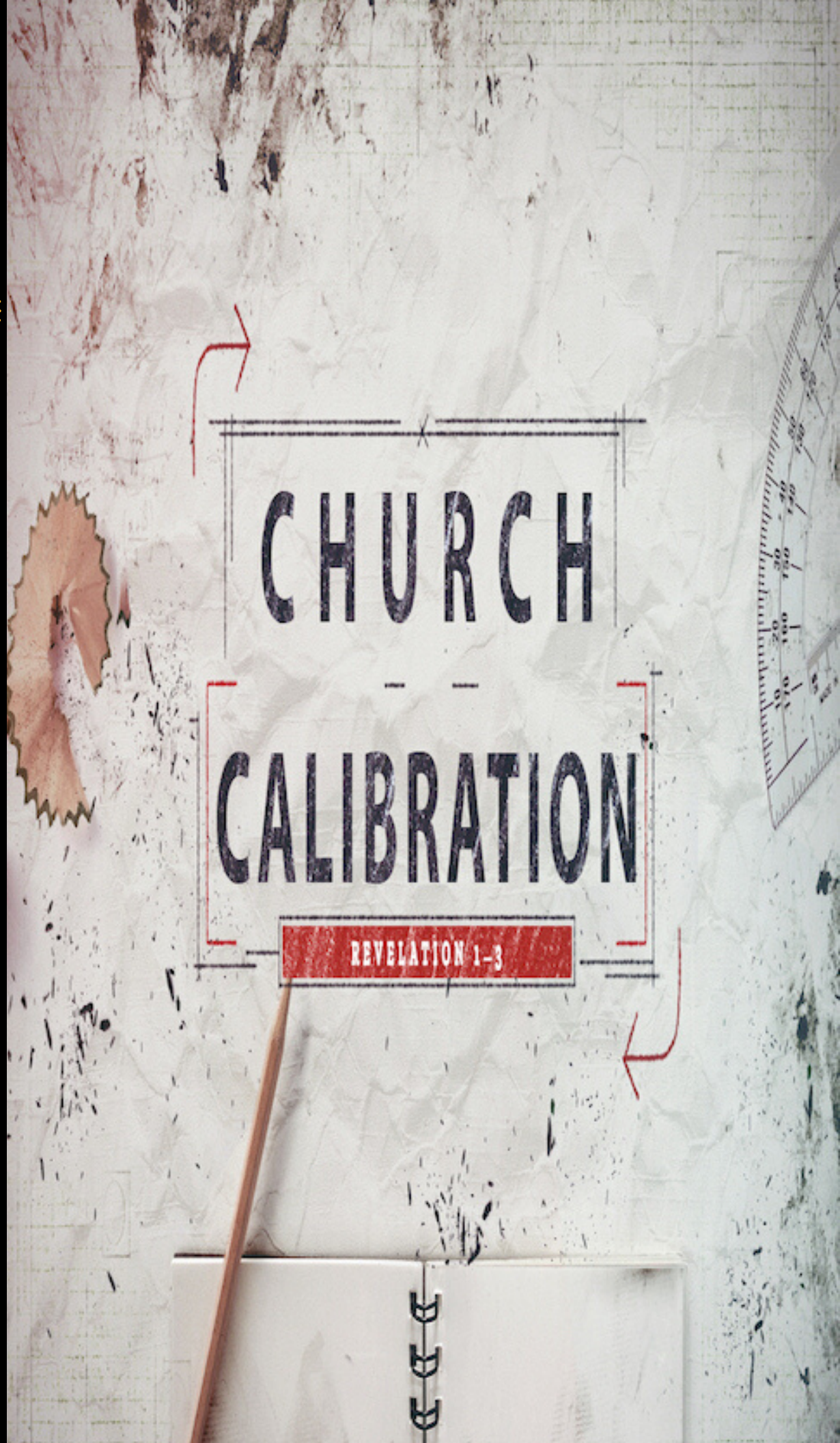




Church Calibration

**May 31 -
July 19**





CHURCH CALIBRATION

A STUDY

Through Revelation 1-3

May 31 - July 19

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Written by TJ Johnson

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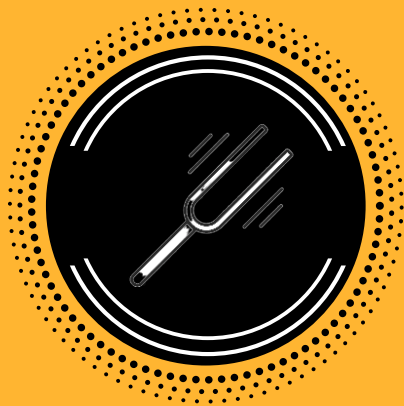
Revelation 1

The world is constantly pulling our minds and hearts away from the truths we have come to know and love. As instruments need retuning and machines need realigning, so our own hearts need recalibrating. The accuracy of all measuring devices degrade over time. So too our hearts! This is why the book of Revelation was written. It is a letter from Jesus to His church, to us! In this letter, let us not get bogged down with scrolls and angels or plagues and locusts. The message to be received isn't so much seven headed, ten horned, red dragons or scary beasts coming out of the sea, but rather Jesus.

When something comes out of align, the only way to correct it is by measuring it against a standard. I remember vividly the first time I saw a piano tuner pull out his tuning fork, bang on middle C and turn his tuning wrench until the piano matched the fork. Why? Because the tuning fork was the standard.

Revelation's main character is unashamedly Jesus, for He is the standard. Read through Revelation and note how often Jesus is mentioned. It is the revelation of JESUS, the testimony of JESUS, and the coming of JESUS that is longed for. How does the book end? "Even so, come Lord JESUS!" The message is simple, look to Jesus, our standard, and allow the Holy Spirit to bring your heart back into tune.

Over the next eight weeks we will look at Jesus' letters to the seven churches. These letters will have commendations and condemnations, not just to the seven churches but to US! May we have ears to hear what the Spirit says to City Church over these next several weeks! My hope is that you pick up your Bible and read this marvelous story of hope....Jesus, the Lamb who was slain, has risen and by so doing has conquered sin, Satan, and death itself. The good news of Revelation is this: Jesus wins, a message we desperately need reminding!



