

The Lukewarm Church/Heart/Life

I. Slide1 Intro: The Lukewarm Church/Heart/Life

A. I would like to buy \$3.00 worth of God, please. Not enough to explode my soul or disturb my sleep, but just enough to equal a cup of warm milk or a snooze in the sunshine. I don't want enough of Him to make me love someone of *a different color than myself* or pick beets with a migrant. I want ecstasy, not transformation; I want the warmth of the womb, not a new birth. I want a pound of the Eternal in a paper sack. I would like to buy \$3.00 worth of God, please.¹ Wilbur Rees

1. Lukewarm. Tepid. Slightly warm. Warmish. Room Temp. Indifferent. Apathetic. Bland. Halfhearted. Unenthusiastic. Lackadaisical.

B. Prayer: Lord, before we *analyze and discuss* Your Word, help us to **1st contemplate** and **meditate** upon it. Before we take your word **apart**, please bring the words **together**. Lord before we wonder if we **agree**, we wonder which words you want to **directly speak to us**. Before we let you word **tickle** our memory, may we be willing to allow it to **penetrate** the deep recesses of our heart.

II. Slide2 BACKGROUND

A. What are our local cities known for? *Murrieta, Temecula, L.E, Wildomar.*

1. You know a lot about your city. Now, imagine if you knew what a 1st century writer knew, about this city of **Laodicea**.

B. Slide3 Wealth - Laodicea was a wealthy & independent city. They were able to **rebuild** their city after an devastating earthquake in A.D. 61 *without the help of Rome*.

1. Tacitus writes: *One of the most famous cities of Asia, Laodicea, was in that same year over-thrown by an earthquake and without any relief from us covered itself by its own resources.* (Tacitus: Annals 14:27)

2. It was one of the **wealthiest** cities in the world.

C. Slide4 Medical Center - It was a **medical center** known for an ointment for treating ears & a salve for the eyes.

¹ Wilbur Rees, from When I Relax I Feel Guilty by Tim Hansel (I slightly changed)

- D. **Slide5 Location** - Laodicea was *located near Hierapolis* & near Colossae.
- E. **Banking & financial center** - It was also known as a *banking & financial* center.
- F. **Slide6 Sheep** - And for their glossy *black* wool cloth.
 1. Jesus will use each of these images for His points to the church.
 2. So, Laodicea was known for its *banking, medical, & clothing industry*.

III. Slide7 JESUS (14)

- A. **He's the Amen** - the final say so. He won't change the truth, it's secure. He is the final word on the subject...*any* subject. (see Is.65:16 *truth* twice = אָמֵן)
- B. **He's Faithful** - He won't *Dilute* the Truth. **He's True** - He won't *Distort* the Truth.
- C. **He's the beginning of the creation of God** - Indicating His priority over all creation.
 1. **Beginning** = or origin. *He is the originator of God's creation*.
- D. Though outwardly the church appeared strong & prosperous, the Lord finds *nothing* to *COMMEND*. Though...*they were busy commending themselves*.

IV. Slide8 HE CONDEMNS 4 THINGS (15-19)

- A. **Slide9a [1] INDIFFERENCE** (15,16) - *Lukewarm*, *not* Hot nor Cold.
- B. This imagery may allude to the water system at Laodicea.
 1. The city had no water supply of its own. It had **cold water** piped in from **Colossae** (w/above ground pipes *from 8000'*) & **hot water** piped in from the Hot-mineral-springs at **Hierapolis** (w/above ground pipes).
 - a) When the water arrived in the city, it had become *lukewarm*.
 - b) Like the water, **the church** at Laodicea was *neither refreshing (like cold water) nor healing (like the hot spring water)*.
- C. **Slide9b** In the Christian life there are *3 temperatures*:
 1. **A Burning Heart** - Lk.24:32 *And they said to one another, Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, & while He opened the Scriptures to us?*
 2. **A Cold Heart** - Mt.24:12 *And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.*

3. **A Lukewarm Heart** - *comfortable & complacent.*

a) If they were *cold* they would have at least *felt it*.

b) Jesus says, *Give me all your Hate or all your Heart, but don't offer Lukewarm Love.*

(1) A lukewarm person is tepid, lacking enthusiasm, halfhearted about what he or she believes. They may possess some sense of *duty* to the church, *but* lack *true conviction & commitment*.

c) Imagine a **Salesman** lukewarm about sales. An **Electrician** lukewarm about handling electricity. A **Fighter** lukewarm against dealing with fire.

