



The Church in Ephesus

Week One

Look Back at the Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sermons

- In his Maundy Thursday message on humility, Pastor Jon posed two questions, “What is humility? How do you get it?” Discuss answers to these questions.
- In his Good Friday reflection, Pastor Emmanuel said that Jesus shows solidarity with us in His willingness to suffer. When have you sensed solidarity with Jesus?
- What is your response to the questions Pastor Curtis posed in his Easter Sermon, “Who is it that you are looking for? Who is it that you are seeking?”

New Sermon Series: Letters to the Church

After celebrating the good news of Jesus' resurrection on Easter Sunday, we engage our Risen Lord's words to seven first century churches. Each congregation was situated in a unique location geographically, with different people, and particular passions - and each had a vital role to play in God's in-breaking Kingdom. In this series, while examining the letter to each church, we will ask what Jesus is saying to us, 2000 years later, in our context.

Passage for this week: **REVELATIONS 2:1-7**.

Head | 15–20 Minutes

OBSERVE THE TEXT AND THE AUTHOR'S MAIN POINTS

1. Based on Pastor Jon's sermon, what did you learn about the city of Ephesus at the time John wrote Revelation? What was its reputation?
2. How is Jesus described to the church in Ephesus?
3. What commendation does the church receive? Which of these commendations apply to FPC?

Heart | 15–20 Minutes

ENVISION HOW THE TEXT—WHEN APPLIED—MIGHT TRANSFORM YOUR INNER LIFE IN TERMS OF YOUR THOUGHTS, ATTITUDES, AND BEHAVIORS

1. How does the rebuke to the Ephesians go to the heart of what it means to follow Jesus?

2. Consider and discuss areas where you or FPC may have abandoned our first love, and what to do about it.

Hands / 10 Minutes

APPLY THE TEXT BY MOVING FROM INWARD REFLECTION TO OUTWARD ACTION LOOKING FOR WAYS TO LIVE THE TEXT OUT IN OUR LIVES TO SERVE OTHERS

Reaching Upwards: Growing in Your Relationship with God

- Confess to your group and to God areas where you have lost your first love.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to show you and the church other areas in which to grow more loving.
- What do you need to conquer to eat from the tree of life?

Reaching Outward: Investing in Your Neighbors

- **Alpha Invitations—Pray and Act:** Our ultimate allegiance should be to God and neighbors. One of the best ways to show love to our neighbors is by inviting them to get to know Jesus. Alpha is a listening community designed to help participants explore questions about spirituality and faith in a non-judging space. Pray as a group for at least 3 non-Christians in your circles of influence who could be invited to FPC Alpha starting April 11–May 23. Then ask for God to provide an opportunity to invite them. For more information go to <https://fpchouston.org/event/alpha-evening-3/2024-04-11/>
- **Alpha Volunteers—Pray and Act:** Out of our love for God, we serve others. Consider volunteering in FPC Alpha April 11–May 23. Contact Pastor Emmanuel for opportunities. epaulpeter@fpchouston.org
- **Alpha Praise and Pray:** On Easter Sunday, we heard a wonderful testimony from Kartik Sharma about the impact of Alpha in his life. Let us praise God for that and ask that the Holy Spirit would be working in the lives of those who come to Alpha this month.

Reaching Beyond

- Discuss ways to show love towards your neighbors and the rest of the world.
- FPC has a number of Local and Global Mission Partners that show practical love to the world. Also, they provide volunteer opportunities to follow Christ's example in service. To sample some of these partners, join us for short visits to Star of Hope Graduation (April 25, 1 PM) and the Landing (May 23, 4 PM). To reserve a place, contact Madie Weir, Missions Coordinator at mweir@fpchouston.org. For more information about FPC Mission Partners and volunteer opportunities go to fpchouston.org/serve.
- April is City Wide Service Month called "Good Neighbor Days". Four of FPC's local priority partners have service days as part of Good Neighbor Days: The Forge - April 20, Houston Welcomes Refugees - April 27, Agape Development—May 4, and The Landing on May 18. For more information about volunteer sign up, here is the link: goodneighboradays.org.