Overcoming Apathy — Delivery Transcript

Revelation 3:14–22 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, May 23, 2021 · *We Will Overcome*

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If you have your Bible, you can open it up to the book of Revelation, chapter three. I'm going to pull a fast one on you. I know we've been going through the seven letters of the book of Revelation and we've been doing it sequentially and as they come in the book, but I'm going to jump over the sixth church and save that for last. And we're going straight to the seventh church this morning. So our passage will be Revelation chapter 3, verses 14 to 22. And as you're turning there, I've shared this before, but when I was in college and kind of coming out of high school like a lot of kids, I was trying to discover what I actually believed.

I had grown up in a Christian home. I made a decision for Christ at a very young age. I, you know, kind of inherited my parents' faith and they were good, godly parents, and I'm grateful for that. They taught me a lot about all that I needed to know to be a good strong Christian boy. And I kind of rebelled against that. And then when I got to Abilene, you know, I kind of surrendered my life back to the Lord, went to seminary, decided I was going to be obedient to the Lord to go into full-time ministry, but it was in college that I began to have an intellectual crisis of faith.

I was being exposed to other worldviews, other world religions. I was reading books by the—they call them the Four Horsemen of the new atheist movement. Anybody ever heard of them? Guys like Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Sam Harris, who's the other one? Christopher Hitchens, who's now passed away. I remember reading their books and being very challenged in my thinking and, you know, just struggling how to give a response. And it was in that crisis-of-faith moment that I stumbled upon a discipline known as Christian apologetics. And that's not the art and science of how to say you're sorry as a Christian, as some think that's what it means.

But it really means to give a word back, a response to objections like those of the new atheist. And I remember, you know, just absorbing that and I would drive back and forth to

seminary for two and a half hour drive. And I would listen to podcasts upon podcasts and audiobooks and just absorbed so much of that knowledge and it really helped me come out of that season stronger than I entered into it and had more conviction. I always tell people who doubt, you don't have to be afraid of your doubts.

Your doubts don't have to be an enemy to your faith. They can actually be a great friend. If you'll do with your doubts what you ought to do, which is to find answers to your questions and not let it cripple you in the faith. But I say all that to say now, ten years looking back at that experience, the biggest religious crisis in our nation is not that of atheism. I really don't believe that. Atheism is not the movement that's growing with great force, even though there are some who suggest that.

The fastest growing religious category in our nation is that of what's called the nones. And there's an author that wrote an article in The Atlantic who said the greatest religious force in Western culture is not atheism or Christianity or Islam. It's apatheism. Apatheism. And he rejoiced and celebrated this. He said, this is a good thing. Atheists and Christians are becoming less passionate about their convictions. And so they don't really know whether they do or don't believe. They say they believe, but they don't really allow it to influence much of their life.

They certainly really don't care what you believe, you know, what you believe is your business, what I believe is my business, and it just kind of affects that sacred sphere of my life that I engage with on Sundays or Saturdays or whenever your religious observances are. And more and more as people press into that kind of apatheistic approach to spirituality, they say, I don't really want to identify with any one particular camp because I'm not all that passionate about any of it in the first place. And so the fastest religious movement in our culture today is what I would call apatheism.

And maybe you would say, I have a little bit of apatheism in me. Like I'm not as passionate about the faith as I used to be. I don't love the Lord like I used to. I don't desire to go to church like I used to. I don't crave that experience with Jesus in worship like I used to. I'm just kind of indifferent. And if that is your state this morning, you need to know you're not alone in that. At most, there's a growing movement of that in our culture. And our culture is not the first culture to struggle with that kind of mindset.

The church that we're going to look at this morning in Laodicea had the same exact problem. And Jesus' message to this church was essentially overcome your spiritual apathy and if you can overcome your spiritual apathy there will be a great reward. So let's read his letter. We'll read the whole thing to the church in Laodicea and then we'll kind of walk through it slowly and unpack it. I'm going to start my timer here so I don't do the same thing I did in the last service. All right, so he says, Write to the angel of the church in Laodicea, Thus says the Amen, the faithful and the true witness, the originator of God's creation.