Imagine a **Doctor** lukewarm about disease. *Imagine a Church lukewarm about Christ? It makes as much sense.*

D. **Slide10a [2] PRIDE** (17a) - *I am rich* - thanks to its banking industry, *Laodicea* was a wealthy city.

1. Like the **city**, the **church** there had convinced itself that it was **self-sufficient** - *but* was deceived about its true spiritual state.

2. **Slide10b** They said, *we're in need of nothing*. Jesus said, *w/o me you can do nothing*.

E. **Slide11 [3] SELF DECEPTION** (17b) - *They did not know*

1. This church *didn't even know* how bad off they were.

2. *Smyrna* thought itself poor, *but* they were rich (Here *Laodicea* was opp.)

3. They said, we're Wonderful. He said your Wretched.

They said, we're Marvelous. He said your Miserable.

They said, we're Prospering. He said your Poor.

They said, we're Beholding. He said your Blind.

They said, we're clothed from Nordstrom's Rack. He said you're Naked.

F. **Slide12a [4] SPIRITUAL POVERTY** (17c) - *wretched, miserable, poor, blind, & naked*

1. We laugh at the story of the Emperor w/no clothes. 2 guys who bamboozled the king with *invisible clothes* that *"any fool could see"*. He paraded himself in

his skivvies', while all the people were saying, look at his clothes, till one boy shouted, *the king has no clothes*.

a) Jesus shouted, *Laodiceans you have no clothes*. They were naked spiritually.

2. Naked speaks of **shame**, humiliation. 2 Sam. 10:4 *Therefore Hanun* (king of Ammon) *took David's servants, shaved off half of their beards, cut off their garments in the middle, at their buttocks, and sent them away. When they told David, he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, Wait at Jericho until your beards have grown, and then return.*

G. I counsel you (18,19) - He is our *Wonderful, Counselor*.

H. We not only need to be honest with **ourselves**, but **allow God** to be honest with us.

1. Ps.16:7 *I will bless the LORD who has given me counsel.*

I. *Slide12b* They were exhorted to grab God's: *Gold, Garments, & Eye salve*.

1. **Gold** - They had *fools gold*...they needed *gold refined by fire*. This is a metaphor for **removing sin**. Job 23:10 *But He knows the way that I take; When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold.*

2. **Garments** - Unfeigned Purity (White garments)

a) The Laodicean's could easily go to market & buy their beautiful **black** wool garments, but they needed God's *white* garments of righteousness.

3. **Eye Salve** - They were famous for their *Phrygian powder* mixed w/oil for an eye salve.

a) The *Laodicean medical school* (at the temple of Asclepius) was known for producing eye salve. Christ prescribes **His salve** as the **cure** for *spiritual blindness*.

4. Jesus will make them *spiritually rich, cover their nakedness, & heal their blindness*. (rich, clothed, & seeing)

J. (19) *As many as I love, I rebuke & chasten* - After all this, *He loved these lukewarm saints!*

1. He loved them enough to **chasten** them, **not** throw them away.
2. He would chasten them **as proof** of His love.

K. **Repent** - from their pride, and humble themselves before the Lord.

1. Brennan Maning, *in order to free the captive, one must name the captivity.*

- a) **Same with the Laodiceans.** They needed to fire up that inner flame & cultivate a burning heart.