Shepherded

May 31

PS. TJ JOHNSON

CHURCH

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REVELATION 1:1-20

Shepherded



Turn your eyes upon Jesus

- How have you been coping during the recent events? Pastor TJ mentioned that we are not meant to be individualised as Christians, so how have you 'remained' within the community?
- Seeing that being a Christian is being part of a community, how has the community influenced your understanding of who Jesus is?
- Reflect
Could you put into words and share with the group who you think Jesus is?
- Relationships form the basis of every community. What would you say is the most important aspect of any relationship?
- How do you think God has been communicating with, firstly, the church, and, secondly, you?
- Read 2 Timothy 3:15-17
How have you viewed Scripture (the Bible) in the past? How has this verse changed your outlook on Scripture? Do you agree with what the passage says?
- Read Revelation 1:13
As Pastor TJ explains it, Christ is among us. Looking back over the past four months, how have you been able to cope with your solitude? Do you think you would have been able to make it on your own?





Turn your eyes upon Jesus

- Read John 16:7
Who is Jesus talking about here? Do you feel Him with you during your days and struggles? Does He bring you comfort?
- Read Revelation 5:5 and 17:14 (cf. 1 Cor 15:55)
Is there a word or phrase which stands out to you in these passages? Do these passages give you comfort during these times?
- Read Revelation 1:14 and Job 5:12-13
According to most Asian cultures, white hair signifies wisdom. How does the fact that Christ's wisdom is unlimited affect you and your understanding of His love for you?
- Last week we discussed Jesus being the cornerstone, the 'Everlasting Rock'. Reflecting upon this, what does this mean for you? What does it say about Jesus' character? (Refer Rev 1:15)
- You and I call Jesus 'Lord' and 'King'. Do you think that His power and majesty become less (diminishes) either on earth (the physical realm) or in heaven (the spiritual realm)? Discuss your thoughts in the group.

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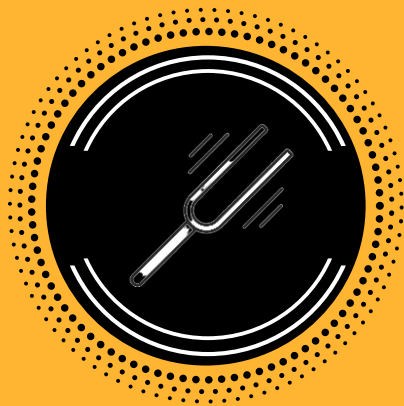


Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

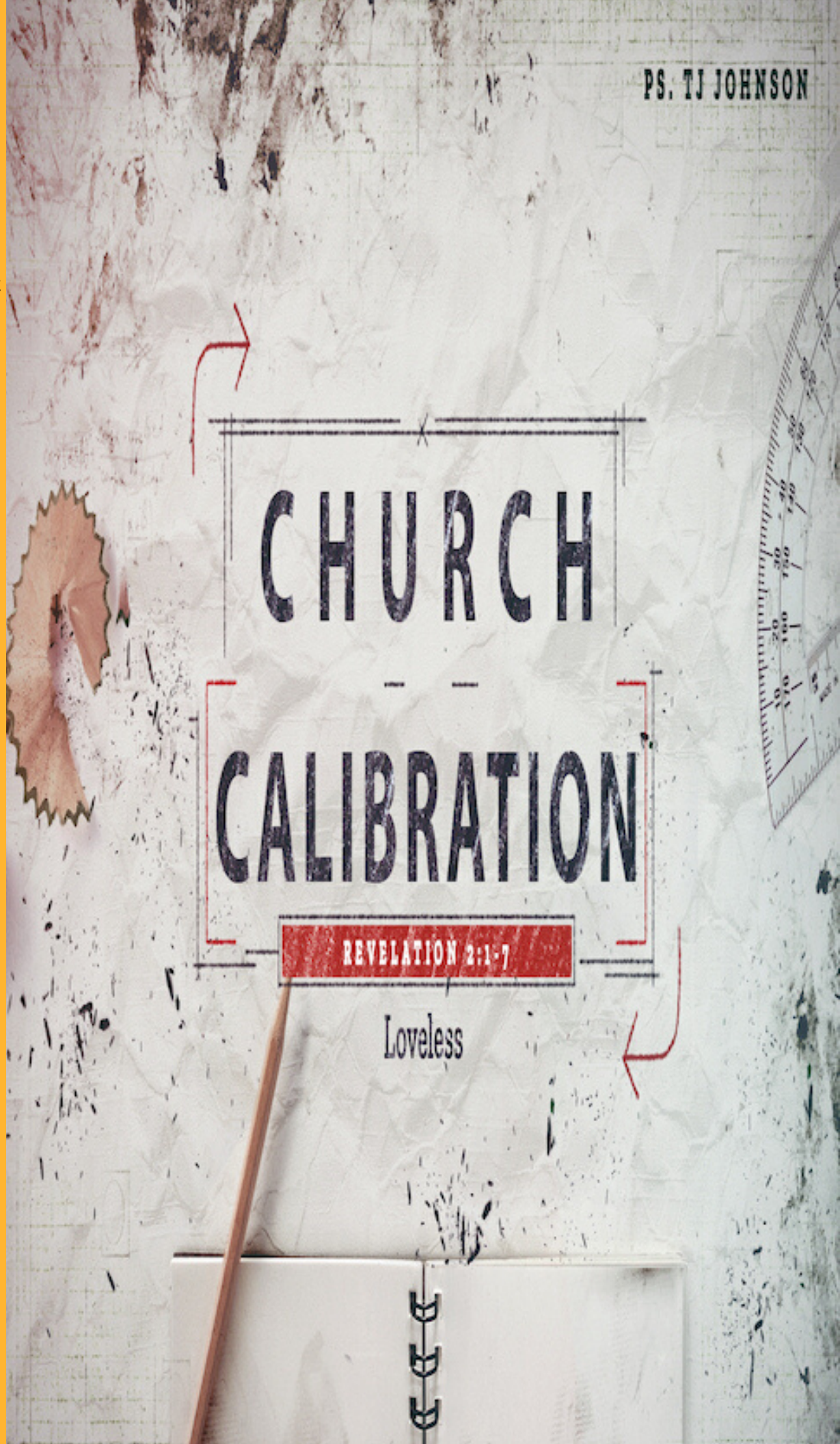
Prayer Requests

Praise Reports



Loveless

June 7



PS. TJ JOHNSON

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REVELATION 2:1-7

Loveless

Over the past few weeks as I have watched videos of brutality, seen images of hatred, and read comments that add to division rather than remove barriers to our unity I am amazed at how God prepares in advance for us the messages we need to hear. Last week we saw a glimpse of Jesus who wields a sword of justice... Come Lord Jesus and bring justice on this earth for those who are oppressed and in need of your defense. This week, as we are forced to witness scenes of a world that has lost its love, we find ourselves studying a church that had lost its love.

