

WCCC 1990

Brother Kaung

What the Spirit Says to the Church (1)

Revelation 2: 1 – 7.

To the angel of the assembly in Ephesus write: these things says He that holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lamps: I know your works and your labor, and your endurance, and that you cannot bear evil men; and you have tried them who say that themselves are apostles and are not, and you found them liars; and endured, and have borne for my name's sake, and have not wearied: but I have against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore when you are fallen, and repent, and do the first works: but if not, I am coming to you, and I will remove your lamp out of its place, except you shall repent. But this you have, that you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He that has an ear, let His hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. To His that overcomes, I will give to His to eat of the tree of life which is in the paradise of God.

Prayer:

Lord, we thank and praise you that we can gather here together in your name. We believe you are the faithful God. We believe you will be with us according to your word. Lord, we long for your presence more than anything else. Lord, if we have your presence, then we are alive. If we lose your presence, then we are like dead. We thank and praise you, when you are with us, your Spirit speaks to us. So, we look upon you that tonight you will speak to us through your Spirit. May you open up our ears and our hearts so we can see your glory. That we can prostrate before you. We worship you because you are always the one worthy to be praised. In the name of our Lord. Amen.

In the seven letters, we see that at the end of each letter, there is this sentence, what the Spirit says to the assemblies, He who has an ear, let His hear. What the Spirit says to the assemblies. Because the Lord is among the assemblies, thus the Spirit has words. We see in Revelation 1, John was on the Patmos Island. He saw a vision. He saw seven golden lampstands and in the midst of them he saw one who is like the Son of Man. And this is the risen Christ. And this risen Christ is among the church. Not only is He among the seven golden lampstands, He also walks among the seven golden lampstands. Because He is in the midst and because He walks among them, that is why we can hear the words of the Spirit. The words of the Spirit are based on the presence of Christ among the assemblies.

We remember when our Lord was on earth, He said, wherever there are two or three who gather in my name, I will be in the midst of them. And this is the meaning of the church. What is the church? The church is two or three gathered together in the name of the Lord. In another word, it is not an individual, but more than one gathered together. And they gather in the name of the Lord. That is, they surrender themselves to the name of the Lord, so that the Lord can truly be the Lord among them. Under this circumstance, the Lord said, I will be with you. And I will be among you. Because He is in their midst, they can be counted as church before God. The glory of the church is the presence of the Lord. If the Lord is not present, then they cannot be counted as the church. But dear brothers and sisters, today we can gather together in the name of the Lord, but we have not submitted to His as our Lord. We can say now we are gathering in His name, but then we ourselves are here as Lord. And oftentimes we do not wish the Lord to be with us. We do not need His to be with us because we already know what to do. We know how we should gather. We have our tradition. We have our order. We do not want the Lord to be with us. Because if He is present, then we cannot do what we want. We want to gather in His name. But we want to do things our way. To put it in a better way, we do not feel this is satisfactory. So sometimes we wish He will come to visit us. And when He comes to visit us, we want Him to give us some words so we can revive a little bit. Then we thank Him. But we do not want Him to stay. We only want to have a revival once a year and we are satisfied. Dear brothers and sisters, is this our condition today?

There was a famous preacher in the last century. Even though he was famous, yet he was childlike. His name is A. J. Gordon. He was a pastor in a big church in Boston. He loved the Lord very much. One Saturday night, he was preparing his message for the following morning. He felt very tired while preparing the message and he fell asleep and had a dream. He dreamed that he was at a podium and this church was filled with listeners. And when he was ready to start the sermon, he saw a person whom he had never seen come before him. This was a stranger and he did not recognize him. This man was walking slowly to the front on the right aisle. And he looked to his left and to his right. He was looking to see if someone would give him a seat. At that time the seats in the assembly were pew system. People paid for the seats. All seats were paid by each individual family. This stranger was looking to see if anyone would give him a seat. When he reached the middle of the hall, there was a person who invited this stranger to his pew. This stranger thanked him and sat down. And after this man sat down, A. J. Gordon began to speak. But he did not know for whatever reason, his eyes kept looking at this stranger. This stranger had a very solemn face as if he had gone through a lot of sorrows. His attitude was very humble. His attire was very plain and common. It seemed that he was listening to his message with intent. And A. J. Gordon for some reason kept looking at this stranger. He thought to himself, I did not know this stranger. And he made up his mind that after he finished speaking, he would go find this stranger. But when he finished speaking and came down from the podium, this stranger had already left. He was very disappointed. He asked the person who gave this

