

The Love You Had at First - Revelation 2:4

But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. (Revelation 2:4)

When love cools the relationship changes.

When the prophetic words recorded in Revelations were spoken they asked the local church to examine itself. Not to generalise to others but to look to themselves. It is always easy to say what *they* should do, but Jesus demands that his followers decide what they must do and leave others to do the same. So in the church it is not what they must do but what we must do. The challenge is to re-discover that first love.

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Without love as we hear from Corinthians 13: **we are like a noisy gong or a clanging bell.**

If our heart has grown cold then we may be going through the motions but the real zest for life in Jesus has gone. In its place is an emptiness that leaves us unsatisfied. As Christian leaders we often hear about Burnout.

Looked at Ministry health. *"People today are feeling tremendous pressure to 'do it all,'... Instead of having a sense of accomplishment, many people feel guilt when they run out of energy to handle all of the tasks."* Source: Ohio State University Department of Aging (Online Fact sheet now unavailable). This quotation also cited in: [Preventing Burnout - Signs, Symptoms, and Strategies to Avoid It.](#)¹

Another useful online article: [Stress and Burnout in Ministry by Rowland Croucher.](#)²

From a secular web site the number one recommendation to help with burnout

- **Nurture your closest relationships,**

Sadly as we read this verse we easily start to feel guilty, maybe try to work out how we can rekindle a renewed fervour for Jesus Christ, but the verse's emphasis is on the primary love, the love we had as a beginning and I contend that this love is not our love for Christ but Christ's love for us.

¹ http://www.helpguide.org/mental/burnout_signs_symptoms.htm

² http://www.churchlink.com.au/churchlink/forum/r_croucher/stress_burnout.html

Remember, how it was at the first.

We love because he first loved us. (1 John 4:19)

Remember what got you into the faith in the first place. I was never a happy pagan, someone living unaware of Jesus Christ. (*sinner!*) I grew up with the conviction that God loved me. I belonged to a family, we had no religion and never went to church but I was convinced that the bible was truth. Family probably thought I was a bit strange. Wasn't knowledge, wanting to do good, it was the love that was real. That is where most of us begin. We love because ... It's a passion that will not let me go. (Sometimes have doubts and wanted to chuck it all in, but then the voice "*What are you doing here?*") It is so important yet it is so easy to lose sight of that fundamental understanding. That we can easily, **abandon(ed) the love you (we) had at first**. Repent, of what is past and move on to the future God has.

For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. (2 Corinthians 5:14)

Convinced + *sunecho*: to hold together, and be carried along: Christ's love utterly convinces us that we have died and been restored as part of the new creation.

... and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:19)

Effectiveness in ministry comes from that love, immersed in it fruitful ministry springs from that love. Elated Sunday and black Monday. It's not about you/me it's about being faithful

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (Romans 8:35)

Conclude with some Good news; that no matter where you are, what you've done, no matter what, the primary love of Jesus Christ is still holding you in its grasp.

As the psalmist says:

As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people, from this time on and forevermore. (Psalms 125:2)

No matter how you feel, that love which led Christ to Calvary, that salvation that God prepared from the foundation of time is still as fresh for you and me today as ever it was. And today maybe more than ever we, each one, need to renew that love.

So back to Rev 2 for our conclusion. We lose our first love because we do not think we need God's love any more. So we grow cold etc. Rev 2:5-7 tell us what we are to do. With the exposition of God love that your texts show, and without a guilt gun held at our heads, it will be Christ's love that brings us back and that love that we need afresh and that love that fulfils us and sends us out.