I know your works, that you are neither hot nor cold— or cold nor hot— and I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you're lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I'm going to vomit you out of my mouth. Pleasant imagery there, Jesus. For you say, I'm rich, and I've become wealthy and need nothing, and you don't realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. Just piling it on there. I advise you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so that you may be rich, white clothes, so that you may be dressed, and your shameful nakedness not be exposed, and ointment to spread on your eyes so that you may see.

As many as I love, I rebuke and discipline, so be zealous and repent. See, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. To the one who conquers, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. So let anyone who has ears to hear listen to what the Spirit says to the churches. So Jesus did not mince words, right?

This is a thoroughly negative letter. This is a scathing rebuke from the Lord. Unlike the other letters where Jesus would have like a little nice thing to say about the churches that were in trouble. He doesn't have anything nice to say to this church. A lot of commentators think this is kind of the climax of compromise and immorality and death of a church. And that very well may be true. This is a church that was in deep trouble, but they had no idea the trouble that they were in. I would call this culture, the city of Laodicea, the elite class, the ruling class.

This is the New York City and kind of highfalutin people of that continent of Asia Minor. Even the name Laodicea, it comes from two Greek words, I think this is interesting. Laos is where we get our word laity, it means the common people, but dikao means I rule. And so you put those two words together. Laodicea was the people who rule over the commoners, the elites. They are the high class kinds of people, and they had a reason to be high class. Jesus mentions these items like clothing and eye ointment and gold, buying gold from him.

All of that was Jesus' way of being ironic, kind of goading them for their material prosperity because they were an uber rich class of people. They had this black silky wool— not silky, but this black soft shiny wool that was extremely expensive and they made a ton of money on that niche market. They also had a center of medicine there where they came up with this new idea where you treat multiple symptoms with multiple different medicines. So if you're frustrated with your doctor because he has you taking 20 different medications for 20 different problems, you can blame Laodicea for that.

That's their doing. They also came up with that eye ointment that Jesus mentions that came from Laodicea. And then the other thing that kind of I think takes it over the top, they had their own refinery of making gold. They mined their own gold so that when this city had an earthquake, back before Jesus was even born,[1] they paid to have not only their city rebuilt

through their mining of gold, but every other city around them as well. They did not borrow from Rome. So this truly was the high class kind of people.

The problem was is that incredible material prosperity had resulted in a toxic form of religious indifference. And a lot of times that happens when people become extremely wealthy. They equate their physical wealth with their spiritual wealth. And Jesus says, no, you're spiritually bankrupt, you're spiritually poor, your material prosperity has brought you to a place of spiritual indifference. And I love this quote that says hate is not the opposite of love, or the opposite of love is not hate. The opposite of love is indifference. Because at least when you hate somebody, you at least have some kind of emotion directed towards that person, and we all know sometimes you just love to hate somebody.

Can I get an amen? It's like I love you but I hate you at the same time. I think there's a song about that. But when you're indifferent towards someone, then you're just checked out, you don't care, you're apathetic. And anybody who's in a marriage with someone who once loved them, but now they're just indifferent, then that's the worst feeling in the world. And that's what happened to this church in their relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. There once was an infectious love, a passion for Jesus, but they just kind of checked out.

Laissez-faire, go through the motions, but I don't really feel the way I used to feel about the Lord. And so that's why Jesus says the things that he says and introduces himself in the way that he does. If you've been with us on this journey, Jesus introduces himself differently to every different church. And to this church, he introduces himself as the Amen, the faithful and the true witness, and the originator of God's creation. And if you ask the question, why does he say that, how does that relate to what they were going through?

I think this is Jesus' way of saying, you rich people think that you can't get anything wrong. Like you think because you have so much money you're also very, very intelligent. Does anybody know rich people like that? Maybe you are a rich person like that. I'm not saying all rich people are like this by any means, and certainly none in our church. But I always think of Bill Gates when I think about this. Just because you have a bunch of money doesn't make you an expert on everything there is in the world.