stranger a seat, 'who was this stranger?' And that person said to A. J. Gordon, 'how come you do not know who He is?' 'He is Jesus of Nazareth. He came today and you can be sure that He will come again.' When A. J. Gordon heard these words, his emotion was stirred. And he thought to himself, what did I speak today? Was I speaking about some fashionable topics? Was I speaking of doctrines that people want to hear? But, he thought, thank the Lord because I was speaking of our Lord, Jesus Christ. He went on thinking: how was my spirit when I was speaking? Was I speaking about this crucified Christ on a same standing as He is? Was I exalting Christ or exalting myself when I was speaking? I did not know whether my God likes our godly building or not. I did not know whether He likes our stained-glass windows. I did not know how He feels about our big organ. I did not know whether He likes our music. And whether He thinks our program is good or not. He was there asking himself all these questions. After all, to him this was not a dream. But indeed, he did have this dream. But this dream became his reality throughout his life. So, this book was 'How Christ Came to Church'. This was his dream and also his biography. And because of this dream, the whole condition of his assembly was turned upside down. The choir disappeared. The pew system was no longer there. All things were drastically changed.

Dear brothers and sisters, if our Lord comes to the assembly today, what will we think? If the Lord is in the midst of the assembly, can we go on like this? If we can still go on like this, it means that the Lord is no longer here among us. If the Lord is here, there will be a great response in us. Dear brothers and sisters, if the Lord comes to the midst of the church, what will He look for? What is it that can satisfy His heart? What will make Him sad? Will our condition today satisfy His heart? The presence of the Lord is the true meaning of the church. If the Lord is here, our condition cannot go on like this.

Brothers and sisters, at that time, at the end of the first century, of all the apostles, only John was still on earth. He was the youngest of all the apostles. But now He was the oldest one that were still on earth. And He was working in Asia. We know the assemblies there were first built up by the apostle Paul. But Paul was already martyred because of our Lord. Later, John moved to Asia. And he was serving the house of God around the areas of Ephesus. But then he himself was imprisoned for the word and testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. And he was exiled to the island of Patmos. This island was on the edge by the Aegean Sea. We were told that on a clear day, John could see the provinces of Asia from the island of Patmos. So, one Sunday morning, maybe John was sitting on a rock and he looked towards Asia. And he longed for the seven assemblies that he has served in Asia. But now he was no longer able to serve them. While he was thinking, he heard a sound as if the sound of a trumpet from behind him. He turned around and saw the seven golden lampstands. And there was one like the Son of Man among the seven golden lampstands. And this was the vision he saw on the island of Patmos. These seven assemblies were started by Paul and served continuously by John. We would think that these

seven assemblies have to be glorious. We would never think that when the Lord wrote to these seven assemblies, He praised and did not rebuke only the one in Philadelphia. But the Lord also warned them. The assembly in Smyrna was one that the Lord did not rebuke but also did not praise either. This was the condition of the church at the end of the first century. And at the end of each letter, there was this sentence, 'what the Spirit says to the assembly, he that has an ear, let him hear'.

The letter to the Ephesians was not just for the assembly in Ephesus. It was also for all the assemblies. Every letter was like this. Brothers and sisters, if it is for all the assemblies, then we can say that it is not just for all the assemblies at the end of the first century, but also for all the assemblies throughout the ages. Thus, it is also for the assemblies today. We believe the contents in these letters to the seven assemblies, that is, the words that are spoken by the Spirit to all the assemblies, they are also the words spoken to us in the assembly today. So, if we have an ear, we should listen. What did the Spirit say? We know what the Spirit said has basis. For example, if we look at John 16: 13 – 14: 'But when He is come, the Spirit of truth, He shall guide you into all the truth: for He shall not speak from Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear He shall speak; and He will announce to you what is coming. He shall glorify me, for He shall receive of mine and shall announce it to you.' The Spirit does not speak according to Himself. He speaks according to what He has heard. He tells us what He has received from the Lord. So no matter what the Spirit says, He always speaks about Christ. So you see here the vision is Christ. And the voice is of the Spirit. The voice of the Spirit is to lead us into the vision of Christ. When the Spirit speaks, we shall see Christ. If today when we hear the words but do not see Christ, then we know these are not the words of the Spirit. It may be an accurate doctrine, but it is man who speaks. If it is the Spirit speaking in you, you shall see Christ, because for sure He will bring us into Christ. The only purpose for the Spirit to come to the earth is to glorify Christ. So dear brothers and sister, here it let us see how we can know it is the voice of the Spirit. If He gives us Christ, then we know it is the voice of the Spirit.

