

*Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. (Revelation 2:6)*

*Or do you show contempt for the riches of His kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? (Romans 2:4)*

## **Do the First Things**

As the fight over abortion now moves to the states, the Church is reminded of a challenge – and an opportunity – that has been overlooked for a long time. So long as the battlefield was thought to be at the federal level (namely, the U.S. Supreme Court and the 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling), many believed that once things had changed there, the work was done. While praise to God and celebrations are absolutely appropriate now that the Dobbs decision has been handed down, the opposite is true. The work is just beginning, and we are just beginning to see the enormity of it.

The disciples of Molech – those who have, whether they realize it or not, entered into a covenant with death (Isaiah 28:15) – once they are over their raging at churches, pro-life family counseling centers and even their fellow disciples who they feel have not been supportive enough, will attempt to try and pull abortion back into the law of the land through legislation. The Dobbs ruling will preclude this action, for the same court that sent this matter back to the states will simply strike down any such law for the very same reasons.

So the fight to preserve the lives of the innocent goes back to the people of the United States. And herein lies the Church's problem; those congregations that hoped that things will get back to normal once the COVID-19 crisis passed must come to the realization that the *old* "normal" is not what God wants.

The situation in America is similar to that of the city of Ephesus in what is today the nation of Turkey. A commentary from the website [shepherdthoughts.com](http://shepherdthoughts.com) describes Ephesus as the "loveless church" for the following reason:

*This church was situated in a pagan city called Ephesus. Next to Rome, this was one of the largest, most influential cities in the Roman Empire at that time. It was a hub for commerce and economic activity, was a major tourist attraction, and featured the Temple of Diana (Artemis), one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. As such an influential, active city, this location was strategic, but it was also challenging. Believers faced constant pressure to let down their guard in an attempt to get along with people, keep their jobs, prosper financially, and avoid being persecuted for their faith. In addition, they also faced constant temptations to tolerate or even practice immorality as a way of life and to participate in pagan social and religious functions just to get along.*

It is for this reason that the Lord Jesus had the Apostle John write to the church in this city – one of the seven letters to the Asian churches in chapters two and three in the Book of Revelation – warning the believers there to change, as referenced in the passage from Revelation cited above. So, how did the Ephesian church avoid this? By *being* what they were – namely, the Church of the Lord Jesus. By

rejecting the philosophy of going along to get along, or compromising with the Roman system in order to avoid persecution and (perhaps most important) offering the agape love of God to their neighbors. In cases such as Ephesus, believers were most likely persecuted when the Roman state needed a distraction of the people from wicked things the state was doing. For example, while the Church always suffered under some form of persecution for their claim that Jesus is Lord (and not the emperor), the great persecution of under the Emperor Nero began as a way to distract the citizens of Rome from the fact that Nero himself burned down half the city, killing a large number of people in the process. Before this, however, most citizens probably saw first among the believers the love they had for one another and for strangers, based on the love of Jesus. They might have thought, *Well, they're a little weird, but they're good folks...* It was that love (as specified in the passage from Romans above) that turned the world upside down and, ultimately, converted the empire.

The Church in America has been thought of as similar to that of Laodicea in Revelation (neither cold nor hot, but on the verge of being vomited out of the Lord Jesus' mouth), but I believe it more resembles Ephesus; materially wealthy, but greatly compromised, although there *are* denominations trying to stay close to the Lord. And it is those denominations and their believers that God has responded to with the Dobbs decision, among others. Some are seeing this as possibly the beginning of the "turn of the tide," if you will, and the first visible signs of a growing Revival in the nation.

But as we ponder what believers must do next in this modern Ephesus, the same call given to John goes out: Do the things you did at first. And while believers have built hospitals and orphanages (indeed, these are creations of faith across the centuries) many individuals need not even do anything so organized to share the love of God. We can work one-to-one with neighbors, co-workers, strangers, the poor, the homeless – anyone who needs a touch of compassion, someone to help or even someone simply to listen. Yes, you can always donate money, but so many people do that and then forget about what they donated for. The late Keith Green told believers to ask the Lord, "How about me *going*? It's so easy to write a check, but God can't cash out of state checks in Heaven; He needs *you*." Do the latter without neglecting the former; it's that simple.

Now, for the other part of this situation. As the revival grows, God's keeping track of things. You have likely seen maps of those states that have or will enact bans or restrictions on abortion procedures and those that are "doubling down" on making them available with little to no restrictions at all. The Lord will make distinctions between the two in terms of blessings. I believe this has already begun; have you noticed lately how the populations of New York and California are declining as economic conditions deteriorate and people express increasing dissatisfaction with "woke" economic and social policies? Guess where they're moving to? This is only the beginning. What is more, God is watching those churches and denominations that are supporting life and His Kingdom and seeking His presence, and distinguishing them from those that follow the ways of the world in an effort to keep the population up and the collection plates full. To the former churches, I say keep doing what He says to do because He will bless those churches and states that put Him first. To the latter churches I say you **must** repent and seek the Lord's forgiveness and presence in your congregations. In case you haven't already noticed, *the world hates God*. And siding with God's enemies will not make them love you more; indeed, look through history and you find those congregations that follow this path are usually the first ones to be

shut down, their rights trampled or their members outright killed once their usefulness to God's enemies is at an end... as some have viewed it, the concept of "useful idiots." It never works. And, as the letter to Ephesus pointed out, you run the risk of God taking His blessing and glory from you and giving it to those who are doing what He wants. The only way out is to be on the Lord's side.

God always wins, regardless of what things look like now. And the victory will not be instantaneous as the fight for life reaches the next level, but it will be visible and grow in strength as time passes, because God is handling this Himself so that no man will be able to claim any of the glory that rightfully belongs to Him. We must love as God loves, because that draws people to Him and the Holy Spirit brings them into the Kingdom. And when we let the Spirit have His way with us, it is the easiest way to proceed.

For the Glory of God, the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit  
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