This kind of attitude that because you have a lot of money, it equals you're sophisticated and knowledgeable about everything that there is to know. Jesus is saying, no, that's not true. I'm the Amen, which is a word, an Aramaic word for truth. That's why when a preacher is preaching a really good sermon, you should say, Amen, because that's saying, I believe it. That's true. Hardy, hardy, that's awesome. I agree with that. Jesus is saying, I am the embodiment of truth. I am the true and the faithful witness. So my word is the final word.

My word is the last word. Just because you think you have the final word doesn't mean you have the final word. And then when he calls himself the originator of all creation, I think this

is Jesus' way of saying, You think you own a lot of gold, you think you got gold more than Rome's gold. I own Rome's gold, your gold, and all the gold, because I'm the originator of God's creation. So whatever reasons your wealth has given you to think yourself superior, you are not. You are not superior. You are not Mr.

Know-It-All. You are not Mr. Smarty Pants. I am. I think that's what Jesus is saying. I'm smarter than you. I'm more wealthy than you. I am more holy. I am more set apart in ways that you cannot even begin to fathom. So listen to what I'm about to say. I think this is Jesus putting a smackdown on this audience before he puts on his doctor hat. Then he puts on the doctor hat and he says, your problem is you're a lukewarm church. Jesus accuses the church of being lukewarm. It's in verse 15, he says, I know your works.

In other words, I know how you do church, I know how your religious activities go. And the problem is you're not hot and you're not cold. You're neither cold nor hot. And I wish that you were either cold or hot. Now when I first read this passage as a young kid, I thought this was Jesus' way of saying either for me or against me. Anybody ever— that's the vibe you get when you first read it. And I always kind of wonder like why would Jesus want people to be against him?

Doesn't the Bible say God's not willing that any would perish, but that everybody would come to repentance? Doesn't sound like a good way to get people on your team, but that's— you know, is that what Jesus is saying? And it's possible that's not what he's saying. It could be, and this is what I think. Jesus is being ironic here, just like he was with the other statements he made earlier. Because Laodicea was a town situated between two other natural springs. You had a natural spring in Colossae, which was southeast, and it had cold flowing water coming from that spring.

But then you had another spring from a town up north called Hierapolis. And it had hot water, and hot water was really good for bathing and medicinal purposes. The cold water was really good for refreshing cold drink of water. But when you got to Laodicea, the hot water had lost its heat and the cold water had lost its chill. And so it was essentially not good for much of anything. And so this is Jesus not making a reference so much to their loyalty. Jesus is instead talking about their utility. So Jesus accuses the church of being lukewarm.

The description is not about their loyalty. It's about their utility. He's saying, I wish that you would be spiritually good for something, but you're not because you're lukewarm. To which they would probably object, but Jesus, we give so much money, we make such an impact in our community. If it was us, I'd say we spent so much money on programming and buildings and resources and materials. We are teaching children. We are giving away money. We're making such an impact in the world. And his response would be, your activity is irrelevant if it doesn't come from a place of affection for me.

Your activity— your fruit is not true fruit unless it comes from a place of abiding in the vine, like we talked about a couple of weeks ago, that Jesus is not so much concerned about what we do as much as he is why we do what we do. And how we do what we do. And this church had separated themselves from a relationship with Jesus. They were doing things for him instead of with him. They were trying to impress him instead of abiding from a place of dependency on him. And it makes Jesus sick.

He says, it makes me so sick I want to spew you out of my mouth. When I think of something lukewarm that makes me want to vomit, the two things that come to my mind are lukewarm coffee or lukewarm milk. Of course, milk, I want to spit milk out of my mouth anyway, unless it's chilled ice cream. Then it's good for something. But and I don't understand how people drink cold coffee, but that's a thing. How many of you drink cold coffee in here? I don't understand it, but it's a popular thing.

My wife even drinks cold coffee every now and then. It's something I really respect about you. I like hot coffee. I know people like cold coffee but lukewarm coffee, yuck, right? You spit it out of your mouth. Lukewarm milk, same thing. Jesus says, that's the way I think about complacent Christians, which blows my mind. Because how many times would you say I've been a little bit complacent in my faith? And we treat it like it's no big deal. Like, oh, it's, you know, I'm just kind of in a dry season right now and really struggling to love the Lord like I used to love the Lord.