In the assembly in Ephesus, our Lord said this to them, 'I know your works and your labor, and your endurance, and that you cannot bear evil men; and you have tried them who say that they themselves are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; and endured and have borne for my name's sake, and have not wearied. Ephesians 2: 6 also said, 'but this you have, you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.' Here we see that the Lord said 'I know' because He is in the midst of the church. I know you have seven good works. Looking at the assembly in Ephesus from the outside there were seven good works that they did. But our Lord said I know all these. Our Lord knows all things. He said I know your good works. The assembly at Ephesus had a lot of good works. They had all kinds of activities. They had youth meetings, children ministry, adult meetings, family meetings, meetings for the newlyweds, college meetings. They had all kinds of activities. Outwardly, they were very

lively. All these activities when they first started were works of faith because they believed in the Lord. And these activities were done according to the power of the Spirit and by faith.

What does it mean works done by faith? That is to say, they depended on the Lord to do it. But then they worked to a point that they did not need to depend on the Lord anymore. They already had a tradition for it and they were used to this. So the work still continued but the faith was already lost. And this was but a dead work. It was not a work of faith. Outwardly, one cannot tell. But the Lord said I know. And secondly, the Lord said, you labor and the labor should be one of love. In the beginning they did have the labor of love. They served the saints. They offered hospitality to the saints. They visited those who were sick. And they also went to look after those in prison. They helped the poor. They had many labors of love. But gradually they worked to a point where even though the labor continued, yet the love was gone. And this became a routine. Men themselves do not know. But the Lord knows. The Lord said I know your labor.

Here it also mentioned endurance. The bible tells us that we can endure because we have hope. When you are in a lot of trials, you have to endure. And these trials come from men. Sometimes you have to endure because of the circumstances. Sometimes matters tried you and you have to endure. The trials from men are not from the men in this world but from the brothers and sisters in the assembly. Oftentimes, we think if we go to gatherings, we can always enjoy and there is no endurance because every brother and sister is like an angel. But when you are there, you found the dealings may be more severe than those from the world. But because we have hope we endured. We know that if we endure, we will reign with the Lord. We have hope. But brothers and sisters, as time goes on what will endurance turn into? The endurance will be like biting the bullet. I am a Christian. I want to prove that I love the Lord. So, there is nothing I can do but to endure. But in my heart, I am very unwilling. On the outside I still have to smile because I am a Christian. Brothers and sisters, by this time the hope has gone. When hope is gone there is no joy. Originally, when you endured, you have joy inside you. Peter told us we have to jump for joy. Why? Because we have hope. But when the hope is gone, the joy is gone too. We cannot see that from the outside because on the outside, it is still the same.

Here it also said 'you cannot bear the wicked men'. In the original language, it just said you cannot bear evil. Of course, evil includes evil man. You know that the saints in the assembly in Corinth reached a point where they allowed sin to be in their midst. That sin was one that was seldom seen even in the world. But they allowed this sin to remain with them. They did not have any feeling in their conscience. But the assembly in Ephesus was different. They had a sense of righteousness. When they saw evil, they could not bear it. They had to deal with these sins. They said the church could not allow sins to be among them. If there are sins in the church, it is like leaven in a loaf and the

whole loaf would be leavened. Whether it is a doctrine of evil or is a heresy, evil actions or evil men, they all had this knowledge to erase it. They could not allow sins in there. Of course, this is something they should do. But they did it to a point that the sense of righteousness in them became a sense of self-righteousness. They thought they were clean and they were above all. But the Lord knows. The Lord knows how their inside condition really is.

They still had another good point. The Lord said, 'and you have tried them who say themselves are apostles and are not, and have found them liars.' We know from the bible there are only twelve apostles and at that time only John was still alive. So, if it was not John, then all the other apostles at that time were false. Apart from the twelve apostles, there were many other apostles because there were false apostles. The true apostles were set up by God, sent by God and doing the work of God. The false apostles were set up by themselves or maybe by some other people. They were not sent by God and they were not doing the work of God. They established their own kingdom. At the end of the first century, there were many false prophets. They went to the assembly in Ephesus and proclaimed themselves to be apostles. And they demanded to be accepted and be allowed to teach others. They asked to be allowed to rule over them and to be able to execute their authority as an apostle. And being an apostle, he felt he was above all. Brothers and sisters, not only was there this kind of condition at the end of the first century. It is the same now at the end of the twentieth century. Not all the apostles were real. And not all the apostles were false either. So you see they had the ability to discern because they knew the bible well and had the knowledge of the bible. And they knew how to use the knowledge of the bible to test whether the apostle was true or false. And this is a very good thing. In fact, today we need to have this ability of discernment. But from this ability to test the false apostles, they even rejected the true apostles. In another word, they became the judge. And they were better than the apostles. They themselves decided whether one is an apostle or not. And so the result was that they also fell into confusion.