What a timely message for us all: LOVE!

God calls the church a lamp stand. There are a great many light sources in this world, but the gospel is the only light source that has the power to break through our current darkness. And our gospel is a message of love from a people of love who serve a God of love. Scripture says, they will know us by...our love. So, we must ask, is City Church know by our love? Does our city think of us as loving? Do our members think of us as loving? Do minorities think of us as loving? Do poor and underprivileged think of us as loving? Do those who hate us, though they have all kinds of accusations against us, in the end have to concede...but they have always treated me with love?

Love is the power of the gospel. Love so divine He left his home to enter a hate-filled world...for only when opposed by love will hatred be overcome. As we study Revelation 2 this week it is a call for us to love one another, to love our world, all peoples of every race who have been created in His image, and to love Christ our Lord of love.

For far too long our churches have been hidden under baskets.
For far too long our churches have been marked by the plague of
Ephesus. I truly believe God has birthed a unique love at City
Church, a love the world, and churches around the world, needs.
So...let us love...not in word or talk, but in deed and truth.

You are the light of the world, so let your light shine through your
compassionate, sacrificial, long-suffering, cheek-turning, cloak-
giving, world-transforming love.

Growing in Love with you,

Pastor TJ



From 'loveless' to Love

- What is the most important mark (characteristic/action) of a church and why?
- Can any of the actions which Pastor TJ mentions as important to a church, be done without love being involved?
- Read Rev 2:4 and 1 Cor 13:1-3
As shown by the Apostle Paul, many important things in the church CAN be done without love. But, in your own opinion, why is doing these things in love so important?
- Reflect
Have you ever helped someone, but love was absent in your actions? How did you feel about what you did afterwards?
- As you read through the BICF doctrinal statements, have you allowed non-essentials to become essentials? Have you allowed non-essential beliefs to cause division between you and another brother/sister in Christ?
- Reflect
How could we all work together to prevent ourselves from 'falling out of love' with the church and other believers?
- Considering recent events taking place in the United States, how should the church and fellow believers respond?





From 'loveless' to Love

- Read Acts 19:21-40

The Ephesian Craftsmen under Demetrius rose up and caused a great riot in the city, blaming Paul and the Christians for the chaos. How did Alexander attempt to respond to the abuse? How do you think you would respond to abuse such as this?

- Read Luke 23:34 and Acts 7:60

Both Jesus and Stephen asked God to forgive those who killed them. What do these passages teach us about love in the face of persecution?

- Read 1 John 4:7

In which ways is a Christian's love different from those not born of God? Is it possible for a Christian to continually hate another?

- According to Revelation, a church as famous as the one in Ephesus was able to lose their love for Christ and each other. Pastor TJ mentioned a number of reasons how this could happen. Reflect on the things which could cause City Church to lose this love.

- How do we as the church prevent ourselves from becoming 'loveless'?

- Read Luke 10:39-40

Mary and Martha are in contrast with each other. With which one do you currently identify with?

- Does it mean that we are wrong if we work hard in ministry or for Jesus? (Refer 1 Thess 3:10)





From 'loveless' to Love

- Read 1 Cor 13:1-3
How can we work for Christ, be busy and yet not lose ourselves in our work?
- Read Revelation 2:5a
What did Pastor TJ mention as being the remedy that the Church of Ephesus was given? Do you think we are able to apply the same remedy to our lives?
- Revelation 2:5a mentions another important act that we should already be familiar with, repentance. From your experience, how does repentance help us in our walk with Christ?
- Repentance requires a further step to ensure that we become transformed. What would that step be and how do we apply this in our lives?
- As you think back to your first love with Jesus and the church, what are some practical things that you did at first to foster this love?
- What is the one thing you should do in response to our service today?



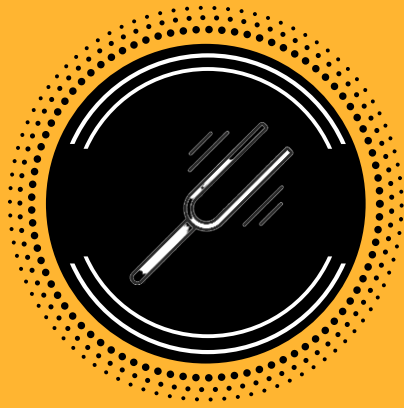


Prayer & Praise

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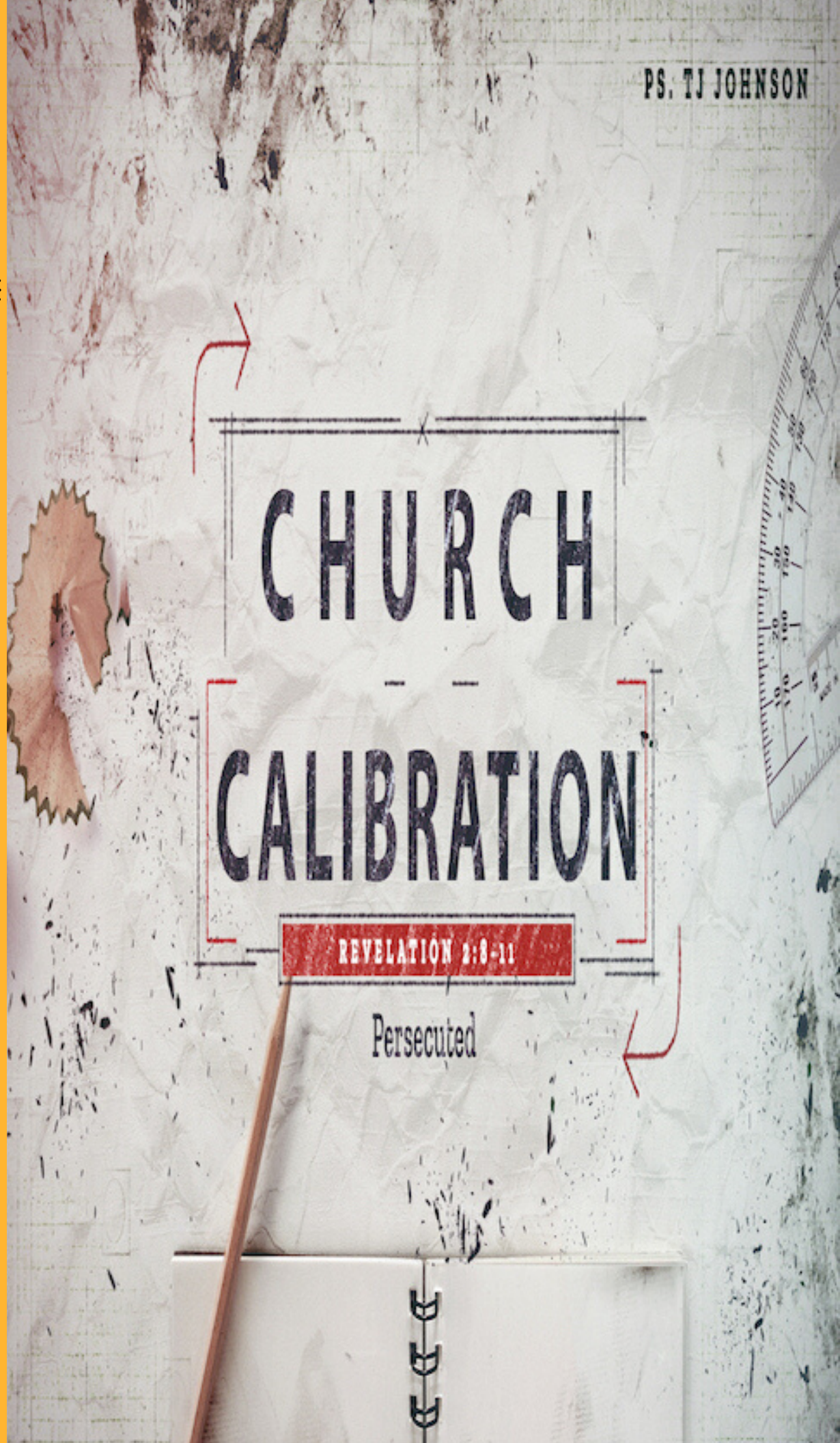
Prayer Requests

