
Adrift In The Heart
Revelation 2:1-7

Adrift In The Heart

- Carson Daly on Weekend Today, “Everyday I stop and appreciate and be thankful to be able to work as I do.”
- How often, if ever, do you recognize the blessing of your marriage, if you are married?
- How often, if ever, do you recognize the blessing you have in Jesus Christ?
- Or has your heart drifted away from those relationships?

Adrift In The Heart

- Think of this scenario
  - Boy meets girl, they fall in love, marry, start a family
  - They buy a house, have another kid or two, push on in their careers to afford a bigger house/car/stuff…
  - Talk around the dinner table *(if there is time for it)* is more a planning meeting than family sharing
  - And ten years down the line, in all the busyness of careers and family life and children and sports, the wife says to the husband, “We never talk any more”

Adrift In The Heart

- Think of this scenario
  - Niel Diamond, “You Don’t Bring Me Flowers”

    You don't bring me flowers
    You don't sing me love songs
    You hardly talk to me anymore
    When you come through the door
    At the end of the day
    You don’t bring me flowers, anymore

- All because they’ve neglected the very relationship that sparked it all, they’ve forsaken *(let drift away)* the love they had at first

Adrift In The Heart

- Most couples do not wake up one morning and decide to grow distant
  - It usually happens slowly
  - Life gets busy
  - Kids, work, ministry, stress, schedules, and expectations start piling up
  - Conversations get shorter
  - Laughter gets quieter
  - Eventually, what once felt close starts to feel lonely

Adrift In The Heart

- They drifted away from each other
  - Drift primarily means to move or float slowly and effortlessly, usually pushed along by an outside force
    - Think of simply floating on the ocean close to shore then noticing how far the current has pulled you away
  - This happens in marriages but also in churches
- We've reached the point in Revelation chapter 2 where Jesus is going to address seven major churches across Asia Minor

Adrift In The Heart

- Revelation 2:1-7 NIV, 1 To the angel *(messenger)* of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands.
  - Revelation 1:20 NIV, "…the seven stars are the angels *(messengers)* of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches"
  - As God walked in the cool of the evening with Adam and Eve in His Garden of Eden, so God walks among His churches

Adrift In The Heart

- Revelation 2:1-7 NIV, 2 I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance.
  - They were actively doing the work of the church in difficult circumstances
  - They were physically doing what Jesus expected
  - They were concerned about pleasing God and sticking with the Christian faith, not being flash in the pan Christians
  - They regularly gathered with other believers to hear God's word and pray

Adrift In The Heart

- Revelation 2:1-7 NIV, 2 I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance.
  - Even if they didn't feel like it, they got up every day and kept God's commandments
  - They were disciplined Christians
  - They aren't flitting around to this or that worldly thing or teaching
  - They do the right thing even if they do not feel like it

Adrift In The Heart

- Revelation 2:1-7 NIV, 2 I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false.
  - Not only were the Ephesians solid, steady Christians, but they adhered closely to the beliefs and teachings in God's Word
    - ➢ They thought deeply about what was being taught in their church
    - ➢ They were like the Bereans of Acts 17 who examined the scriptures every day to see if what was being taught was correct

Adrift In The Heart

- Revelation 2:1-7 NIV, 2 I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false.
  - Not only were the Ephesians solid, steady Christians, but they were adhered to the beliefs and teaching in God's Word
    - They weren't like some Christians today who accept everything they hear if it comes from someone with assumed Church authority
    - If someone says they believe in Jesus, we need to ask, which Jesus?

Adrift In The Heart

- Revelation 2:1-7 NIV, 2 I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false.
  - Jesus says in Vs. 6 that he hates their teaching too
    - Jesus is not a weak, indecisive, spineless, or overly sentimental Jesus, always smiling and gentle
    - He hates teachings that do not honor God and that destroy human beings

Adrift In The Heart

- Revelation 2:1-7 NIV, 2 I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false.
  - Notice, Jesus says in Vs. 6 that he hates their teaching too
    - We need a passion for the truth and inerrancy of God's word
    - There are many serpents out there who say, "Has God said? …" and "You will not surely die" if you disbelieve
    - We need to stand up and say, "Thus says the Lord"

Adrift In The Heart

- Revelation 2:1-7 NIV, 2 I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance.
  - Not even a hint of compromise in the Ephesian church
  - Revelation 2:1-7 NIV, 3 You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.
  - From the outside they appear strong, resilient, and trustworthy
  - But when Jesus looks inside He discovers something hidden

Adrift In The Heart

- There is an unidentified cancer growing deep within them that they were ignoring
  - Revelation 2:1-7 NIV, 4 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken *(let drift away)* the love you had at first.
  - The Ephesians were drifting not in their doctrine, nor in their behavior, but in their affections
  - They were doing all the right things and believing all the right things, and yet a coldness entangles their heart

Adrift In The Heart

- Revelation 2:1-7 NIV, 4 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken *(let slide)* the love you had at first.
  - We can deceive ourselves by focusing on our good works and right beliefs, saying, “I must be alright because I am doing and believing the right things.”
  - They were living the **“what should we believe”** and **“how should we live”** but let loose of the **“why should we live this way”**
  - Their eyes, faith, joy, confidence was upon what they did, not on Jesus and what He brought into their lives