Not only this, the Lord said you can endure. You labor and bore for my name's sake and you have not wearied. And this endurance is different from the endurance mentioned above. This endurance is towards the world. They endured the persecution of the world for the sake of the Lord's name. They can endure the misunderstanding of the world. And they do not weary. And this is also a very good thing. But brothers and sisters, the endurance sometimes became something like this is what I have to do because I am a Christian. There is nothing I can do. When the people in this world treat me like this, all I can do is to endure. So you see, the situation inside is different. The Lord knows how they were inside.

Then there was another good work. And that was they hated the Nicolaitans. The Lord said this is also what I hate. In the history of the church, we cannot find a sect called Nicolaitans. And some people did have interpretations. Some

said Nicolaitans was one of the seven deacons (Acts 6). But we know this is not reliable. So we know this Nicolaitan is symbolic. Actually, in the seven letters you see several names that are symbolic. What does it symbolize? Nicolaite are made up of two words. Two Greek words being used to make the one word. One word is 'Nico' which means to overcome. And the other one 'lait' is laity, that is ordinary people. In another word, some people in the church started talking about clergy and layman. And that is to say, there are some who are of a higher order than the others. And they rule over the laity. And they are separated out to serve God just like the priests in the Old Testament time. All other brothers and sisters are laymen. It became a class distinction among the brothers and sisters. At that time, it had not yet become a doctrine. It was only a behavior of some people who announced that they were higher than others. And John himself had experienced this. In the book of John III, he told us that there was a man who was proud and arrogant. And he controlled everything in the assembly. He did not receive the servants of God. And the Lord said, 'this is what I hate'. We who are children of God, are all members and each of us is a royal priest before God. We all serve our Lord. The Lord does not want to have a mediator between Himself and us. There is only one mediator between God and us. But between the Lord and us, there is no mediator. We come to the Lord directly. Every brother and sister can draw near Him directly. Every brother and sister should serve Him. And every brother and sister should live for Him. There should not be any class distinction among us. This kind of behavior is what the Lord hates. And at that time the assembly in Ephesus also hated this kind of behavior. And this was a good thing. But when they did this, subconsciously they came to a condition of democracy. And the assembly became a democratic thing. We know that the assembly is a theocracy and is ruled by God. The assembly is not a democracy. We are all equal before God. The grace of God to each one of us is the same. Our God does not give grace according to man. He treats every one of us the same. There is no question about this.

But within the work of God there is a spiritual order. God is the head of Christ. Christ is the head of men. And man is the head of woman. And oftentimes the sisters do not like that. In fact, a lot of sisters are more spiritual than brothers. And it can be said that this is a universal fact. The sisters are more spiritual than the brothers, showing that God does not distinguish between male and female. But in the family or in the assembly, the brothers represent Christ. The sisters represent the church. And for this reason, there is a spiritual order. And this is according to the basis that God is the head of Christ. God the Father and God the Son are equal. In nature they are equal. You do not say one is higher than the other. God the father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are the same. But to accomplish the will of God the Father, the Son is willing to submit to God the Father and let God the Father be His head and He himself be the body. And He executes what the head wants to do. Dear brothers and sisters, this is spiritual order.

But the assembly in Ephesus came to a point that they could hate what God hates, but they could not love what God loves. Thus on the outside, they appeared to be very good. But in reality, the Lord said, I know. The Lord said, I know all these good works. But what the Lord was looking for in the assemblies and what the Lord knows are two different things. The Lord knew of these seven good works in the assembly in Ephesus. But what did the Lord say to them? He said, I have one thing against you. In the original language, the tone of this saying is very heavy. It did not say I have one thing against you: as is there is only one thing. In the original language it is I have to oppose you. I have to oppose you even though you have these seven good works. In men's eyes, these were very satisfactory. But I know what was inside. The Lord said, 'I oppose you'. Why did the Lord oppose them? It was because 'you left your first love'. Dear brothers and sisters, these seven good works should be the outpouring of the life of Christ. They should be the fruits of the Holy Spirit. But at that time, these seven good works in the assembly of Ephesus were not the result of the outflowing of Christ. And they were not the fruits of the Holy Spirit. These seven good works were their own works – the expression of their own nature. So before the Lord, all these good works could not satisfy His heart.