Praise Reports



Loveless

June 14



The Body of Christ, the Church, is experiencing a unique time in history. Churches worldwide have been unable to meet physically as a church. Churches worldwide have struggled to meaningfully respond to rising racial tensions and highlighted injustices. Churches worldwide have had the difficult task of deciding how to support their members in the face of job loss and financial uncertainty, and to do so in ways that doesn't attend to one member's needs over another's. Churches worldwide are grappling with how to alleviate the pain and confusion of those thousands of families that have lost loved ones to COVID-19. It is heart-breaking for a family to lose a father, a mother, an uncle or aunt, grandparents or even children. Again, the church is being asked to help in these circumstances, to explain why it happened to them.

But it is here that our story changes today. Today we are reminded that God provides for His body's needs at all times. God is to be trusted in times of need. But that is not all. God has already provided us with life. Not necessarily life on this rock, on this planet, but everlasting life, to be spent for all eternity in His glory! God has provided His body with the Victory!

As we move, and live and have our being in these troubling times today, let us remember all that which God has promised us: Provision, Life and Victory!



Promises that are made

Read Revelation 2:8-11

- What has your experience of 2020 been like? Have you found it comforting or challenging?
- Who has Jesus been to you this year? How has your view of Him changed?
- How do you think Jesus has related to you this year?
- Even though this year has been bad, what are you most grateful for?
- Read John 11:17-27
Even though Lazarus had been dead for 4 days, what hope did Jesus give Martha?
- How does Jesus' power over death give you hope?
- Read 1 Corinthians 15:54-57
What does the promise of eternal life mean to you?
- Read Mark 8:14, 19-21
During this time of loss (financial and work), how have you experienced God's giving in times of need?
- Pastor Paul shared a saying: "God's provision is a given". Could you share with the group where you have experienced God's provision in your life, no matter how small?

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Promises that are made

- Read Revelation 2:9a and 2 Corinthians 8:1-2, 9:6, 8
Pastor Paul speaks about the believers in Smyrna being citizens of heaven, temporarily staying in Smyrna. How does Pastor Paul show that we are rich even during this time of uncertainty? What are we, as believers, supposed to do first and foremost?
- Reflect
Looking back over the last four months, the last year and the last 5 years, have you ever been in need of anything? Why or why not?
- Read John 16:33, 2 Corinthians 4:8-9, Proverbs 24:16 and Revelation 2:10-11
After reading the above passages, what is the main thought, the promise, which you can find? What is it?
- How does the promise of victory change your view on struggles and persecution in this life?
- Read Romans 8:28
Reflecting on this verse, can you share with the group how God's goodness and promise has been changing you and your life?



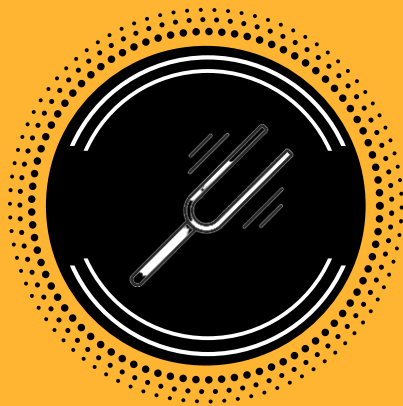


Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

Prayer Requests

Praise Reports



Infiltrated

June 21

PS. TJ JOHNSON

CHURCH CALIBRATION

REVELATION 2:12-17

Infiltrated

In elementary school it was common for teachers to give us assignments to match like items. Typically, there would be two columns of words and you were required to draw a line from one word to its pair. For example, peanut butter is matched with Jelly. Fish is matched with chips. Thunder is matched with lightening. Just as there are like items, the opposite is equally true. There are things in the world that are incompatible. Sometimes incompatible items simply do not mix, like oil and water. Other times, to try and combine two incompatible items is deadly, like placing a lion and a lamb in the same pen.

As we come to Revelation 2:12-17 we find that the church of Pergamum has tried to mix two things which prove to be deadly... allegiance to Jesus and allegiance to the world. They wanted to hold fast to Jesus (v. 13) and simultaneously hold to Balaam (v. 14) or the Nicolaitans (v. 15). As we allow the Spirit to search our own hearts, we might find that we are in a similar predicament, having a true longing for Jesus but also trying to make Him compatible with our longings for immoral behaviors or heretical beliefs. Jesus is clear, there can be only one King of your heart. He will not share His glory with another. He will not co-reign with Satan. Therefore, He says to the church, "Repent and Conquer." As we prepare for Sunday let us pray Psalm 139:23-24 and learn how to let go of anything that keeps us from holding fast to Jesus alone.

Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
24 See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

Holding fast with you,

Pastor TJ



Holding Fast to Christ

Read Revelation 2:12-17

- Looking at the church today, what can you identify that the church is allowing which are not in-line with what the Bible teaches? Discuss in the group.
- Are you able to identify some things that you have to give up that is preventing you from committing fully to Christ?
- Have you ever felt that you had to, or felt pressured to, compromise on your beliefs? What did you do?
- When you have stood up for your beliefs in Christ, have you ever been made fun of, or bullied worse, been bullied? How did you deal with it?
- How do you view your responsibility in proclaiming the Gospel in Beijing?
- In which way do you witness to the people you come into contact with in Beijing?
- What is your stance on the moral standards of your community? How do you try to influence those around you?
- Read 2 Timothy 3:16
How can we ensure that the church, and the members, are not mislead by wrong teachings?





Holding Fast to Christ

- Read 1 Peter 3:14-16a
How does the above passage motivate you to deal with wrong teachings within the church, or your community?
- Read Romans 12:2
How do we ensure that we are not influenced and led astray by false teachings (doctrines)?
- Romans 12:2 is not only useful in reproof (rejecting) of false teachings, but also for believers' behaviour. How can we ensure that we stand above normal, worldly behaviour? (Consider 1 Corinthians 5:7)
- The church today is in danger due to cleverly disguised teachings which are not Biblical (consider Galatians 1:6-10 and 1 Corinthians 15:1-8). Keeping in mind the warnings that Paul wrote the Galatians and Corinthians, why is it important that we know what is Biblical?
- Repentance is an important theme throughout the Bible. Consider the following dictionary definition of 'repent': *to feel sorry, self-reproachful, or contrite for past conduct; regret or be conscience-stricken about a past action, attitude, etc.* How can we explain to an unbeliever why repenting of socially acceptable behaviour is important in turning our lives around and become followers of Christ?

(Please see more definitions of repentance of the following page...)





What is Repentance?

For a good understanding on what repentance really means, please consider the following definitions:

Thomas Watson - The Doctrine of Repentance (Simplified in this document)

- **Sight of Sin** - You must first see your sin before you can repent of it
- **Sorrow for Sin** - True repentance must involve sorrow for sinning against God and His free gift of grace for us in Christ, and lastly for the consequence of sin
- **Confession of Sin** - True repentance must come from confession which is voluntary, specific and sincere
- **Shame for Sin** - Disregarding the modern connotations of the word in modern English, the believer should feel shame for their sin, so much so that they 'blush upon thinking of it'
- **Hatred of Sin** - Truly hating sin for what it is
- **Turning from Sin** - Walking away from sin and refraining from doing it again

J.I. Packer

Repentance means turning from as much as you know of your sin to give as much as you know of yourself to as much as you know of God, and as our knowledge grows at these three points so our practice of repentance has to be enlarged.

Charles Spurgeon

Repentance is the discovery of the evil of sin, a mourning that we have committed it, a resolution to forsake it. It is, in fact, a change of mind of a deep and practical character, which makes the man love what he once hated, and hate what he once loved.

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Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

Prayer Requests

Praise Reports

PS. TJ JOHNSON

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REVELATION 2:18-29

Adulterated

Adulterated

June 28

I once heard a story of a mother who baked cookies for her children. This was a treat indeed, seeing how little sugar the children were allowed to eat. Upon finishing the plate of cookies, the mother then proceeded to share the ingredients that went into the cookies: sugar, flour, salt, baking soda, butter, chocolate chips, and...a tiny little bit of dog poop.

I doubt this is a true story, but it serves a point: It doesn't matter how many good ingredients are included in the cookie, ONE bad ingredient ruins the whole batch. This is what we find with the church at Thyatira. It was commended for its works, love, faith, service, patient endurance, and the fact that it was growing in these giftings. BUT...there was one deadly ingredient found in the church, an ingredient that spoiled the whole batch: Sexual Immorality.

Given the state of our culture today, it is likely that there are many in our church that struggle with sexual immorality. Given the state of our culture's aversion to label sexual sin, sin, it is also likely that we for the most part have tolerated the sexual immorality that has taken place among our members. But this is not all gloom and doom; the letter to Thyatira is a message of hope: Jesus, the one with an iron rod, has given us the power to smash our earthen vessels of sexual sin. The one who calls you to rule over your sin is the one who promises to rule with you (Rev. 2:27). This Sunday we will assess the problem at Thyatira and then look at some very practical next steps to conquer this sin. May Christ be magnified in our lives and may sexual sin decrease as the glory of Christ increases in our hearts and minds.

Ruling with you,

Pastor TJ



Smashing earthen vessels

Read Revelation 2:18-29

- Sex is a rather difficult subject to discuss among Christians. Apart from it being intimate and private, what reasons can you think of that makes sex a taboo (off-limits) subject?
- Many old, and current, Christian groups consider sex to be a 'dirty' word and idea, banning it among their members and allowing it only for conceiving babies. Do you think the Bible treats sex in the same way?
- Reflect
Considering your own motives and upbringing, what do you consider to be sexual immoral?
- Think of the book, Song of Songs (Songs of Solomon), considered to be a beautiful poem between two lovers, destined to be married. How does this book teach us about being intimate within marriage?
- However, as Pastor TJ has pointed out, the sexual fall appears to have happened together with the Fall in the Garden of Eden. Prior to this fall, for what reason do you think God intended sex?
- How, do you think, has man over the course of time, changed the general view of the purpose of sex? What do you consider sexual immorality to be?
- Within the church context, what does it mean to tolerate sexual sin?

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Smashing earthen vessels

- Reflect

In which way is it acceptable to 'admire' people of the opposite sex? Compare this with what Jesus taught the crowds in Matthew 5:27-28.

- Considering the above passage, how has your opinion changed with regard to sexual immorality (sin)?

- At the time of this letter to Thyatira, gentiles (unbelievers) viewed temple sex with people of the same or opposite sex as accepted. What is your view on this?

- With this in mind, how does the Bible oppose this view? Consider the following verses (1 Corinthians 5:11; 6:18; 6:13)

- Read Revelation 2:22-22

As Pastor TJ has pointed out, how does God allow for anyone who commits this sin to be forgiven?

- What should we do when we realise that we have committed this sin?

- What is our duty as Christians to share with others who are struggling with this type of sin?

- Reflect

Using what you have learned over the past number of weeks, how would you go about helping a friend who would admit to having struggles with a sexual sin?





Smashing earthen vessels

- Reflect
In the case of a spouse (husband or wife), what steps would you take in helping them to stop committing any sexual sin?
- What do you think is the church's responsibility in helping anyone who is trapped in sexual sin of any kind?





