**The Loveless Church**

1. **The church worked and labored for Christ.**

The Greek (*kopon*[PWS: 2287](http://www.crossbooks.com/book.asp?pub=0&book=748&tocpath=L\#2287: Labour)) means to labor to the point of weariness, sweat, and exhaustion; to work and labor to the limit of one's ability. The church was a working church, a laboring church, a church committed to serve Christ and to serve Him to the fullest.

1. **The church patiently endured*.***

The word means to persevere and to be stedfast in serving Christ and in standing against all the temptations and trials of life. The church was stedfast in studying and proclaiming the gospel and in ministering to the needs of the needy.

1. **The church could not bear those who were evil.**

This refers to sin and evil, men who were corrupt and polluted and who lived for the world instead of living for God. The church could not tolerate the sin and shame, dirt and pollution, filth and destruction of evil.

1. **The church tested all the preachers and teachers of the church and rejected the false.**

The church could not tolerate false teachers and stood against all false teaching. They were loyal to Christ. They did just what Scripture exhorts: they tested the spirits of the teachers.

1. **The church bore up under all for the sake of Christ's name**.

**there is the complaint.** The church had lost its first love. This probably means two things.

The church and its believers had lost their feelings for Christ. Christ was no longer first in their lives. They were putting themselves and their own affairs first, and they were putting the church first—the programs, services, ministries, and fellowship of the church. They had become more attached to the church than they were to Christ.

**Matthew 24:12-13 (NIV)**   
12 Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold,   
13 but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.

**Matthew 10:37 (NIV)**   
37 "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me;

**Matthew 22:35-40 (NIV)**   
35 One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question:   
36 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"   
37 Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'   
38 This is the first and greatest commandment.   
39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'   
40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

**How do you know that God is your first love?**

**John 14:21 (NIV)**   
21 Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."

**John 14:23 (NIV)**   
23 Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

**Repentance— Remember**: *remember* (literally "keep on remembering there is the counsel. The Lord counsels the church to return to him. When a church or a believer goes astray, the Lord issues the very same call that He issues here: return. Three steps are involved in returning.

1**.  First, remember from where you have fallen.** Think back over your former love for the Lord. Remember His presence:

2.  **Second, repent: turn away from whatever has pulled you away from Christ and turn back to Christ**. Something has drawn you away from Christ. You are attached to something more than you are to Christ. Something is consuming your thoughts and energies and keeping your mind from focusing upon Christ and fellowshipping and communing with Him. You are not flickering your mind to Him in prayer as you walk throughout the day. You are not sharing and communing with Him like you did. Something has replaced Him in your thoughts and attention. And you are more attached to that thing than you are to Christ. Repent—turn away from that attachment and turn back to Christ.

3.  **Third, do the first works that you did.**

**The overcomer** Everything that pulls his heart and love away from Christ and attaches it to the world. Whatever possessions, whatever pleasures, whatever it is that has dampened the believer's first love for Christ—it is that thing that the believer must overcome.