You know, I don't want to pray, I don't feel anything anymore. And I have just kind of lived with that. And in the church, pastors talk about this at pastor conferences. They say, how's your church doing? Oh, there's so many complacent Christians in the church, and this problem with the church is this, that, and the other thing. We kind of just kind of complain about it, but we tolerate it as if this is just the way it's going to be. You know, we live in the West. We live with so much other stuff.

This is just one of the problems of the church in the West. And I don't think that we react towards spiritual indifference the way that Jesus reacts towards spiritual indifference because he has strong, violent language to say, I cannot tolerate it. I will not be a part of it. I think this is Jesus' picturesque way of saying when you are lukewarm in your faith, you grieve the Spirit of God, and he is not going to be present in your life. I'm not saying that you lose your salvation. I don't think that the text is teaching you lose your salvation, but you lose your anointing, you lose your power, you lose your joy, you lose the fruit of the Spirit, like self-control and patience and happiness and all of the good things that accompany a life fully surrendered to God and in love with Jesus, you forfeit all of that because Jesus in that sense spits you out of his mouth so that you're no longer with him in the way that you used to be with him.

And so complacency in your faith is a huge deal before the Lord, and I wonder if we should make it a bigger deal in our church and in our life. I really believe that Jesus is worth so much more than we think and so much more than we give him. We just kind of check in sometimes, we just kind of go through the motions, and I wonder if we've not accepted this as the status quo and a reason why we're so spiritually impotent and so many churches feel dead and not exciting and, why would I want to be a part of a church like that?

Because we've tolerated what Jesus says he will not tolerate. I put down in my own notes that we've had a lot of checking Jesus out, but no selling out; coming in without buying in. Produced a generation of decaffeinated Christians who were spiritually bored because they've never really experienced a truly compelling vision of Jesus Christ as Lord of all. And man, God help us. And God forgive us if we've done that in our church. And to whatever degree that we've done that in our church, we've got to stop. I really think it's one of Satan's greatest weapons in the church.

And the reason it's so effective is because spiritual indifference and spiritual complacency happens upon you and you don't really know it until it's too late. It's kind of like people who will sometimes come in for marriage counseling. They'll say, I don't know when it happened or how it happened, but we just grew apart. And it wasn't until she threatened to leave, or it wasn't until something significant like adultery or something big happened that it finally, boom, woke us up. But the distancing had been taking place for a long time, and that's what happens spiritually in your relationship with the Lord.

That indifference grows and grows and grows and the whole while you're totally oblivious to it because that's just the way complacency works. You see this in the church in Laodicea in verse 17. They had no idea their spiritual condition. He says, you say, in verse 17, you say that I'm rich. You say I've become wealthy and I don't need anything. In other words, I'm doing fine. Me and Jesus are great. But you don't realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. Which is like two adjectives too many, right?

You're like Jesus, you got me at wretched and pitiful. You don't have to keep piling it on. But he piles it on and piles it on and piles it on. And this is again Jesus being stingingly ironic because this was a city that prided itself on its fancy black wool and the wealth that they got from that clothing line. This was a city who fancied itself on its material prosperity of gold. It was a city who prided itself on saying, we see it all and we've done it all. We don't need anything.

It prided itself on its vision. And Jesus is saying, all the things that you pride yourself on, you should not pride yourself on because you're naked, which has connotations of guilt and sin. You're not as good as you think you are. You are naked, you are poor, which has connotations of spiritual inability. You cannot save yourself, you cannot commend yourself to the Lord. And then blindness, this idea of you cannot even see the truth of your condition.

If you saw yourself the way that God saw you, then you would not be saying the things that you say.

But that's something only the Holy Spirit can do. You are pitiful. And you and I read that and I think they should already know that they're Christians. This is just basic gospel stuff that when you become a Christian, you recognize my sin has separated me from God. I'm poor in spirit. I can't save myself. Only Jesus can save me. And so you say, Jesus, would you clothe me with your righteousness? Would you save me, I'm going to find my significance in you, I'm going to buy gold from you. All of that's basic ABC Christianity stuff, and so why is Jesus saying ABC basic Christianity stuff to this church full of Christians who should already know the ABCs.