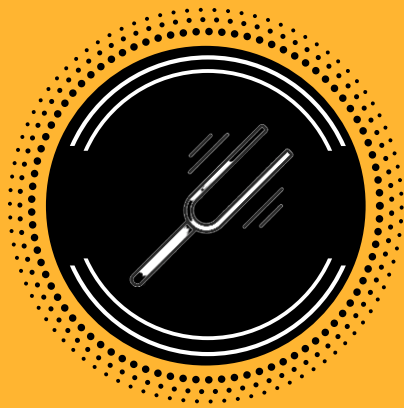
Prayer & Praise

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Prayer Requests

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Dead

July 5

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REVELATION 3:1-6

Dead

Shortly after moving to Beijing our family found ourselves at a local animal market. As we made our way down narrow passageways and in and out of small shops, we happened upon some (actually A LOT of) hamsters. My two sons immediately fell in love with them. Mom had already put her foot down concerning a dog. Too much work. Too much responsibility. Too much mess. But a hamster... Those cute little cuddly creatures, not even mom could resist. So, we purchased one and brought it home.

Noah and Nate named him Hammy. They played with Hammy. They watered Hammy. They fed Hammy. They cared for him really well. But one day Hammy fell ill. We stayed up all night watering and comforting him. But eventually Hammy passed away. As we stood before a hole in the ground and a tiny box soon to be covered with dirt, it was their first experience with death. They wept and mourned for days. Even to this day they will on occasion talk about Hammy the Hamster.

What Noah and Nate learned from that experience is that death is painful. It's painful because it's final. After hammy died, he wasn't coming back. As much as Noah and Nate hoped for it, Hammy wasn't going to open his eyes again. He wasn't going to wake up in his little box and claw his way out of the dirt. Death is (typically) final.

So, when we come to Revelation 3, it is a sad occasion indeed. Sardis, like Hammy had died. The letter to Sardis reads like the obituaries. It is as if we are standing before a hole in the ground and watching the church of Sardis being slowly lowered into its final resting place. Hear the words of Jesus...I know your works...YOU ARE DEAD! There we are, donned in black, waiting to hear the words...ashes to ashes, dust to dust. But then something unusual happens at this funeral. Weeping is drown out by someone shouting, "Wake up!" The good news in Revelation 3 is that the one presiding over the funeral happens to be skilled in resurrection. As Jesus speak of death, He is simultaneously speaking life into that church.

Resurrecting with you,

Pastor TJ



The Walking Dead

Read Revelation 3:1-6

Read v.1

- In what ways can a church appear (reputation) alive, but actually be dead?
- How do we know that the seven Spirits is the Holy Spirit? Why is He referred to as the 'Seven Spirits'?
- Christ's message to the dead church was that He has the Holy Spirit. Discuss the ways the Holy Spirit is directly linked to life and resurrection.
- The Bible speaks a lot about being filled with the Holy Spirit. Name some key passages and discuss how the Holy Spirit comes upon an individual or church.
- What are some ways a church works in its own power vs the power of the Holy Spirit.
- The sermon suggests a dead church is a church which has lost its message (the good news of salvation in Jesus). What are some ways our church is actively sharing the Gospel?
- What are simple ways you and your small group can start doing to grow in being a messenger?





The Walking Dead

Read v. 2

- What does Jesus mean when He says, "Wake Up"?
- How is a church or individual to 'wake up'?
- The sermon asks several questions in order to "wake us up" to our present condition. Choose some of the following questions to discuss in your group:
 - Are you walking in the Spirit?
 - When people walk into our church or join online, do they feel the power of the Holy Spirit?
 - At City Church, do people see the Spirit, hear the Spirit and fellowship with the Spirit?
 - Are non-Christians getting saved at City Church?
 - Are baptisms happening at City Church?
- What are the things at City Church God is calling you to strengthen? (v. 2)
- What are the things God is calling you to strengthen in your own life?
- Why does Jesus call the Christians in Sardis to stay and strengthen their church rather than move on?
- Have you ever seen a dead or dying church revive because faithful people stayed and strengthened what remained?





The Walking Dead

- How does Jesus' promise in v. 5-6 give confidence to those who stay and strengthen what remains?

Read v. 3

- Share with the group your encounter (received) with the Gospel and how it impacted you.
- The Bible gives lots of examples of the power of the Gospel. Take some time to share one of your favourite passages about the power of the Gospel.
- How is the Gospel directly linked to the Holy Spirit?
- How does remembering and keeping the Gospel strengthen a dead or dying church?





The Walking Dead

Going Deeper

- Read John 6:27, 33, 35

Jesus was teaching the people about Him being the 'Bread of life'. How does this help us to resurrect a dead church?

- Read Luke 13:6

How does this parable relate to the church in Sardis and to our own lives? How can we prevent ourselves from being 'uprooted'?

- Read John 4:14 and 14:6

Can you think of the lesson which Jesus was trying to teach the crowds, and ourselves? What could the church in Sardis, and the church today, learn from this?

- Read 1 Timothy 5:6

Here Paul speaks to Timothy about the care of widows. But he warns that if a widow lives for sensual (tangible/temporary) pleasures, she is dead. How does this compare with how the world is trying to 'live'? Why should the church steer clear of temporary pleasures?

- Read Matthew 28:19

This passage is discussed in the sermon. Which 'fruit' are we able to draw from this passage that would show a 'healthy church'?

- Read Revelation 3:4

This verse makes it clear that the church in Sardis was to repent. In which ways are we, as the body of the church today, to repent so that we can once again become 'alive'?

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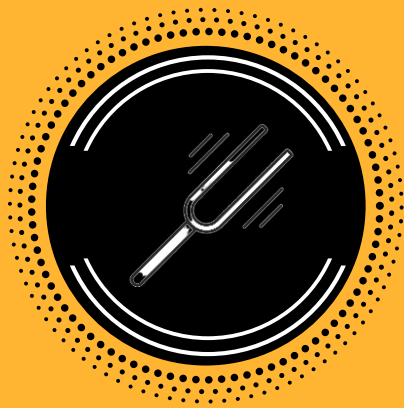
Prayer & Praise

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Prayer Requests

Praise Reports





Enduring

July 12

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REVELATION 3:7-13

Enduring

As we come to letter six in Revelation, we find that Jesus desires that His church persevere despite hardship. Here is what Jesus says to the church, "You have kept my word about patient endurance." Certainly, we are in a season of perseverance. Persevere through a different way of working. Persevere through not all meeting together on Sunday. Persevere through wearing masks and constantly getting your temperature checked. But in reality, we are always in a season of perseverance. The Christian life isn't easy...life comes with difficulties and Christians are not exempt from that, in many ways we are the greater recipient of hardships. Jesus said, "In this life you WILL have troubles."

