



Dear Church

Dear Church: Letter to Ephesus September 15th / 16th

Speaker: Joel Schmidgall

Scripture: [Revelation 2:1-7](#)

Sermon Summary:

There is nothing more personal than a handwritten letter. It is a uniquely customized message to you and speaks directly to who you are. In the beginning of the book of Revelation, God speaks directly to the church in seven unique letters. In this sermon, we will explore what the text DID mean to the original audience – the Church of Ephesus – and what the text DOES mean to us today.

Sermon Series Questions:

1. What did you think the letter meant to the original audience?
2. What do you think the letter means to the Church today?

Sermon Specific Questions:

1. The Letters to the Seven Churches were uniquely crafted to show each church that “God sees YOU.” Have you had an experience where you felt seen by God?
2. **Read Acts 15:22-30.** The Council at Jerusalem established 3 moral codes that cut at the heart of Roman culture: To avoid (1) idolatry through meat sacrificed to idols, (2) murder, and (3) sexual immorality. What have you had to sacrifice for your relationship with Christ?
3. How do you hear the question: “Are you right with God?” Does your posture toward that question relate to how you currently treat your community?
4. Where is it easiest or hardest to reflect the love of God? Why?
5. What letter is God writing to you today?

Digging Deeper

Letters to the Seven Churches

As we study the *Letters to the Seven Churches* found within Revelations, we need to try to understand what **DID** it mean to the original audience **BEFORE** we try to understand what **DOES** it mean for us today. You do not have to be a Biblical scholar to study scriptures! Yet, below you will find information, resources, and questions to guide you and your group in studying these letters together.

Additional Resources

Check out **The Bible Projects'** exploration on the book of Revelation. Play **The Revelation of Jesus - Part 1** video for your group to provide a great introduction to the book of Revelation and frame the new series.

<https://thebibleproject.com/explore/revelation>

<https://youtu.be/5nvVVcYD-0w>

Geography of the City of Ephesus

The city of Ephesus is located near the western coast of modern-day Turkey. It was the closest city to the Island of Patmos where the author received the vision of revelation.

History of the City of Ephesus

Ephesus was the 4th largest city in the Roman Empire. The city was home to one of the 7 Great Wonders of the Ancient World – The Temple of Artemis (originally constructed 550 BCE). The temple was the pride and joy of the city. It was rebuilt in 323 BCE funded by the local Ephesians. Temples served as community hubs, asylum, meat markets, and banks in the ancient world. Citizens would store their incredible wealth and treasures within local temples, like the Temple of Artemis and the 14 other pagan temples in the city.

Culture of the Church in Ephesus

The Church of Ephesus is praised for their deeds, hard work, and perseverance for Christ's name. Additionally, the author applauds the church for how they questioned and tested apostles to weed out false teachers (vs. 2). However, the author condemns the Ephesians for their lack of compassion within their community. They found themselves between tension of accountability (*challenging directly*) and compassion (*caring personally*).

RE-READ REVELATIONS 2:1-7

Questions for the Church Today

1. How does the Church today relate to the Church in Ephesus?
2. How can we, as the Church, protect our community from false teaching?
3. What does compassion look like within our church community?