

Fresh Oil



May 2018 (reprise from 2009)

Dear Fellow Servants,

I was reading in my devotions recently from the seven letters to the churches of Revelation. As I have read so many times before, I came across the words to the church at Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-7). I think more than any other church that is listed in these early chapters of Revelation, the Lord's stinging rebuke to this church stands out to me above the rest. They are a busy church, and one that is certainly bearing fruit. Look at Rev.2:2-3:

"I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot endure evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary."

If we could just stop right there after the third verse we would feel fine, but our Saviour continues in the fourth verse:

"But I have this against you, that you have left your first love."

The resume in verses 2 and 3 sound so convincing, don't they? If only Jesus had stopped there, leaving us buried underneath that wonderful load of praise. But alas, He was only warming up to His pivotal point. If the foundation is missing, the building in all its splendor has nothing to stand upon and will eventually fall. Our love for Jesus must be the first matter in all our service and endeavours for Christ.

The word for "first" in Rev.2:4 is the key word. It not only means 'first in order', but also 'first in rank'. It conveys the thought of being the best, of having primary quality and intensity. A return to "first love" means a renewed commitment to the Acts 2:42 model for the church:

"And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."

After a long, cold winter we are now enjoying a delightful spring. This affords us a great opportunity to take inventory of our personal relationship with Christ and see what is needed to get back to 'first love.' We need this for our ministry here at First Baptist Church, too. If what we are building in this ministry is to last, then the foundation must be securely in place. There can be no exceptions. This will take concerted effort and focus on the Lord, but the rewards are out of this world!

Your fellow servant,

Pastor Brian

... I have been anointed with fresh oil

PSALM 92:10