There is always a temptation to take shortcuts. There is always a temptation to quit mid-race. There is always a temptation to compromise. Philadelphia was a church that was known to persevere through the troubles of life. What was their secret? Was it that they were spiritual superheroes? Was it that they just had more willpower than others? No! Their secret to endurance is ours to have: Jesus. As we come to letter six in Revelation, we find that Philadelphia is overtly Christocentric. They were a church that took to heart Hebrews 12, "looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him ENDURED the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who ENDURED from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted." This Sunday we will look to Jesus and learn the Philadelphian secret, what it means to look to Jesus.

Persevering with you,



Endurance

Read Revelation 3:7-13

- Discuss in the group things that motivate you when you feel like giving up during a difficult period in life
- Have you ever felt like giving up at any point, feeling it is too hard to carry on being a Christian? Why did you not give up?
- Can you recall a time when you have been so discouraged by an unbelieving friend who continues to appear to live a comfortable, easy life? How did you manage to deal with it?
- How does the fact that Jesus is God, the Holy One, encourage you to get up and carry on with the race of life?
- If you have been a believer for only a short time, what facts about Jesus convinced you that He is real?
- For the 'older' Christians, what about Jesus has maintained your faith in Him?
- Read John 14:6
How does the fact that Jesus talks about Himself as the Truth, help you to hold on to Him even during difficult and desperate times?





Endurance

- Read John 1:9
John records Jesus referring to Himself as the Truth. He describes Jesus as the True Light and The Holy One. How do these titles affect the way you see Jesus?
- Read Revelation 3:12a
Here Jesus gives a weak Philadelphia a powerful promise. What is this promise and how does it change our thinking when we become tired and ready to give up?
- Humans are very frail and weak in that they need to eat everyday so that they may live. Jesus uses this to compare Himself with bread, and that we are to eat of this bread. Discuss in the group what you think this 'bread' is that we have to eat
- Read Revelation 3:12b
Humans have a habit of writing their names on things which they own. How does Jesus claim us to be His? For what reason does He do so?
- Read John 15:1 & 5, Romans 9:6 and John 8:39
It is very honourable for a Jew to be able to trace his ancestry to Abraham and claim to be part of Israel. How does Jesus change this view and how can we claim ancestry to Israel?
- Read Isaiah 22:22 and Revelation 3:7
What does it mean for us that Jesus is the 'keeper of the keys'?





Endurance

- Read John 10:7 & 9

Jesus refer to Himself as the 'Door' through which His people enter. What does this mean for us? What is it that we must do to go through the 'Door', through Jesus into heaven?

- When we perservere to the end, when we see the finish line, what else shall we see there? What is waiting for us 'in the end'? Does this encourage you to endure all hardships in this life?





Endurance

Going Deeper

- Pastor TJ pointed out that Jesus Christ is not just a man from Nazareth. Read Mark 1:23-25 and respond how this passage shows that Jesus is more than just a man
- Read Revelation 3:12
Jesus promises the Church in Philadelphia, even in their weakness, that they would become a pillar in the temple of God. What effect does this promise have on you, when you are challenged and questioned, and endure and hold onto Jesus?
- If Jesus is the 'True Vine', what does that mean to you, me and all believers? How does that differ from how the world sees us?
- Read Revelation 3:7, Isaiah 22:22 and John 10:9
What do these verses promise us regarding Jesus Christ? What role do they play in our understanding of the importance of keeping our eyes on, and holding fast to, Jesus Christ?





Prayer & Praise

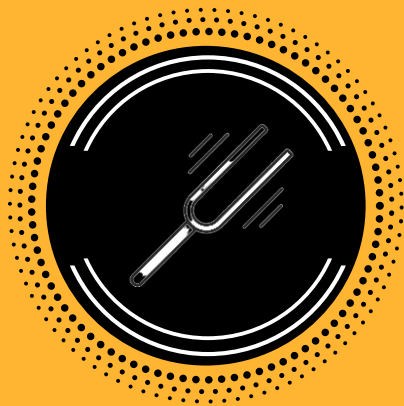
End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

