



## International Conference – Feb. 2023

**General Theme: He who has an ear,  
LET HIM HEAR!**

**Mess. 01: The Root of the Church's  
Decline: Losing the First Love.**

**Scripture Reading: Rev 2:4-7.**

Link to this Message on the IVPT Channel

<https://youtu.be/5fVQdk5JCg4>



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Word given by brother **Pedro Dong**, transmitted by Instituto Vida para Todos directly from São Paulo - SP, Brazil, on **05/14/2023**. Text not revised by the author.



1. As the world celebrates Mother's Day today, I would like to encourage everyone to be fathers and mothers in the care of our spiritual Children. We have a wonderful tool available to all churches: the "May I pray for you?" by QR Code, where people get in touch with us, sending us their prayer requests, and from there they are involved in the care networks. **We have desperate people who need help**, but often we don't have the number of brothers and sisters available to help them. That work belongs to the churches. We want to make an improvement for those who want to participate in the reception center and the care network. **We hope that everyone here has someone to care for; so when the Lord returns He will find us feeding our fellow servants.**

2. **We will enter the book of Revelation.** The letters to the 7 churches describe the history of the church until the Lord returns. We've been talking a lot about the church in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum and Thyatira, and to talk about Sardis we need to go back to Thyatira, to understand its background. **Church history gives us our location**; we need to know where we are, how much of the journey has already been covered and how much is left for the Lord to return. With this **"location tool"** we realize that we are very close to the Lord's coming. Let no brother miss this moment because of occupation with work or secular responsibilities. We must be side by side and not let anyone miss the final moment! We must do a great sweep, bring brethren back and alert everyone about our location within the history of the church, because there is little left for the end! It's worth paying whatever price it takes!

**Rev 2:6-7; Isa 66:1-2; Mt 5:3**

3. In Revelation 2:6-7 there is **a warning to never lose our first love**. When we lost our first love, we lost our function in the church, as a lamp that shines in every city, we lost the reality of the church. Many of our teenagers and youth today are experiencing their first love, thank God! Adults shouldn't miss it either, we all need to love the Lord like never before. Love comes from the Word, so **we can't lose our reverent love for the Word**, that's the secret to never losing the first love!

4. **Thus, we will finally be able to give God a resting place: the edified church. He will give His attention to the poor in spirit and to those who are devoted with reverent love to the Word.** The humble in spirit are those who make up the kingdom of heaven. God needs a church that contains the reality of the kingdom of heaven, which is made up of people who are poor and humble

in spirit. We need to convert like children. Let's repent of our complications and live by our capabilities and experiences. **It's time we had the humility of a child** to tell the Lord that we depend on Him and His Word guidance.

### Ex 19:4-6; Eph 5:18

5. **God wants a people close to Him**, who are His exclusive property and who give Him rest. How to turn such a rebellious people into a place of rest? **If we diligently listen to the voice of the Lord and keep the Word** He has given us (His covenant), we will be His holy nation! **The Word is the main factor to keep us in the first love**, the best love. Therefore, the Lord gave us immersion in the Word. It must not be heard and forgotten, but must be part of us. **There are several "wines" that make us drunk** and make us forget our part in the history of the church, such as our work, studies and relationships. We must be filled with the Spirit by speaking to each other with the Word, with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (immersion). This wonderful tool helps us to enjoy and immerse ourselves in the Word.

### Eph 3:17

6. If **the Word dwells in our hearts**, Christ Himself will dwell in us, for He is the Word. Christ is God, and God is love. **The first love comes from the love of God in our heart!** Being in that state, we are rooted and grounded in love. Every building needs a foundation to stand on. By the word of Christ and the indwelling of God, we have a firm foundation, upon which **a building of love** is built! If we lose the first love, we lose all ground for building. Along with all the brethren, we began to understand the love of Christ that surpasses all understanding. **We cannot live in church logically**, we must be simple, obedient and immerse ourselves in the Word, until it saturates us with God Himself. All the voids of our being are being filled by the fullness of God, which is love!

### Deut 6:4-7

7. We can never lose the first love, stop loving the Word reverently and immersing ourselves in it. We must make it dwell in our heart to keep love burning within us with all our strength. This process takes place only by **inculcating (engraving, printing) the Word in our heart, repeating the Word over and over again**. **Why do we talk to each other? Why do we do war cries?** We are repeating it over and over until the word is engraved in our hearts. **The life of a colporteur** is one of constant inculcation of the Word throughout the day. All of us, in our everyday lives, must maintain this practice.

### Jn 1:1,14; Jn 6:28-29, 38, 47-48, 63

8. God does His work through the Word, which is why reverent love for the Word is so important. The Word is Christ, and the Word was with God from the beginning, **the Son is the communication of God**. The Lord's work is accomplished when man believes in the one sent by Him, who is the Word itself. Today, when we believe in the Word, God's work is done in us and through us. Whoever believes in the Word gains eternal life, and Christ becomes His food. It is up to us to eat of the Spirit, which is in the Word - the words we have received are spirit and they are life. **We must associate the Word with Christ Himself, who does the will and work of the Father and who is food for us!**

### Jn 14:10; Jn 5:19

9. Whoever is a bearer of the word of God does not have freedom to do his will and speak his own word. He must be one with God, and his words must accomplish God's work. The Son has no autonomy, He is at the service of the Father, He is the expression, the channel of communication of the Father. Jesus never sought His own will, He of Himself cannot do anything. **Today, we should all have the same attitude** → be simple and have a poor heart. After some time in the church, we gain experience and find ourselves able to give advice, speak messages, take care of couples, hold meetings, and we end up losing simplicity. **We need to learn from the Son, who claims that He can do nothing of Himself**. We depend on the Word of the Lord!

