

Sunday theme – **Alive in Christ**

The way in. When you achieved something for the first time, something that required gaining a skill or getting the 'knack', do you remember the pleasure and subsequent enthusiasm for doing it again and again? Is it possible to regain that 'enthusiasm' years later, or is it restricted to the first times or does time dull the pleasure? Perhaps it's something to do with youth? What does the group think?

Read Revelation 2: 1 – 7

For today's theme the key verses are 4 & 5

1. 'You have forsaken the love you had at first'. Love here could mean the love of Jesus Christ, or the love of one another, or perhaps both.

1a. What do you think it means?

1b. Verses 2-3 indicate that the church in Ephesus was doing most of what was expected, so what is so important about 'love you had at first'?

1c. On a scale of 1 to 10 of understanding Christianity (10 being highest/best) where would you place this 'first love' on the scale? What else would you score close to this?

2. Having come to an understanding of the error the Ephesian church is being asked to correct -

2a. Can you recall the moment or time that you first really understood that God loved you, and you loved God (Jesus)? Perhaps one or two of the group could share their particular 'moment'.

2b. What 'down sides' are there to the enthusiasm of that feeling and energy following the first period after 'commitment'?

2c. For those of us who have been a Christian for some time, what are the 'down sides' of this later period, of your commitment no longer being new? What are the 'up sides', if any?

Read Ephesians 2: 1-10

3. This is a very well-known passage from which lots can be drawn, but keeping to our theme –

3a. Pause for a moment or two to consider the passage as a whole; what we once were, by God's grace what we now are, and what was God's purpose. Focus on verses 4 and 8 to 10.

3b. Those who do not know that they are God's handiwork and made for a purpose, do you think they are really 'alive'?

4. Returning to the Revelation passage, did you notice that (verse 4) action is required – "do the things".

4a. How do you maintain your first enthusiasm for Jesus, feeling and expressing his love? In what practical ways can you keep the 'burning' benefits of that initial passion?

(Bible used = NIV 2011 translation)

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