

The New Testament Church
First Things – Revelation 2:4-5
 Pastor Paul Jehle – January 1, 2023

I If ever there was a time to rehearse *first things*, it is now

- A. Revelation 2:4-5 - the Church at Ephesus – deep truths – a teaching church
 - 1. Seven stars and seven lampstands – truths about being salt and light
 - a. Labor, patience and exposing evil – character formation, a generational legacy
 - b. Teaching on government, exposing a false gospel that worships leaders
 - c. Perseverance and faithful service without growing weary
 - 2. *Nevertheless*, you have left your first love – it is love of our Savior, **JESUS**
 - 3. *Remember* and repent and do the first works – first works cultivate the first love!
- B. The purpose of marking a new year is to focus on Christ and remember His good works
 - 1. The beginning of the year was the Passover – Exodus 12 (other illustrations)
 - 2. The “first work” that cultivates our first love ought to be *gratitude* for salvation
 - 3. Jesus in Hebrew is *Yeshua* (from *yasha*, to deliver); God is salvation – deliverance!
 - 4. In Greek *Yeshua* was translated as *Jesus – Christ* (anointed one) - power of the Spirit!
 - 5. Matthew 28:38 – to **love God** is the first and greatest commandment – encounter Him!
 - 6. John 1:11-12 – *to those who believe in His name* – rehearse your own testimony!
- C. Why remember the basics?
 - 1. Foundations – help us maintain balance in a storm – we are heading into storms
 - a. Put on life jackets – Ps. 119:9-10 - *Bible reading and prayer* are your life supports!
 - b. Stow unneeded objects – Ja. 1:19-20 - *listen to God; complain less* avoid detours
 - c. “Batton down the hatches” – 1st Cor. 15:46 – natural/spiritual; *exercise and rest*
 - d. We stay away from metal – Mt. 5:24; Eph. 6:1 - *reconciled to others; honor parents*
 - e. Slow down the boat – 2nd Tim. 2:6 - *rehearse our testimony and learn to share it*
 - f. Steer right of the storm into waves – attitude – 1st Th. 5:17 - *Pray without Ceasing*
 - 2. This is true in every area of life
 - g. Practice the *spiritual* basics – loving God, Bible reading, pray without ceasing...
 - h. Practice basics of *communication* – listen to God/others; speak less; be reconciled
 - i. Practice the *physical* basics – exercise, rest, share your testimony with others
 - 3. To get out of a spiritual, social or physical slump – we practice the basics

II An Illustration of the discipline of “first things” in a storm – Mark 4:35-41

- A. Jesus said “let’s cross to the other side” – He led them into a storm on the way over!
 - 1. There were many on the shore, but they needed a storm – to expose their depth of faith
 - 2. It was obviously a test since He calmed the storm with a command!
- B. Let’s review the basics as an illustration of what the disciples could have done
 - 1. Do first works – love Jesus – but instead, they yelled at Jesus to wake up!
 - 2. Pray without ceasing – but it appears that instead they panicked!
 - 3. If Jesus led them, the storm had a purpose - but they did not rehearse Biblical truth
 - 4. Listen to Jesus – they did not put unnecessary objects away (symbolically)
 - 5. Rest in His Will – but they did not “batton down the hatches”
 - 6. Honor God (be reconciled) – but instead, they accused Jesus of letting them die
 - 7. Encourage one another (rehearse testimony) – but they seemed to lose all hope
 - 8. Attitude of dependence on God – steer the boat into the waves – water over the sides?