And the reason I think Jesus is giving them ABC Christianity is because there had grown a disconnect, a gospel disconnect, between what they knew up here and their experience of that truth in their hearts. And that's what happens when you become a rich, self-sufficient Christian. There becomes a disconnect, a gospel disconnect between what you know up here intellectually and what you believe convictionally and what you experience in here in your heart and how you live out there with your life. This is why Jesus warns against money. He says it's easier for a camel to get through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich man to get into the kingdom of heaven.

To which all the rich people said, oh, me, you know, oh no. But then he says, if it's impossible with man, it's possible with God. And all the rich people said, Amen. Thank you, Jesus. Paul tells Timothy in 1 Timothy chapter 6, you got rich people in your church, Timothy, so you want to help your rich people? Tell them to be rich towards God. Don't be rich towards yourself. Be rich towards God because the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Now there's nothing wrong with being rich, you know, and in the West we're all rich compared to the rest of the world.

And so if you're sitting here pointing your fingers at rich people, you should point your finger to yourself because most of us, even those of us who are subsistence living at the poverty level in the USA, we're still the world's rich. So it's a warning, I think, to all of us in this culture to beware of the allure of wealth and how it can put you in a place where you disconnect your mind from your heart. You know intellectually I'm a sinner who needs to be saved by grace, but spiritually you don't feel that way anymore because look at my big nice house and a big bank account and I feel like I can save myself, and, you know, maybe God doesn't exist, and if God doesn't exist, I'm pretty well off right now and I can just kind of coast until I roast or coast until I die.

I like coast until you roast, and then you're and then you're done. And God's mercy will not be sweet in your life unless sin becomes bitter. And the only way for sin to become bitter is for you to separate your material prosperity from your spiritual condition. Because you can

be physically, materially high on the hog and be spiritually bankrupt. And the truth is, it doesn't matter how much money you have. When God looks at you, He doesn't see your money because it's His money. He sees your spiritual condition, and your spiritual condition is hopeless.

So we need this word. You know, we need this word as a church. We need because we live in Laodicea. We live in a very wealthy land. Most of us have more than enough. I remember when I was in seminary, we would do these tours of these big churches in the Dallas–Fort Worth area. I guess it was the seminary's way of saying if you try real hard and do all the things that these churches do, then you'll grow big and strong like these churches. And I remember looking at these buildings and being just overwhelmed at how nice they were and thinking, man, one day I'm going to pastor a church and it's going to have all these big nice things in it.

And it was— let me put it this way, there was another group of people in that tour who were international students. And they challenged me on that sentiment that I just vocalized. They would get in this little huddle and they would be speaking in the language that they spoke, and this just happened to be Korean. They came from a place where the church was exploding, but poverty was a given. Everybody was poor. The churches, nobody had big buildings, nobody had land because it was way too expensive. And they were kind of getting angry and mad, and I asked them after the tour, I said, what got you guys so upset about the tour?

And they said, we're just sick to our stomach that the churches in the West spend so much money on buildings and activities and programming, but they don't have any prayer meetings. Prayer is totally absent. And the proportionality of how much they give to the poor and how much benevolence they do compared to how much they spend on maintenance is outsized and sickening. And then they said the thing that makes us the sickest is that there is no sense in which the church in the West is vocal about their faith. When it comes to the public square, there is a deafening silence of most Christians.

And you ask yourself, when's the last time you shared your faith? When's the last time you were vocal about your convictions in the Lord? I think many of us would be embarrassed to say, I haven't been very vocal. And if you ask yourself, when's the last time it was just you and the Lord in your prayer closet? Not prayers at mealtimes, not prayers at bedtime, but you and Jesus alone, the private place, how many hours, how many minutes last week did you spend in private prayer? I think a lot of us would say I'm pretty embarrassed by that.