Dear brothers and sisters, what is the Lord looking for in the church? He is not looking for good works. He is not looking for labor. He is not looking for endurance. He is not looking for opposing evil. And He is not looking for testing false prophets. He is not looking for sufferings in His name. And He is not looking for people who hate the Nicolaitans. All these are good things but these are not what He is looking for. He is not looking for works. What is He looking for in the church? He is looking for Himself. If this work is the expression of Himself, then it can satisfy Him. If the endurance is His own character, this will make Him happy. But if all these things are not out of Himself nor the fruits of the Holy Spirit, are not propelled by the first love inside, and are not done because of the love of God, He could not see Himself. And because He could not see Himself, He said 'I oppose you'. Dear brothers and sisters, today what is the Lord looking for in His church? We give Him much work. We give Him much endurance. We give Him much knowledge and we give Him many things. But if we do not give Him Himself, the Lord said, I oppose you. This saying is very severe and this is what the Spirit is speaking to all the assemblies.

Dear brothers and sisters, what is the first love? One day when the grace of God was upon us, we would be just like the woman in the book of Luke. When the Lord was sitting there, she brought this alabaster ointment and anointed the feet of the Lord. She showered His feet with her tears and used her hair to dry His feet. Why did she do that? She did that because she was forgiven much. She loved much and her forgiveness was much. Brothers and sisters, when we were first saved from our sinful and corrupted past, and we were forgiven much, how single was our heart towards our Lord. We really do love our Lord. This first love is not talking about the length of time but it refers to the better love. You know our Lord and God always give us the better things. When the prodigal

son repented and returned, the father put on Him the best robe. God loves us so much that He gives us His only begotten son. What love is greater and deeper than this love? He loves us so much He is willing to sacrifice His only begotten Son. Our Lord loves us and He gave Himself up for us. The Holy Spirit loves us and He pours the love of God in us. Our God is love. Love is not only an action. Love is a nature. And God is love. Because He loves and all He does is love. What the Lord is looking for is that love. Because God is love and in love, He can find Himself. Only this can satisfy His heart.

What is the first love? First love is the perfect love. In Deuteronomy in the Old Testament, we see that God said, 'you have to love God with your whole heart, with your whole soul and with your whole mind'. In Matthew, our Lord also said, 'love the Lord your God with your whole heart, whole soul and your whole strength and your whole understanding and this is the greatest commandment'. So what the Lord looks for in the church today is this perfect love. Today is our love for God a perfect love? We said we love God. Yes, we indeed love Him. But can we say we love Him with our whole heart, our whole strength and our whole soul? And do we love Him perfectly? Can we say like in the Psalm 73, 'whom have I in the heavens? and there is none upon earth I desire beside Thee'. We know our Brother Watchman Nee. Forgive me for mentioning him. I have gotten much help from him. And I believe many of you have read his story. One day he was preparing his message and he wanted to use the Psalm 73. 'Whom have I in the heavens? And there is none upon earth I desire beside Thee.' And he said to God, it is easy for me to say in heaven, besides you whom do I have. But I cannot say besides you on earth whom do I desire. At that time, he had a lover and they grew up together. And they already had an agreement. But this girl that he loved he had spread the gospel to her when he himself got saved. He hoped that she would be saved but this girl did not accept the gospel. But brother Nee still loved her and he told God, 'If you allow me this matter, I would double my effort to serve you'. But our Lord never bargains with man. Finally, one day when the love of God touched him, He told the lord, I am willing to let go. And he wrote a hymn that many of us know. Dear brothers and sisters, today, do we have a perfect love towards our Lord? Indeed, we need to love our parents, we need to love our husbands/wives, we love our children, we love brothers and sisters. But if we truly love them, we need to love the Lord with a perfect love. Only in that perfect love can we really have love.

This love is also an unselfish love. The first love is love without self. Was there a time when the love of the Lord touches us, and we do not have ourself? We do not care for ourself. We do not count the price we pay. As long as it is the Lord, everything goes. This is the first love.

