



The Real Priority: A Series in Revelation 3/11

Jess Woodliffe – 28th June 2026 ([watch talk here](#))

In Revelation 2 to 3, we see Jesus' messages to the seven 1st-century churches which include praise, challenge/ rebuke and encouragement: to the one who is victorious, they will be rewarded. We looked at three recurring themes: (1) Jesus knows the good, the bad and the ugly of our lives; (2) Jesus loves us too much to leave us in our sin/ mess; and (3) we're called to persevere in faithfulness to Jesus, even when things get challenging, because we know who wins in the end. Jesus calls the church in Ephesus to return to the love they had at first: love for God and love for others.

Zoom Out

Jesus calls the seven churches in the Roman province of Asia to persevere in faithfulness to him amidst strong persecution from Emperor Domitian. The messages to the seven churches echo the overall message of the Book of Revelation: despite the challenges (like temptation to follow false teaching in Pergamum or Thyatira, or imprisonment and persecution even to the point of death in Smyrna), we can be encouraged and have hope: Jesus wins in the end.

Zoom In

- **Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches** – Repeated throughout the messages to the seven churches. Whilst the messages were to specific churches dealing with specific issues, they contain timeless truths and principles that were applicable to the other churches and are applicable to us today.
- **Those whom I love, I rebuke and discipline** – Revelation 3:19 – Jesus loves us too much to leave us in our sin and in our mess.
- **You have forsaken the love you had at first** – Revelation 2:4 – Jesus calls the church in Ephesus, a Christian community that had been around for 40 years, to return to the love they had at first.



Press In

- **Persevere in faithfulness to Jesus, even when things get challenging**
 - Jesus says in this world we will have trouble but we can take heart because He has overcome the world (John 16:33). Like watching a football match when you already know which team wins, we can have a different perspective on the challenges and setbacks along the way because we know Jesus wins in the end.
 - When we face challenges or setbacks that may tempt us to neglect putting Jesus first – that could be personal challenges we're going through, temptation to sin, or even just the busyness and worries of life (Matthew 13:22) – Jesus calls us to persevere in faithfulness to him.
- **Let love be the driving force for all that you do**
 - The church in Ephesus were seemingly doing everything right (Revelation 2:1-3) – they were even persevering in faithfulness to Jesus. But they had forsaken the love they had at first which was so serious a problem that Jesus warned that he would remove their lampstand – symbolic of their very status as a church – if they didn't repent and return to their first love.
 - Likewise, we're called to do everything out of love for God and love for others.

Reflection questions

- Can you share a time when you felt God showed you that He sees you and cares for you?
- Is there something that God has been challenging you to repent from and to seek his forgiveness for? Is there a practical step you could take towards addressing that?
- How would you describe your love for God/ love for others at the moment?
- How do you personally experience love for God and how could you be more intentional about pressing into that? (You could look into *Sacred Pathways: Nine Ways to Connect with God* by Christian author Gary Thomas which we have available in the Small Groups library).
- Are there people who God has been putting on your heart to show His love to? What practical step could you take?