain, or immerse themselves in Dostoevsky or Stravinsky or Georgia O'Keeffe.

Eugene H. Peterson



The Circle

- We grow together in unity and diversity – Ephesians 4:1-16 – a celebration of a multifaceted body with many different gifts
- The 'spirituality of the circle' – all of us using our gifts as represented by a circle

