

April 14, 2013

SOVEREIGN GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

Of Princeton, New Jersey

Jesus Christ

For by Him were all things created,
that are in heaven, and that are in earth,
visible and invisible ...

And He is before all things,
and by Him all things consist.
- Colossians 1:16-17

WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday: 10:15 AM Bible Class
11:00 AM Morning Service
Thursday: 7:30 PM Mid-week Service

WEB ADDRESS

Be sure to bookmark our website for daily articles and audio messages:
www.FreeGraceMedia.com

WEEKLY MEETING LOCATION

Rocky Hill Firehouse, 2nd floor
150 Washington Street
Rocky Hill, NJ 08553

MAILING ADDRESS

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Pennington, NJ 08534
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If you would like to receive this bulletin sent weekly to your email then send a note to the email address above. Articles in this bulletin are by the pastor unless otherwise noted.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

10: 15 a.m. Bible Class followed by short break

11:00 a.m. Service

Opening Hymns

Scripture Reading

Message

Closing Hymn

Nursery Today: Denise C. Nursery Thursday: Urmilla I.

FIRST LOVE Revelation 2: 1-7

After forty years, the church at Ephesus was commended by the Savior for six good things. But the Lord Jesus Christ said something terrible had happened. He says, “thou hast left thy first love.” (v4) Therefore, Christ sent this letter to them. But it is a letter to all the Lord’s churches—us included. “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” (v7)

Good Works

First, the Faithful Witness says, “I know thy works and thy labour.” (v2) The gift of faith is accompanied with good works. (Jam 2: 26) A good work is done in faith and obedience to Christ (Heb 11: 6; Rom 14: 23), from love to Christ (Gal 5: 6), for God’s glory, (1 Cor 15: 10) and is done wholeheartedly. (Tit 2: 14) Christ commended them for their works. Brethren, good works are pleasing to our Savior.

Patience

Secondly, the Lord commends them for their patience. (v2) It means they were steady in doing good works. They had the same daily responsibilities and struggles we have. Yet, they patiently persevered in the cause of Christ.

No Tolerance for Evil

Thirdly, Christ says I know, “how thou canst not bear them which are evil.” (v2) They did not want to be around those who were evil in their doctrine or in their lives. “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.” (1 Cor 15: 33) “Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.” (Rom 12: 9; Pro 8: 13)

No Compromise with False Teachers

Fourthly, the Lord said I know “thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.” (v2) Many think we should not warn one another so often about false free-will, works preachers. But the Lord commends the Ephesians for doing so. Christ said, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.” (Mt 16: 6)

Perseverance in Suffering

Fifthly, the Lord Jesus said I know “how thou hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast labored and hast not fainted.” (v3) The Lord Jesus commends them for persevering in faith though they suffered for his name’s sake. Brethren, commit ourselves to him that judges righteously and God shall keep us. (1 Pet 2: 23; 1: 5)

Hatred of the Deeds of Antinomians

Sixthly, the Lord commended them saying, “But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.” (v6) We are accused of being against the law because we believe the truth that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes (Rom 10: 4) But when Paul wrote, “(as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just” these were the kinds of folks Paul was speaking of. (Rom 3: 8) True believers hate our sin because we know our sin is against the very God who loved us and gave himself for us. We despise those who blaspheme our gospel by saying that to “not to be under the law but under grace” is to preach that men have a license to sin. Christ hated it, the Ephesians hated it and so do we.

First Love

There were six things the Lord commended the Ephesians for—six things believers should ask God’s grace for and strive to maintain. But the Ephesian brethren had one serious problem. The Master said, “Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.” (v4) “First love” means “the love we had at first.” (Jer 2: 2) Do you remember when the Lord Jesus Christ first revealed himself in your heart? It was like Christ looked down at you from the cross and said, “I’m doing this for you. Now, you are washed, you are sanctified, you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” (1 Cor 6: 11) You fell so in love with him, you said, “As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.” (SOS 2: 3) You confessed him publicly in baptism. There was communion between you and Christ. The most reasonable thing in the world to you was to no longer live for yourself but only for Christ. (2 Cor 5: 14) Now, Christ says, “You have left your first love.” So have we done that? Brethren, never lose that love we had at first for our Savior. If we have, the Lord Jesus gives us three things to do.

Remember

First, the Lord says, “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen.” (v5) Be always remembering your first love for Christ. Remember the price that was paid by Christ for you. If you are truly one of God’s elect. Christ came down from heaven to be forsaken of God for you that you might never be forsaken.” “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen.” (Lam 1: 12; 1 Cor 6: 20; 2 Cor 8: 9; Mk 10: 15)

Repent

Secondly, the Lord says “and repent.” (v5) Turn from whatever is taking your time and attention away from Christ. It really does not matter what it is, if it is coming between us and Christ, it is to be repented from. (2 Cor 12: 9-10)

Do the First Works

Thirdly, the Lord says, “and do the first works.” (v5) Men, what were the first works that accompanied your first love for your wives? We’d go a long way out of our way just to see her for a short time; no time was too short and all time away was too long. That is how it was with our first love for Christ. Remember how you used to never miss hearing the gospel?—do the first works. Remember how you’d get alone so you could read his word?—do the first works. Remember how you’d ask Christ to communion with you? do the first works.

A Word of Warning

Lastly, Christ shows us how serious he is about us maintaining our first love for him. Christ says, “or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.” (v5) Those chosen, redeemed and born of God shall never be lost. But any that are not his will prove it by leaving him altogether. Walk in the light while you have the light. Perhaps the Lord places this word about the Nicolaitans where he does in the passage because as the Nicolaitans committed literal adultery, to leave our first love is spiritual adultery. If we really hate their works, then let’s not do their works.

A Word of Encouragement

Our Lord ends with a promise, “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” (v7) As you turn to Christ in faith, the Lord Jesus Christ will be 'the Tree of Life' to heal you now and forevermore in heaven. Someone may say, “But a sinner can’t turn himself, except Christ turn him!” Maybe that is what Christ is doing for you now! Is your heart breaking for your first love to be rekindled by him? May he make us to pray as David did, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me...Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me *with thy* free spirit. (Ps 51: 10, 12; Ps 80:3; Lam 5:21)