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The Cold Church

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"To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, 'These things says He who holds the

seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lamp stands: "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; and you have persevered and have patience, and have abhorred for My name's sake and have not become weary. Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lamp stand from its place—unless you repent. But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who

overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." **Revelation 2.1-7**

These words of Jesus Christ have echoed for over 2000 years however it seems that the church of Jesus Christ doesn't hear His message. Many times I have heard Christians say that they expect a special personal revelation or one for their church, a revelation that would "revive them" and give new guidelines and consequently more efficiency in their private or church life.

★ **The lives of these churches and the people in them fall apart because they don't want to hear what Jesus has already revealed to us in the Scriptures.**



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Unfortunately, a lot of these numerous “revelations”, which I have heard, coming from people, even spiritual leaders, have nothing to do with the Scriptures or with common sense! It is obvious that the ear is not bound with its head! The lives of these churches and the people in them fall apart because they don’t want to hear what Jesus has already revealed to us in the Scriptures. They don’t want to obediently, as an ear, cling to the eternal message of the owner’s head!

Jesus Christ has written to the seven existing churches at that time and to their spiritual leaders, He called them “angels” for the purpose of showing us eternal principles to help keep going and, by His grace, come to the end of our race. Not cold but passionate for Him and His Kingdom.

The time for His return is closer than ever and it is high time we took seriously His Words. We have given too much heed to human philosophy; we have been directed by doubtful “revelations” most of which have not

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been confirmed by the Scriptures and have followed religious clichés and charismatic personalities who lack character. Now is the time to turn to the Word of God, for if we don’t the work of Christ will be ineffective and Jesus will not be in it.

Jesus said: *“Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy,*

And keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.”
(Revelation 1.3)

Greek word for treasure is *makarios*. It means to be fully content or to be satisfied with something. In the biblical context it means “blessed is the person or church that is fully contented with God, not only in good circumstances, but are fully content with God’s presence in them through Jesus Christ in everything.”

If we lose His presence in our life or in church’s life, if we remove ourselves from the Living Word, not wanting to hear the message of the Holy Spirit to the church, we shall be thrown away from Lord and become useless His Kingdom. We will become a cold church without God’s presence and He will have to remove that church!

What kind of cold church is God talking about?

▶ **1. A cold church is a very active and doctrinally correct church**

"I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary."
(Revelation 2.2-3)

The cold church can be very active; a church that understands its mission and vision. Almost all its members work for Kingdom of God; they are dedicated to church activities, doing their best, and are not lazy. These are the kind of believer of whom people can boast because they have done something for the Kingdom of God in their city by their efforts, work, and steadiness. Every pastor would like to have such a church. In the past year they have grown in number, founded various Christian associations, and initiated institutions which positively influenced their society

David Ravenhill, in his book "The Letters of Jesus", says that the word "effort" according to G. Campbel Morgan means "the effort giving results at the cost of pain".

In other words, these were not only Sunday Christians but true born-again by the spirit, filled, sacred, courageous, and stable Christians who did their best to reach the city of Ephesus, which at that time was the leading city on the west coast of Little Asia. It had about 300,000 inhabitants and was leading their economy, culture and religion. Their effort was obvious. They wanted to influence the people around them – they had a clear goal.

Not only were they tried but were proud of their standards of holiness and doctrinal purity, which they successfully maintained in their church.

The church in Ephesus persistently

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refused to tolerate sin among their believers. It is known that it was not easy, because sexual immorality was bound with religion in their society. They refused to lower their standards as many do nowadays as we see society obsessed with the flesh and sexuality.

According to recent researches, the church is not much better than the world. Divorce is a normal thing, adultery, financial misconduct, and similar activities are tolerated in the church today. But the church in Ephesus was not like this! Its belief was exact; theologically accurate books were dispersed, spiritual workers completed theological colleges with the best marks, pastors spoke grammatically correct, their children were of good behavior, not like some of today's pastor's children.

They were so doctrinally diligent that they cast out those who were false teachers and "criminals" *"I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are*

evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars." **(Revelation 2.2)**

They could recognize those who pretended to be good. They knew what was good and what was evil. Jesus said that they hated the "deeds of Nicolaitans" as He did. The Nicolaitans were believers who compromised their faith in order to enjoy socially acceptable yet sinful behavior. It is the same today. Many believers and churches compromise or keep silent while enjoying sinful actions thinking that they are with Jesus. It is not possible! Apostle John clearly says: *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."* **(1 John 2.15)**

The church in Ephesus remained in truth and in holiness. These characteristics are not bad and should exist in all healthy churches. But in their battle for holiness and common doctrine they might have lost the patience and passion toward Lord.

Although they left their parents, brothers, sisters and workplaces for Him, Jesus told them: *"Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love."* **(Revelation 2.4)**

★ **In cold churches the love for Him is mostly very deeply hidden – almost invisible to the naked eye.**

► **2. The Cold church left its first love**

The cold church lost its passion for its bridegroom. Can you imagine what kind of bridegroom we would be on the day of His return? Jesus wants His bride, the Church, to be passionate about Him, not cold and united with Him for duty

If the church loves Him, when He returns it should jump for joy. In cold churches the love for Him is mostly very deeply hidden – almost invisible to the naked eye. Such churches, to defend themselves, use the devil’s hypocritical cliché such as “we worship in the heart not with body”, “we have decent, liturgical worship”, and similar excuses. No wonder people don’t want to go to church, it is more interesting in various clubs or cinemas.

