

Revelation 1:19-2:7

“The Loveless Church”

Scripture: Revelation 1:19-2:7

Memory Verse: Revelation 2:4: *“Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.”*

Lesson Focus: In this letter from Jesus to the church at Ephesus we will see how they have become what seems unthinkable: a church that has lost its love for Jesus. We will challenge the kids to renew their love for Jesus and show how we must first love Him before we can “overcome”.

Activities and Crafts: Jesus is My Hero Coloring Picture, Word Search of different terms from lesson, Bring it Home Discussion for 3rd – 5th.
Activity for 1st and 2nd Graders: Origami Autograph Book

Starter Activity: Autographs

Kids should be familiar with the idea of getting someone’s autograph. Consider getting the lesson started by talking about what this means. Consider using some of these questions below:

Q: What does it mean to get someone’s autograph?

Q: Why would you want to get someone’s autograph?

Q: If you could pick one person, whose autograph would you want to get and why?

Teachers: Consider bringing in something of yours that you have with someone’s autograph to share with the class. * Tell them a little story about who it was, where you got it, and why you kept it.

We typically get autographs of people that we respect and look up to. And sometimes they will not only sign their name, but offer a little message of encouragement to us.

Q: Who are Christians to respect and look up to above everyone else? A: JESUS! He is our hero!

These next two chapters of the book of Revelation are personal messages directly from Jesus to Christians at seven ancient churches. As we have discussed before, these seven churches were real gatherings of believers. So while Jesus has specific messages for them, we will also see that these messages were written for us too!

Let’s see what Jesus has to say to them AND to us!

Bible Study:

Revelation 1:19: Some of your Bibles may have these words written in red. This indicates that they are the words of Jesus Christ directly! Remember John the apostle was banished to an island because of his faith in Jesus but now he has been supernaturally transported into heaven for a special “*Show and Tell*” meeting with God.

John is going to be **shown** things and he is commanded to **tell** them by writing them down: the things that he has seen (chapter 1), the things which are (chapters 2 and 3), and the things that will take place after this (chapters 4-22). *

Revelation 1:20: Jesus helps John (and us) understand these mysterious seven stars and seven lampstands that he sees. These will get referred to many times in the book so let’s draw these out so we don’t forget what they mean. (**Teachers:** Consider drawing on the white board a star and a lampstand and that they represent the messengers and the churches themselves respectively).

Q: What do stars and lampstands do? A: They shine brightly! (**Teachers:** Consider bringing in a lamp that you can use throughout the lesson to demonstrate this). * This is why Jesus refers to the church in this way. We as the church are to shine Jesus’s light brightly! The church is not just a building, but a gathering of people who are called to be light in the darkness, to bring hope to the hopeless, and good to a world filled with evil!

Revelation 2:1: Jesus now tells him to write to the church at Ephesus. *

Notice Jesus’s autograph here! This refers back to the majestic, awesome, and glorified Jesus we read about previously (review **Revelation 1:12-13**). Remember that this describes Jesus the way He is RIGHT NOW.

Jesus holds all of the stars (the messengers) in His hand and He also walks in the midst of the lampstands (the churches). Jesus walks in the midst of all His churches, including you and me at RMC!

Revelation 2:2: Jesus begins his message to Ephesus by praising them! He knows them because He is walking among them!

Q: Imagine having your hero, maybe the one whose autograph you cherish, speaking well of you! How would you feel?

Let’s list these things that Jesus praises them for: hard work, patience, holiness, knowing the truth. (**Teachers:** Consider having the kids read out to you some of them and make a list on the white board as you talk about each one of them)

Wow, this sounds like a pretty strong and solid church! Let’s continue reading.

Revelation 2:3: Jesus continues to praise them for not being quitters!

Revelation 2:4a: BUT they have a problem.....UH-OH! *

Revelation 2:4b: They have left their first love. The people of this church were doing all of this great stuff, but for the wrong reasons. They forgot the WHY. *

Jesus has told them and us WHY when He taught on the greatest commandments.

