

## SERMON STUDY QUESTIONS FOR MAY 18, 2014

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**Sermon Series:** The Lion, The Lamb, Our Savior

**Sermon:** "Ephesus"

**Scripture:** Revelation 2:1-7

**Preaching:** Bob Hopper

1. When Jesus evaluates each of the seven congregations, how does he do this? What pattern can be identified as he lovingly speaks into the life of each congregation? How does Jesus speak into the life of Central?
2. As westerners, we value very highly the idea of individual autonomy (independence) and tend to devalue the idea of inter---connectedness and community. If you transplanted a typical American back into time into the first century church at Ephesus, and if that person read the letter from Jesus to that congregant, such a person might respond by saying, "What business does Jesus have speaking to us in that manner? I personally am not guilty of losing my first love." If you were also a member of the congregation in Ephesus and heard such a comment from a fellow church member, how would you respond to it?
3. Jesus commends the congregation in Ephesus for three virtues. What are they? Which of those virtues are also present at Central?
4. When Jesus states that their weakness is losing their first love, what do you think he means by that comment? Pastor Hopper offered four possible interpretations of that phrase. Which of the four do you agree with? Do you believe that there is any way that Central can identify with the church in Ephesus in this regard?
5. Pastor Hopper introduced a new paradigm to us called "high grace / high truth." He also stated that they can be biblically distinguished but not separated. "Grace is based on the content of truth and grace must be expressed in the context of truth." Do you agree with this assertion of the inter--- connectedness of the two? How does our sin and carnality tend to separate the two and distort one over the other?
6. In various relationships we can tend to live in one quadrant, and then move to a different quadrant in a different relationship. Using these four quadrants, where would you place YOURSELF in the following relationships?
  - a. Your marriage (if appropriate)
  - b. Your parenting (if appropriate)
  - c. Your workplace
  - d. Your broken/strained relationships
  - e. Your church relationships



7. Generally speaking, where would you place Central on the “grace/truth” chart?
8. What do we know of the origin and development of the church in Ephesus (read Acts 19)? What advantages as a congregation did they have? What advantages as a congregation has Central had?
9. Jesus called the congregation in Ephesus to repentance. Is there any way that you think he may be calling Central to repentance? What might that look like for you? What might repentance look like for us as a congregation?
10. What does it mean to be an “overcomer”? How does the gospel empower us to be “overcomers”?