

Vomit, Vanity—and Grace

REVELATION: YOUR STORY IN GOD'S STORY, Week 11

Revelation 3:14-22 (NIV)

I. Christ Title: The _____ One

¹⁴ “To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation.

II. Commendation: _____

III. Complaint: _____ and _____

¹⁵ I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! ¹⁶ So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

¹⁷ You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.

IV. Correction: _____ True _____

¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

¹⁹ Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent.

V. Consequences: _____ and _____

²⁰ Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

²¹ To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne.

²² Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

The Bottom Line

_____ is _____ on the _____— _____ him _____!

...by evaluating what “_____” _____ you _____.

Be especially suspicious of money; use the reflection questions to help.

...by _____ of this _____ and accepting Christ’s _____.

...by this week using the _____ to help with humility and focus.

(For much of this structure and content I am indebted to Weima, *The Sermons to the Seven Churches of Revelation*.)

Money Questions for Reflection (1= strongly agree 4=strongly disagree)

1. I often think or dream about money or possessions: 1 2 3 4
2. I often talk about money or possessions: 1 2 3 4
3. I often compare my finances with others: 1 2 3 4
4. I don’t have time for others b/c of finances or work: 1 2 3 4
5. I have a hard time being content with my finances: 1 2 3 4
6. I would be happy if I had a certain amount of money: 1 2 3 4
7. I think more about money than I do about God: 1 2 3 4
8. I have a hard time giving money to others: 1 2 3 4
9. I use purchases to find self-worth or happiness: 1 2 3 4
10. I feel controlled by money or possessions: 1 2 3 4

Wealth or Poverty? (Fanning, *Revelation*, 191)

“You made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in you” (Augustine, *Confessions* 1.1.1). Love for our material possessions makes us useless for Christ and his kingdom. Instead we live for ourselves in self-absorption and self-sufficiency rather than for God or for others. Yet material things can never satisfy the human soul, and they leave us greedy for more. And as Jesus tells the Laodiceans, he finds such conduct disgusting in the extreme. We have faith not in him but in our bank accounts or our sizeable income. We are preoccupied with our large houses (and garages and rented storage facilities) filled with all the things we thought at some point that we couldn’t live without. Just as the Laodiceans did, we frequently think of spiritual and material riches as coextensive; when we experience financial well-being, we myopically think all’s right in our world, but if our bank accounts are thin we wonder what God has against us. Those who base their well-being on material possession couldn’t be more wrong about their true condition, as Jesus powerfully communicates (3:17). Our constant need instead is to draw real and lasting life from Christ rather than from property we amass (3:18). When we get these things backward, we are of no use to God, to others, or even to ourselves.

A Prayer for the Grace of Devotion

(Thomas À Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, Moody Press [language modernize by me], 155-56)

O Lord, my God! You are to me whatever is good. And who am I, that I should dare speak to you? I am your poorest, lowest servant, and a most vile person, much poorer and contemptible than I can or dare express.

Yet remember me, O Lord, because I am nothing, I have nothing, I can do nothing. You alone are good, just, and holy; you can do all things, you accomplish all things, you fill all things, only the sinner you leave empty. Remember your mercies, and fill my heart with your grace, you who do not will that your works should be void and in vain. How can I bear up myself in this miserable life, unless you strengthen me with your mercy and grace?

Turn not your face away from me; delay not your visitation; withdraw not your consolation, lest my soul become as a thirsty land unto you. Teach me, O Lord, to do your will; teach me to live worthily and humbly in your sight; for you are my wisdom, you do truly know me, and did know me before the world was made, and before I was born in the world.