Read **Matthew 22:36-38:** We are to **love** God with all we are. Why? Because He first **loved** us. (**1 John 4:19**) How? He sent His own Son to pay for our sins. (**Romans 5:8**) *

Another book of the Bible was written to this same church at Ephesus 40 years earlier where it was said, “*But God, who is rich in mercy, **because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our sins, made us alive together with Christ (for it is by grace that you are saved).***” (**Ephesians 2:4-5**)

It seems that they had forgotten this. Love for Jesus was no longer their motivation. He was no longer their hero!

Revelation 2:5a: So, Jesus warns them to REMEMBER and REPENT.

Q: What does it mean to REMEMBER? A: To not forget but be mindful of something. They had forgotten the grace and love of God. They became a “loveless” church! *

Q: What does it mean to REPENT? A: To turn away from sin and turn back to Jesus.

Revelation 2:5b: Notice the warning: If they don’t repent, Jesus will remove the lamp! The church will be snuffed out! (**Teachers:** If you brought in a lamp, consider switching it off right now to demonstrate this). A “loveless” church is not actually a church! *

Revelation 2:6-7: Jesus wraps up His message with a plea and a promise. Notice that this isn’t just for Ephesus but for all of the churches, including you and me at RMC! Jesus pleads, “Listen up! You too: remember and repent! Don’t be a loveless church!” Jesus promises, “The one who overcomes will join me in **Paradise!**”

Q: What does paradise mean? A: A place where it doesn’t get ANY better! This is what Jesus promises to all those who overcome.

Key Point: To overcome means to gain victory over sin and the devil. But how do we do that? Maybe we just need to try harder to be really good like the church at Ephesus was doing? * No, that can’t be since Jesus just told them they had it wrong!

Let’s revisit the autographs we talked about at the beginning. We want those because we admire and look up to those people. We believed they were special. Read **1 John 5:5**. Who is the one who overcomes? The one believes in Jesus. * The one who loves and adores Jesus! RMC will not be a “loveless” church if we love Jesus and then one another.

Make Jesus someone you always admire and follow and you will overcome! *

Bring It Home

Download at: <https://rmcalvary.org/volunteering/childrens-ministry/family-resources/>

Lesson Theme: “The Loveless Church”

Scripture: Revelation 1:19-2:7

Memory Verse: Revelation 2:4: *“Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.”*

Teachers/Parents: We got our lesson started by talking about getting autographs. We mentioned how you don’t just get anybody’s autograph, but rather those that you look up to and admire or respect. If you could get someone’s autograph today, who would it be and why? If you have a famous autograph from someone, share it with the family and talk about it!

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Read **Revelation 1:20**. Jesus describes the churches as lampstands. Why do you think Jesus used this object to describe the church? (Hint: Read **Matthew 5:16**)
- 2) In **Revelation 2:2**, Jesus commends the church of Ephesus for their ability to discern and oppose false teaching. What is our primary tool today for being able to discern false teaching? (Hint: Read **Acts 17:11**)
- 3) In **Revelation 2:4**, what does Jesus say He has against the church? This is so surprising since he praised them in the previous two verses. What do you think might have happened?
- 4) In **Revelation 2:5**, Jesus warns them to remember. There is another entire book of the Bible, the letter to the Ephesians, which was written to this church. Read **Ephesians 2:4-5**. What is to be remembered from this passage?
- 5) In **Revelation 2:7**, Jesus promises “paradise” to those who overcome. How would you define “paradise”?
- 6) When we read the challenge to overcome, we can immediately think we need to try harder or be better. But read **John 16:33** and **1 John 5:4-5**. What is the first step toward being an “overcomer”?
- 7) Jesus described the church of Ephesus as a “loveless” church. What do you think this might look like today? What can you do to help RMC not be such a church?