

## **Christian Education Session**

**Wednesday, June 4, 2025**

**TOPIC: The Mark of a Healthy Church**

**Lesson: Revelation 2: 1-7**

### **What Are the Seven Churches mentioned in Revelation?**

The first church mentioned is the **Church of Ephesus**. To this church, Jesus commended them for their endurance, their longsuffering, and their dislike of false doctrine and evil behavior. He chided them however, "...you have abandoned the love you had at first" ([Revelation 2:4](#))

They no longer had the burning, consuming passion for their God they had when they were first saved and settled into the routine of the faith. He encourages them to find that fire again and continue where they were doing well.

The **Church of Smyrna** received words of comfort. They were mocked and persecuted for their faith,. It was not a wealthy church either, with opportunities to flee and take refuge somewhere else. Theologians believe many of the laborers of this church were expelled from their labor guilds - and unable to legally work in their craft - because of their conversion. The Lord said, "Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life" ([Revelation 2:10](#)). Though they would suffer in this life, God had a reward for them.

The **Church of Pergamum** was surrounded by wickedness in their city, but they held fast to their beliefs. Their location was so full of wickedness the Bible calls it, "where Satan's throne is...the place where Satan dwells" ([Revelation 2:13](#)). However, there were members of the church who still held onto their former traditions, not willing to let go of their idols. Others indulged in false doctrine. Jesus calls on this church to stop these sins. They did receive consolation as well because many from this church had been martyred.

In **Thyatira**, the church was also having problems with false teachers. There was a woman in the church who claimed to be a prophetess, who committed sins of [sexual immorality](#), and whose behavior was reminiscent of Jezebel, Ahab's wicked wife, whose story is told in 1 Kings. Despite the church's love, patience, and endurance, they tolerate this wicked woman taking an inappropriate role of leadership, giving false prophecies, and being flagrantly sinful. God has given this woman, and the church, time to turn from this sin; "I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality" ([Revelation 2:21](#)). The message ends with encouragement for those who did not follow this prophetess.

**Sardis** was a seemingly active church, full of good works. The city of Sardis was also a city of wealth, known for the carpet industry and for minting coins. However, the wealth and good works of this church meant nothing because the church was spiritually dead. They epitomized a church that seemed good, but many had cold hearts toward the Lord. They most likely put their faith in their works, prideful and assuming they were saved, or in good standing with the Lord. The message is, "Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God" ([Revelation 3:2](#)). The church was not beyond hope, but it needed to find that passion for Christ again.

The next church, in **Philadelphia**, receives encouragement and affirmation in their message. Despite poverty and hardship, they stayed true to God. "I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name" ([Revelation 3:8](#)). Jesus wanted this body of believers to continue as they were, and they would spend eternity in Heaven with Him.

Finally, John addresses the **Church of Laodicea**. While the other churches received some encouragement or commendation from the Lord, this church received no positive words. Like Sardis, Laodicea had an abundance of resources but held an indifferent spirit - described as lukewarm - toward the Lord. He wants them to grow hot or cold toward Him, but not to remain lacking in any passion toward the faith. While they were doing well in an earthly fashion, they were spiritually lacking. Here, Jesus asks for them to let Him in. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me" ([Revelation 3:20](#)). Despite their lack of spirituality, Christ waits expectantly for them to open their hearts to Him.