Adrift In The Heart

- Revelation 2:1-7 NIV, 4 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken *(let slide)* the love you had at first.
  - Ephesians 1:3-7 NIV, 3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.
    - Chosen to be holy and blameless in his sight
    - Predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ
    - Redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins
    - His glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves

Adrift In The Heart

- Revelation 2:1-7 NIV, 4 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken *(let slide)* the love you had at first.
  - Jesus is not asking believers whether they feel from the first instant when they get up in the morning and at every imaginable moment whether they feel love for him
    - ➢ You can end up focusing on your feelings rather than Jesus
  - No, his point is whether love for him is a regular feature and pattern for our lives

Adrift In The Heart

- Revelation 2:1-7 NIV, 4 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken *(let slide)* the love you had at first.
  - It is like being married
    - ➢ We probably don't feel every moment of the day joy and affection for our spouses
    - ➢ But if joy and affection are not a regular part of our married life, if our marriage is just doing the right things for our spouse, without any affection or joy, then our marriage is in trouble and so is a congregation

Adrift In The Heart

- Revelation 2:1-7 NIV, 4 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken *(let slide)* the love you had at first.
  - That is what was happening to the Ephesians
    - Their affection for Christ was drying up
    - Their works and beliefs had descended into being mechanical
    - Our spiritual lives are like a potted plant that needs water to survive but it doesn't need water every second to thrive
    - But it needs regular watering to prosper, and we too need regular waterings of love for God or we too will become dry

Adrift In The Heart

- If this loveless cancer is not removed and replaced with fresh love, then a slow painful death awaits this church
  - Wouldn't you treat a cancer before it become untreatable?
  - So what should we do if we have lost our first love?
    - Revelation 2:1-7 AMP, 5 So remember the heights from which you have fallen, and repent [change your inner self—your old way of thinking, your sinful behavior—seek God's will] and do the works you did at first [when you first knew Me]
    - Remember, Repent, and Return

Adrift In The Heart

- Revelation 2:1-7 AMP, 5 So remember the heights from which you have fallen, and repent [change your inner self—your old way of thinking, your sinful behavior—seek God's will] and do the works you did at first [when you first knew Me];
  - We are to remember that first flame of love that we had for the Lord
    - Stop the current way and remember what it was like at the beginning – Christian life or Marriage
    - Identify what is missing
    - Make a decision

Adrift In The Heart

- Revelation 2:1-7 AMP, 5 So remember the heights from which you have fallen, and repent [change your inner self—your old way of thinking, your sinful behavior—seek God's will] and do the works you did at first [when you first knew Me];
  - And upon remembering - repent and turn from works that are not powered by love, but which have become lifeless and loveless

Adrift In The Heart

- Revelation 2:1-7 AMP, 5 So remember the heights from which you have fallen, and repent [change your inner self—your old way of thinking, your sinful behavior—seek God's will] and do the works you did at first [when you first knew Me];
  - What does it mean to repent?
    - It means face the Lord and ask him to renew your first love
    - Ask him to have mercy upon us
    - Ask him to shine his face upon us anew
    - Ask him to grant us a new strength to love him and to love fellow-believers

Adrift In The Heart

- Revelation 2:1-7 NIV, 5 If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.
  - This is no minor matter, for Jesus says that he will remove the lampstand of a church that loses its love for him
  - The church will no longer shine with the love of Christ and have a bold witness for the gospel
  - The church may disappear entirely as did all the churches in Turkey, or it may become a church in name only, with no power of the gospel

Adrift In The Heart

- Revelation 2:1-7 NIV, 5 If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.
  - This is not a losing your salvation statement
    - But this church losing the authority to speak for Jesus
    - And losing the presence of Jesus in their congregation
    - Slowing dying on the vine because they have removed themselves from the root
- Revelation 2:1-7 NIV, 6 But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.
  - Jesus has not given up on them yet

Adrift In The Heart

- Pay attention Christians
  - Revelation 2:1-7 NIV, 7 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.
    - Listen closely and apply spiritual truth rather than just hearing it passively
    - Stay faithful, endure trials, resist spiritual compromise, and return to their genuine devotion to Christ's presence

Adrift In The Heart

- Revelation 2:1-7 NIV, 7 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.
  - True faith is never a one-time decision to trust Christ
  - True faith conquers, overcomes, it is a persevering faith
  - Only those who so overcome will eat of the tree of life in paradise

Adrift In The Heart

- Revelation 2:1-7 NIV, 7 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.
  - Who are the ones victorious or overcomers?
    - 1st John 5:5 NIV, 5 Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

Adrift In The Heart

- Today, understanding what Jesus is saying to His seven churches is more important than end-times prophecy
  - The words spoken to the Ephesus Church is just at much prophecy as end-times
  - But more relevant because it is happening now
  - As a born-again child of God you are already prepared for whatever will happen in the future
    - Romans 8:37 NIV, "we are *(right here, right now)* more than conquerors through him who loved us"
  - Jesus is calling us to live as conquerors in/through Christ Jesus


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