There's a lack of prayer. There's a lack of generosity. If you look at your giving record, or you look at the attitude with which you give to the Lord compared to what comes in, compared to what you spend on everything else. For many of us, there is a sickening level of lack of generosity in our heart. And maybe that's a result of spiritual apathy. Because that's exactly

what they said. The church in the West is spiritually deadened. They are desensitized to the realities, spiritual realities of what is going on in the world.

And that's what happened to the church in Laodicea. Prayerless lack of generosity, lack of courage to speak out about their faith. And honestly, it's not just international students who recognize that about the church in the West. It's a new generation of young Christians, not the millennials, the ones underneath that who grew up in a digital world. They just want something real. I just want something authentic. I've seen so much fake in my life. I don't know what news to trust anymore. I don't know what truth is anymore. I just want to see something authentic and real.

And a form of spirituality that has some kind of external appearance of godliness but denies its power. That looks good on the outside, but it's kind of spiritually dead on the inside. That's not real. That's not authentic. And nobody wants any part of that. And why would you want any part of that? Much better to have a real faith, a sincerity of conviction. So what about you? Your prayer life, your generosity? Your public conviction to be vocal about your faith, if that's dead and dying, here's what Jesus says you need to do.

He says, I advise you to buy from me gold. Okay, don't go to your mines to get gold. Come to me to get gold, refined in the fire. In other words, suffering. So obedience is going to cost you, but it's going to benefit you. Buy from me gold refined in the fire so that you may be rich, white clothes so that you may be dressed and your shameful nakedness be exposed— or not be exposed— and then ointment to spread on your eyes, so that you may see, as many as I love, I rebuke and discipline.

So be zealous and repent. So we'll start where Jesus ends. He says to be zealous and repent. He's told every church to repent, but he adds to this church, be zealous, which is a Greek word for jealous. But it's not jealous in the negative sense. The way you should think about jealousy, I think, is to think of jealousy as protective love aimed at an object. So jealousy is a good thing so long as it's externally focused. What happens is when people— like, you get jealous of somebody or your husband or boyfriend gets jealous of that other person, it's not because he loves you, it's because he loves himself or loves herself.

And that person sees a threat to being loved by you, so they get jealous of the thing that's threatening them. But Christian love is not internally focused, Christian love is externally focused. And so you become jealous for your marriage, you become jealous for another person's success, and in this case you become jealous for the Lord Jesus Christ that you pursue protecting your time with him, protecting your affection for him. When your affections begin to wane for Christ, you wake up and you say, what is causing this? You fight for affection for Jesus.

You war against those things that are deadening your soul against him. That's what Jesus is saying when he says, be zealous. Renew your passion for me, renew your excitement about church, about worship, about Bible study, get excited about the things that bring about communion with me. And then he says, don't only have a zeal for me, but you need to purchase some things from me. And I think this is just Jesus' way of saying to heal the disconnect, to reconnect what's been disconnected between the head and the heart. He says you need to buy gold refined by fire, white clothes to cover the nakedness, and eye ointment for your spiritual blindness.

So I don't think he's saying you can buy your salvation, but he is saying you need to be renewed in your salvation. You need to have the joy of your salvation restored. And it's really the reverse order. You first got to have your eyes open. So he's saying ask for the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to what you've been blind to. This is why as a church we've been praying things like, God, would you give us a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit? Would you open up our eyes to see you for who you really are?

Help us to see the truth about you, to see the truth about your love. Have our eyes opened. And then he says, be clothed with white clothes, which is his way of saying, stop looking to your works and your moral effort to justify you, to make you feel good about yourself. No, you need to be washed in the blood of the Lamb. It's not what you do, it's what Jesus Christ has done. It's not about your moral effort. It's about his perfect righteousness credited to you, even though you're unworthy. Be clothed in the white clothes of the blood of the Lamb.

And then he says, buy gold from me, which I think is Jesus' way of saying not only should you have your eyes opened and be saved, but you need to find your significance in me. You need to find your purpose in me. The things that give you value, the things that make you feel good about yourself. Don't make those things from the world— make your gold, make the thing that gives you significance, me and what I'm doing in your life. And so many Christians miss it. We try to justify ourselves through our efforts and our good works.