V. Slide13 **PROMISES (20-22)**

A. Slide14a 1ST PROMISE – FELLOWSHIP (20)

- B. This describes a request for *a renewal of fellowship*. In Song 5:2 the Shulamite talking about her groom, *I sleep, but my heart is awake; It is the voice of my beloved! He knocks, saying, Open for me, my sister, my love, My dove, my perfect one; For my head is covered with dew, My locks with the drops of the night.* (I have a headache)

1. In their self-sufficiency, the church in Laodicea had **locked Christ out**. He wants them to **repent** and, ultimately, **take part in the coming messianic banquet**.

C. Hear & Open & I'll Come & Dine.

1. Can be used in **both** applications for believer & unbeliever. **1st, to Lukewarm-ers.**
 - a) It's spoken to the **individual**, *if anyone...* (**put your name in the blank tonight**)
 - b) He **knocks** through *circumstances*. He **calls** thru **His Word** for *Fellowship & Communion*.

D. I will come in to him - He enters the believers heart & makes it his home.

1. Some people let you in their house, others make it feel like it's your own home. (**grandma's house**) [note Jesus is writing to bel's here]
2. Have you just let Jesus in, **or has He been able to make it His home?**

E. I will dine with him - Have some good spiritual food & fellowship.

F. Slide14b The Greeks had 3 meals in the day:

1. ακριτισμα (akritisma) - Breakfast, bread dipped in wine.
2. ἀριστάω (aristao) - Picnic snack on the go.
3. δειπνέω (deipneo) - (**used here**) the evening meal, where people lingered & sat long, & talked over it.

G. And he with Me - If **we** open **our heart's** to Him, **He'll** open **His home** to us.

1. **Enjoy the pleasure of His company.**

H. What does this tell you about your Savior? About His amazing **love** for you?

1. Jesus isn't eager to condemn, **or** to spit us out of His mouth.
2. **No**, His love compels Him to *care, confront, & call* us back to Him.
3. *Call us back for punishment? no*, for *clothing, healing, nourishment, companionship. For Love.*

I. **Slide15a** No other religion has the vision of a *seeking God*.

1. **Montefiore**, the great Jewish scholar, said that one thing which **no Jewish prophet and no Jewish Rabbi** ever conceived of is the *conception of God actually going out in quest of sinful men, who were not seeking Him, but who were turned away from Him.*
2. It would be great enough to think of a God who **accepted** men when they **came back**; it was **beyond belief** to think of a God who actually **went out & searched**. *Barclay*

J. Even tonight, He will not kick the door down for fellowship, though He could. He gently knocks & keeps knocking.

1. He won't huff & puff & blow your door down.
2. Open up, choose to come out of seclusion.
3. It doesn't matter what you've done, **or** how far you've fallen, how long you've been lukewarm.
 - a) **Love** can go no further than that.

4. **Slide15b** Paul McCartney said something similar back in 1976, *Someone's knocking at he door. Somebodies ringing the bell. Do me a favor and open the door and let me in.*

Wings

K. **Slide16** 2ND PROMISE – INHERITANCE (21)

L. A promise of *true exaltation* w/Christ in His Millennium rule.

M. Wow, the privilege of *sitting w/Him* on His throne.

N. Letting **Him** in lets **love** in, with all its *risks*.

1. **But** note the end of His love is **NOT** the shaky security of this world, **but** a place next to Jesus in the next. [I guess it's *false humility* then when we say, *I'll be happy to stand in the back in heaven*. Or bad theology]
- O. **As I also overcame** – Christ overcame by the power of the cross & set this pattern for His followers. *Leon Morris*
- P. 7th time **he who has an ear...hear what the Spirit says** –
1. When churches stop listening to the voice of the Spirit, through the Word...is when they're in trouble.
- Q. **END:** Laodicea had *a Framework of church*, **but** no **Fruit**.
1. Does **your fruit** hang like ornaments that we tie on our X-mas trees? Or, like **summer fruit** attached to the limb, relying on its **source** for its very life?
 2. John Stott spoke to our skin-deep religiosity, *Our Christianity is flabby & anemic. We appear to have taken a lukewarm bath of religion.*