The first love is an enduring love. The Lord loves us and loves us to the very end. When the Lord was about to be crucified, He knew He had to go back to the Father. He loved His disciples and He loved them to the very end. He washed their feet. Dear brothers and sisters, is our love to our Lord always changing?

It is sometimes cold sometimes hot. Or do we love our Lord continuously? Love is a sacrificial love. It is willing to sacrifice oneself. It is not there to negotiate but is ready to sacrifice. And that is how our Lord loves us.

Brothers and sisters, in fact God has only one request and that is to love Him as He has loved us. The bridegroom has only one request and that is for the bride to have a single and pure love for him. He is not there to see how much housework the bride can do. Even if she can do a lot of housework but if her heart is not towards him, it is not what the husband wants. What our Lord wants from us is the pure love. In John 21, After His resurrection, the Lord asked Peter, 'do you love me? Do you love me more than all these?' What the Lord wants from us is this love. What the Lord looking for in the church is this love. Without this love, the Lord said, 'I am going to remove the lampstand from you'. So you have to think back where you fell.

Brothers and sisters, it is very easy for us to leave the first love. There are many reasons which can cause us to leave the first love. Sometimes it is our pride. Because the grace of God on us is plenty, unknowingly there is a pride in us. And this is so called spiritual pride. But if you are really spiritual, then you will not be proud. But maybe you are proud of your spirituality. And when you are proud of your spirituality, then you love yourself more than you love the Lord. Some have ambition. When they first started, they are very humble, then they have ambition inside. They expect to do great things. And because of this, they leave the first love. Some are enticed by the world. When you are first saved, you really were willing to forsake the world for the Lord. But then you look back and the world attracted your heart again. The world now has taken away a lot of your love for the Lord. Some leave the first love because they look at others. They look at this brother or that sister, especially the big brothers or big sisters, someone that they look up to. Then they said this brother can do such a thing. He wounded us and cause us to stumble. And then they left their first love. I remember what brother Nee said. 'Unless your eyes are blind, otherwise you will not trip. If there is a rock before you and your eyes can see, you will not trip. You tripped because your eyes are blind'.

Dear brothers and sisters, today there are many children of God who have left the first love. And then they blame certain brothers and sisters. They are wounded and disappointed. Did God disappoint you? Men disappoint you. But did the Lord disappoint you? Did the Lord ask you to look at others? Did the Lord ask you to admire certain people? The Lord asks you to look unto Him. The more you look at Him, the more your heart will be moved by love. The first love then returned to your inside. Dear brothers and sisters, we have to remember where we fell. Then we have to repent. We cannot blame others. We cannot say others wounded me. We certainly cannot say the Lord wounded me. We have to repent. Our heart and mind have to change. We have to admit that it is our weakness. We have to return to the Lord.

How can we restore back our first love? To restore is to return to the Lord. You have to come out of tradition and return to Christ. You need to come out of doctrine and return back to Christ. You have to come out of organization and return back to the Lord. You have to come out from rumors and return to Christ. You have to come out from men and return back to Christ. You have to come out from yourself and return back to Christ. Dear brothers and sisters, what the Spirit says to all the assemblies is for us to go back to Christ. All these outward things can be forsaken. Conduct and work can be forsaken. The labor and the endurance can go. The testing and the hatred can go. Brothers and sisters, do not set your eyes on these things. Do not let these things occupy your heart. You need to come out from all these outward things and return back to Christ. If you return to Christ, the first love will come out from you. And you can do all the first works. All these things have to be done. But what you are doing now is different from what you have done before. You do it from the inside. It has to come out from the life of Christ. It has to come out from love. If you have love, you do not need to be afraid there is no work. You do not need to fear you do not have labor. You do not need to fear there is no endurance. You do not have to fear you will not hate what God hates. All these things will be there. But inside there is love. What the Spirit says to the church, whoever has an ear, let him hear. Maybe we come to the Lord and repent that we have lost the first love. To leave the first love is to leave Christ. We have to return to Christ and let His love fill us again. Let us forget everything else and let us only look to Christ. This is what the Spirit says to the church.

Let us bow our head and pray.

Our Lord, we thank you. Because you have so much patience. You are still walking among the church even though the church left you outside the door but you still care for us. And you are still there calling for us. Lord, we ask you today to let us hear the voice of the Spirit and we repent and can come back to you. Our Lord, may we satisfy your heart. And when your heart is satisfied, then we are satisfied. We thank you and praise you. In the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.