We try to find meaning in life by our job or our house or how many people think well of us. And we get blinded to our spiritual blindness, thinking, I know what God wants and I know what God should do, I know what I should do. When the reality is most of us are blind to what God wants us to do because we never humbled ourselves to ask him in the first place. We just got cocksure and took off running thinking we know best. And it's through Christ alone that any of that stuff is going to happen.

And so Jesus is just saying, stop, slow down for a minute, and come to me for these things that you say you have, because you don't have them, and the only way you're ever going to get them is through repentance and faith. And so this morning, I think the Lord's Supper is a perfect invitation for us to slow down, to stop, and to say, Jesus, I want to come to you. I

want to be clothed in your righteousness, I want to find my value and significance in what you have done for me.

He closes with this invitation. He says, behold, as many as I love, I rebuke and discipline, so be zealous and repent. And then he says in verse 20: See, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him and he with me. It's such a powerful verse. It's so crazy. Even though our indifference makes Jesus sick to his stomach, he still says, I love you. It reminds me of anybody ever got puked on before? Anybody?

Can I get an amen? We got a six-month-old in the house, a little bit of puking going on, right? And it's so nasty. Oh, it's gross. But I still love him, right? Even though he just vomited on me. Now Jesus is not saying, even if you vomit on me, I still love you. He's saying, even though you make me want to vomit. I still love you. But same kind of idea. He is not going anywhere. You have not offended him to the point of no repair. He's saying, I'm standing here, I am knocking on the door, I want to commune with you, I want to love you, I want you to love me, I want you to participate in my life, I want you to participate in my joy, I want you to be fulfilled, I don't want you to be stressed out all the time and running from anxiety episode to anxiety episode.

I want you to be free from all of those things. But the only way you're going to do that is if you let me in, if you open the door, if you repent and regain your zeal for me. You know, so many times preachers quote this verse to talk about lost people. I can't tell you the number of sermons I heard growing up that said, if you're not a Christian, Jesus is knocking on the door of your heart and he's saying, will you let me in? And that's true, you know.

I guess it's not biblical, but it is true. He is knocking on the door of your heart. If you're not a Christian this morning, he knocks on the door of your heart, wants to come in. But that invitation and revelation is not for lost people, it's for saved people. It's for the church. It's for a church who has grown cold in their affection for Jesus and Jesus saying, grow hot in your love for me. So here's what I want us to do. We're about to take the Lord's Supper. I'm going to ask our ushers to come up to the front.

I don't have time to get through all the rest of the blanks, but I want you to— I'm going to pray this prayer and if there is a sense in which the Spirit of God is speaking to your spirit, and he's saying to you, your affection for me has grown cold. You are spiritually apathetic. And you'd say, Lord, I want to be renewed in the affections of my heart. I want to love you the way that you love me. Will you help me do that? Then you can repeat this prayer after me.

You can pray something along the same lines. And then as we take the Lord's Supper, allow the Spirit of God to continue to minister to you. Here's the prayer. If you want to pray it

along with me, Lord Jesus, I repent. I repent for having a lukewarm faith. I repent for allowing the material blessings of my life to blind me to the spiritual blessings of being a wretched sinner saved by grace. Open my eyes so that I can see. Help me to see my sin the way that you see my sin.

Clothe me afresh and anew with a zeal for righteousness and communion with the Lord Jesus Christ. Forgive me for not seeing you. Forgive me for not treasuring you for who you really are. Lord, help me to treasure you and desire you in a way that honors and glorifies your name. Help me to overcome spiritual apathy. If you're willing to pray that prayer and mean it, Jesus says to the one who conquers, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne. Just as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.

Let anyone who has ears to hear listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.

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1. Transcript note: spoken as "back before Jesus was even born"; the earthquake after which Laodicea famously rebuilt itself without Roman aid struck in AD 60, in Nero's reign. Tacitus: Laodicea "was that same year overthrown by an earthquake, and, without any relief from us, recovered itself by its own resources." Source: Tacitus, Annals 14.27; Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites, "Laodicea ad Lycum." ↩