Let’s remember the time we first fell in love. We sat before our PC for hours sending e-mails to the one we loved, we didn’t care about telephone bills, and rain and snow didn’t bother us when we wanted to meet our darling. We always had time for the loved one and were never late. However, people in the cold church don’t spend time with Jesus. If it rains or it is cold they

don’t go to church. Their faces show no passion except an awareness that they are fulfilling their duty; they come to church and do what they are expected to do. Can you imagine such a marriage – full of duties yet with very little passion?

Something went wrong in the church in Ephesus! At the early stage they were excited about Jesus; nobody forced them to come to prayer meetings, worship, or evangelism. They could hardly wait to get together and spontaneously worship and sing to Lord. After the sermon they gladly wanted to hand out 25 tracks on the way home or talk with a friend about Jesus. They could hardly wait to come to church to hear the Word of God and readily act accordingly, no matter the cost. Whatever you asked them to do they always had the time and nothing was too hard for them to do.

But now all of a sudden they became

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wise, because they read a book about priorities; all of a sudden they had a vision with short-term and long-term goals, they wrote their statutes and their beliefs, printed books void of doctrinal mistakes, and created the best web site. They started to be proud of themselves. Worship became professional and void of emotion, polite, and culturally acceptable!

They became a distinct people who didn't want to show their feelings in front of others because faith is, as they say, a "private matter". Jesus alone does not fascinate them as much the things they can do in His name!!! They became ecumenically oriented and started to pray for the unity of Christianity with those who are not even born-again Christians.

We can reach our society with the message of gospel, fill our churches, feed the poor and take care of orphans, build buildings, and struggle to obtain "justice and rights", but if we don't have love for our bridegroom all these deeds will

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be of no use on the day of His return.

Therefore the apostle Paul dedicated to the growing charismatic church in Corinth a complete chapter talking about love. He said: *"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing"* (1 Cor. 13.1-3)

C.S. Lewis said once about love and spiritual life: *"Every Christian would agree that man's spiritual health is in proportion with his love to God"*.

The problem that arises from each cold church, as with the church in Ephesus, is that such churches substitute personal godliness with duty for Jesus. They probably are doctrinally pure and perform their duties but their hearts are not passionate for Jesus and do not long for His presence; they rely on their names and former "Christian hunting stories" but lack the passion

they had at the beginning of their walk with Lord.

▶ **3. The cold church should turn to Jesus so they will not be removed from its place and function in the Kingdom of God!**

“Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lamp stand from its place—unless you repent.”

(Revelation 2.5)

The cold church should repent! It is not enough to say “Good and wise word” as many like to say after the sermon. We must seriously do something.

The Greek word for “to convert” or “to repent” is metanoeo, and it means – “to repent with regret followed a change of heart toward God.” It also shows a change in thinking resulting from recollection of the deeds done, regret for the path taken, and wisdom upon reflection of the present and future.

It is my hope, my wish, and prayer that the cold church understands and changes the situation in which

it is! The only solution is that it “remembers where it fell” and truly changes its heart toward God, not with Christian clichés. God doesn’t ask for our emotions or tears before others but a full change – doing the first deeds!

It is enough to remember how we were when we were first converted: spontaneous, full of passion for Christ, passion for preaching. Nothing was a problem to do and we had always had time for Him and others. We spent hours with our Bridegroom; we could hardly wait the time to enter into prayer and His presence.

These are the first deeds of love - to leave everything, knowing that our Bridegroom has godly jealousy for us and wants our passion for Him back! That is what is of worth. That was the godly mission of the apostle Paul when he said to Corinthians: *“For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”* **(2 Corinthians 11.2)**

If the cold church does not want to turn to God; if the believers have no ears or have closed them in order not to hear the truth, God himself and their Savior will remove “the lamp



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stands from their place”

The lamp stands Jesus talks about are the churches that give light to the world. Churches that have light are not cold; they do not lack oil. Oil comes with true passion for the Lord.

The church is the only visible expression of Jesus. If we are not filled with His Holy Spirit, His oil, if we don't give light to the world and do not remove the obstacles that shadow the light, Jesus said that He Himself would remove us from our place and purpose given for that city or state. The same would be with our lives.

Cold churches will keep going with their programs, people, institutions, and buildings but will not give light to the darkness. They will have no more light and purpose, and Jesus will remove their lamp stands.

The only solution for us is to keep our

ears open (**Revelation 2:7**), hear the message of the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ and turn to Him in passion to be united.

Only then we shall have a new spark of our first love that will set fire in us and in many around us. This is the only way to join the sacred in the victorious march that constantly carries the light of the gospel and readily awaits His coming full of oil, our bridegroom.

“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work “!
(Revelation 22.12)

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