**Heb 1:1-2; Heb 11:3; Jn 21:5-7; Lk 24:13-32**

10. **God speaks and His work is done.** Since Genesis we see this dynamic: it was the word of God that gave rise to the universe, such is its power! Through the Son, God made the universe and made Christ the heir of all things. God spoke through the Son during His time here on earth, and what He spoke did the work of God; the Word was within that Man. He died and rose, but what matters is not His body, but the Word. In John 21: 5-7, the disciples did not recognize Jesus when He appeared to them, but only when they realized that He was speaking and His word was being fulfilled. Similarly, the two disciples in Lk 24:13-32 talked with Jesus after His resurrection, but they only recognized Him later, because of the Word that was in Him. Jesus spoke to them of the Scriptures that both of them knew, but without the revelation, it was of little use. **Jesus is the very speaking of God, not the dead**, doctrinal word. When His Word is spoken, it burns in our hearts!

**Ac 1:2-3,8,14; Ac 4:8-12; Acts 10:36-48**

11. After being resurrected, Jesus continued speaking, showing the disciples that His presence was no longer physical, but was in the Word. Jesus spoke as the word of God all His days on earth. He died, rose again, and continued to show that **the presence of the Word is the presence of the Lord**. From the day of Pentecost, when the first church was officially created, Jesus never physically appeared again, as God now wants to use the church. Peter was used to prophesy at that time, and from then on God continues to this day speaking through the Son, who uses a man as a channel. At that moment, He used Peter, from then on the body of Christ was generated, and the disciples received **the Holy Spirit and power, which is in the spirit and in the Word, to do the work of God!**

12. Then comes **the prophetic word in the New Testament**, through the church. Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, preached salvation in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:8-12). He was used to open the door of salvation to Gentiles who believed and were baptized into the Body of Christ. We Gentiles were officially inducted into the Body at this time. **As church, now it's our turn!** We have been given authority to preach the gospel, to make disciples of all nations. This is our mission.

**Gal 2:11-13; Ac 11:1-17**

13. **Peter should have remained as the bearer of the prophetic word**, but his insecurity in the face of pressure from "the circumcision", on the part of James (who kept the law of Moses), limited him from being used in preaching the gospel among the Gentiles. He was still influenced by Judaism, and **he did not simply obey when given the chance**. Peter separated himself from the Gentile believers and remained with those of the circumcision. This made even Barnabas and other Jews to be carried away by this dissimulation. Paul went so far as to admonish Peter regarding justification by the work of the law. Because he faltered, Peter could not take the gospel to the Gentiles without restraint. God then prepared another tool: Paul.

**Ac 9:1-19; 11:19-22; Eph 3:8; Col 3:15; 1 Thes 2:13; Gal 4:16-21; Gal 3:1-5; At 20:28-30**

14. After the death of Stephen, a great persecution arose. Judaizing Christians spread to the Gentile world: Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, but they preached only to Jews. Some from Cyprus and Cyrene were not aware of this "rule" not to preach to Gentiles, and they preached to them in Antioch. **In this way came a wonderful church in Antioch**. After a while, Paul was taken to serve in Antioch. After a year there, **the Spirit called Paul and Barnabas to the work of the Lord**, and there they went on their first journey. There it was evident that the Spirit had appointed Paul to speak the prophetic word. Henceforth, Paul became an apostle of God by appointment of the Spirit, not human. **Who gives order in the church is Christ**. None of us has the right to give positions, it is Christ who puts us where we are. Paul was chosen as an apostle and minister of God's grace and completed the word of the New Testament.

15. **The Son, in those days, spoke through Paul. The Word operates effectively in the brothers who believe in it, and thus the work of God is carried out.** Through her, the churches

from Antioch in Syria, Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, Achaia, to Rome were raised up. However, the prophetic word spoken by Paul suffered competition from the Judaizers, right at the beginning of his ministry, distracting the brothers from the word that really does the work of God, to return to the yoke of the Law. Many did this to gain followers. That's not how we're supposed to do it in the church; **no one should dispute popularity to have their own followers**, we must make disciples of Jesus, because it is the Son who speaks, and uses channels chosen by Him, to speak. This competition distracted the churches from the word that truly performed the work of God.

16. From the end of the first century and the beginning of the second century, the prophetic word already had competition from other teachings. This opened the door for many heresies to enter during John's time. In the second century, there was no more word inspired by the Holy Spirit, because there were no more apostles raised. Without Word, there is no work of the Lord, and in His absence, human organization comes in. **Without the Word, we fall into decay**: we lose our first love, God's work is no longer carried out, and there is no leadership or direction from the Spirit of God. The Word is everything to us. We need to understand where the church fell, it was 20 centuries of decay, until it reached rock bottom. Thank God, we were restored by Him and we are in a good moment. Let's not give up, and let's not let others give up! **It is time for all to join forces, to follow the line of reverently loving the Word, inculcating the Word in our hearts and allowing it to do the work of God.** Let's move forward!