Prayer Requests

Praise Reports

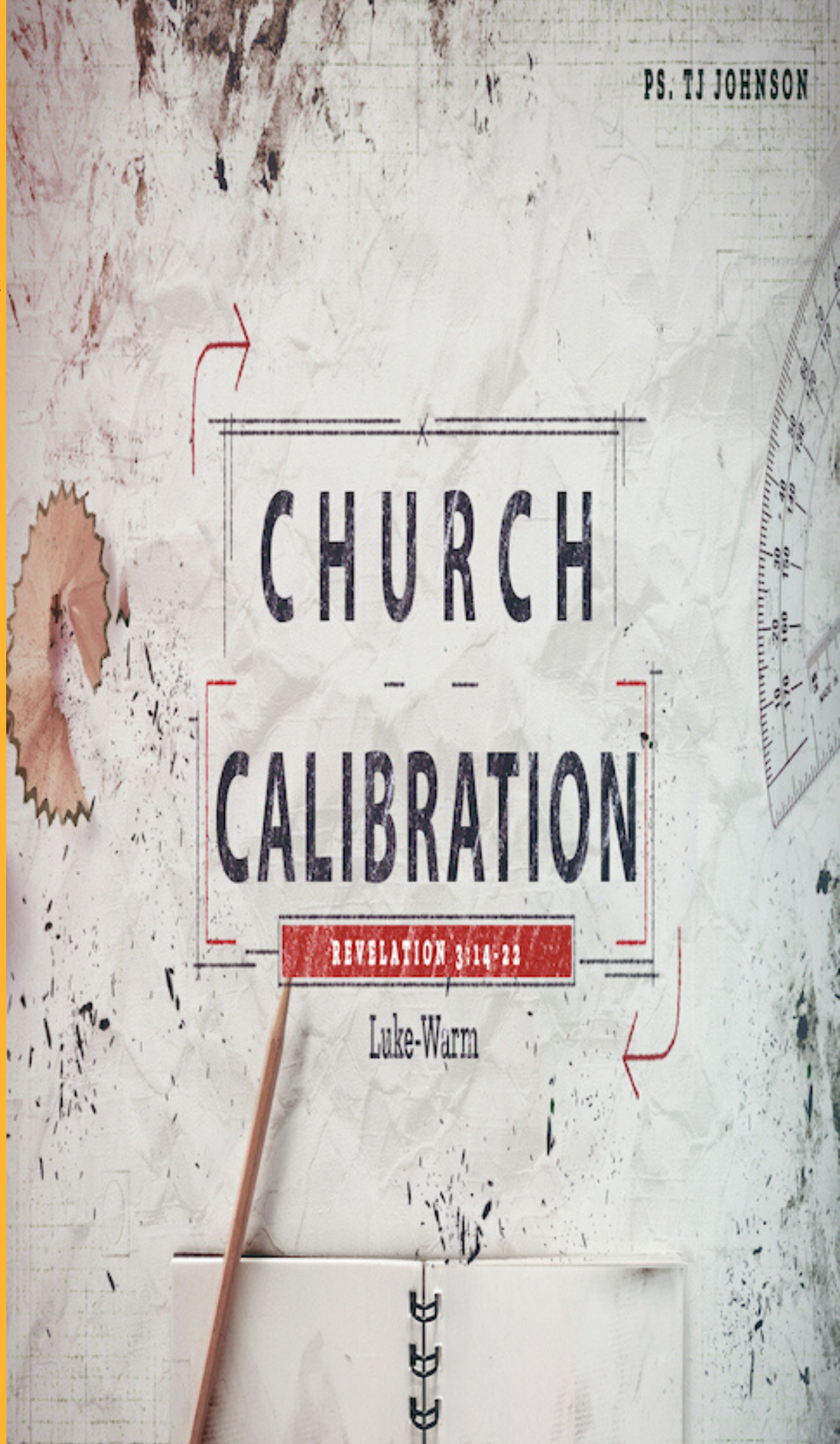
CHURCH

CALIBRATION



Luke Warm

July 19



As we come to the close of the letters in Revelation, we find that Laodicea has repeated the error of Israel after it left Egypt. As Israel stands on the edge of the Promise Land, God warns them of the dangers of the 'good life'. He tells them that the land is flowing with milk and honey. He speaks of fertile soil and adequate rain. He mentions homes and not tents; dwelling and not travelling. All of this sounds good to a people who have wandered in a desert for forty years. But God knows the dangers possessions pose to the human heart. So he warns them: "Take care lest you forget the Lord your God... lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God...Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth'." (Deut 8:11-17).

In the forty years after Laodicea's inception, they had voiced the very words God warns against in Deuteronomy, 'I am rich, I have prospered, I need nothing'. They had, because of their wealth, forgotten God. It's an all too common story. So, Jesus writes to this church to remind them of the surpassing worth of Himself and the fleeting pleasures of the created world. As He speaks to them, He speaks to us...Be zealous not for things, but for me. Don't depend upon yourself, come to me and buy from me. He ends with a beautiful promise. In love, I stand at the door of your church and knock, longing to enter and fellowship with you. If ANYONE opens the door, I WILL come in and dine.

Opening the door with you,



On Fire

Read Revelation 3:14-22

- The Bible gives a holistic view of wealth and warns us from going to the extremes of equating wealth with evil or blessings only. How can we as Christians find a good balance on how we handle our wealth and how can we teach Biblical concepts of wealth to others?
- Can you give examples of both rich and poor (inside and outside of the Bible) that used their wealth or poverty well for the Kingdom?

Love Jesus more than you love things

- In Deuteronomy 8:11-14a & 17, God warns His people not to allow possessions and prosperity to turn their hearts away from dependence upon God. Why is it so easy to forget God in times of prosperity and how can we fight against this tendency?
- Read Revelation 3:17 and discuss the deceptiveness of wealth and prosperity. Can you think of a time when this described you or someone you know?
- Jesus teaches that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. He also teaches that WHERE our wealth is reveals where our heart is. If a stranger were to read a transcript of your daily conversations and see a daily report of your financial expenditures, what would he or she assume was our greatest loves?





On Fire

- In the sermon we were asked, "Have you allowed the glories of this world to so satisfy you so that you have no room for the beauty and glory of Jesus?" What things of the world are most likely to 'fill you up', so that there is no room for Jesus?
- Often in the Bible we are not told to simply stop an act or emotion, but to replace it with something greater (Eph 4:25-32; col 3:5-15). In Revelation 3:19, the church is told to remove their zeal (covetness) from money and place it on Christ. What does zeal for Jesus look like and how can we increase our zeal for Him?
- Revelation 3:14 describes Jesus as the beginning of God's creation. Share with the group how the eternal, uncreated Jesus is greater than any created thing that tempts you to love it more.

Trust in Jesus more than you trust things

- Read Revelation 3:17
Although we might say, "I need nothing", what are some ways that our actions and lifestyle says, "I don't need Jesus"?
- What things in this world are you most tempted to trust in more that you trust in Jesus?





On Fire

- Read 1 Timothy 6:17
Take some time to verbally thank God for all the things God (nor yourself) has provided you to enjoy. For example, the sermon illustrated this by asking, "Who caused the seed to grow? Who sent the rain? Who gave you a strong back to plow and hands to pick?"
- When difficulties come your way, what is your usual response: crying, complaining, calling upon your resources or looking to Jesus? What are some of the practical things we can do to ensure that the first thing we do is to go to Jesus?
- In Revelation 3:18, Jesus is presented as a merchant who possesses what we need. How do we 'buy' these items from Jesus?
- Which of the three items in Revelation 3:18 (gold, garments, salve) were the most meaningful to you and why?

Jesus loves you in ways your things never could

- Read Revelation 3:19
Even though Laodicea is the 'worst' of all the churches, Jesus reminds them that He loves them. How have you experienced Jesus' love when you didn't deserve it?
- Though possessions can provide us with great comfort, our possessions have never bled for us. Discuss how the death of Jesus motivates us to set our hearts on Him and not possessions

CHURCH
CALIBRATION



On Fire

- Revelation 3:19 talks of the loving-discipline of God. Have you ever experienced discipline (from God, a parent, a boss, etc.)? How is discipline an act of love?
- How is the discipline of Jesus greater than the indulgences of your possessions?
- In Revelation 3:20, Jesus promises to eat a meal with you. Discuss some of the meals Jesus had with people in the Gospels and the shame he received because of His association with sinners
- What is Jesus promising in Revelation 3:20 (see Revelation 19) and to whom is He promising it to?





Prayer & Praise

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Prayer Requests

Praise Reports