



**Dear ALIVE - Dear Church—Loving Community  
Sermon Discussion Questions – August 6, 2023**

***Scripture Passages:***

**Revelation 3:3 (NLT)** <sup>3</sup> Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent.

**Acts 19:18 (NIV84)** <sup>18</sup> Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds.

**Acts 20:28–31 (NIV84)** <sup>28</sup> Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. <sup>29</sup> I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. <sup>30</sup> Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. <sup>31</sup> So be on your guard!

**Revelation 2:2–7 (NIV84)** <sup>2</sup> I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. <sup>3</sup> You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. <sup>4</sup> Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. <sup>5</sup> Remember the height from which 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. . . <sup>7</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

**1 John 5:3 (NLT)** <sup>3</sup> Loving God means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome.

### **Warm Up:**

In his message, Pastor Tom asked us about playgrounds when we were growing up and described different playground equipment and the funny memories from them. What was your favorite thing about going to a playground growing up?

### **Discussion:**

1. Read Revelation 2:2-3. What do we learn about the church of Ephesus in these verses? What does it mean to persevere and endure hardships for Jesus' name? How can one not grow weary?
2. Read Revelation 2:4. Why do you think Jesus used the language "first love?" Why do you think this is important to Jesus?
3. In his message, Pastor Tom talked about using Christ-like love. What do you think Christ-like love looks like? How can you show Christ-like love in your everyday life?
4. Pastor Tom said "The essence of a church is not its programs or its buildings or its reputation or its doctrinal purity—as important as that is. The essence of a church is its spiritual life." Why do you believe this is true? What does a church without love look like? What can we learn from the church in Ephesus?
5. Excerpt from Pastor Tom's message:  
*But what Ephesus had lost sight of was the fact that unless love covers all of this, they have lost their core of spiritual life.*  
Why do love and spiritual life go hand-in-hand? Why is love needed in your spiritual life?
6. Read Revelation 2:5. Pastor Tom gave us 3 words: remember, repent, and restore. Why do you think it is important to remember where you came from? What does it look like to repent? Why do we need to do the things we did when we first met Jesus? What was that like for you?

### **Next Steps:**

*Jesus says we are going to eat from the tree of life in the paradise/park of God. Adam and Eve were in the park. Adam and Eve sinned, and the park got closed, and the cherubim guarded its entrance with a flaming sword, making intimate, personal communion with the living God impossible, unless one should come and open up a new and living way whereby we would have access into this amazing park, into this wonderful place of future happiness, where all of the benefits and the blessings of communion with the risen Christ and all of the saints through all the ages would become part and parcel of our future happiness.*

*"Yes, there's plenty I can praise you for. Consider the possibility of this problem. Pay careful attention to the plan that I have given you. Remember, and repent, and restore, and keep listening and overcoming.*

*And get ready for eating from this wonderful tree.” And if I may say so, Jesus says, “I’ll meet you in the park.”*

What can you do this week to remember your first love? What steps can you take to remember to love as you did in the beginning?