

Reclaim Your Fire
Revelation 3:14-22

We have been studying the seven churches in the book of the Revelation. Jesus did have something good to say about every church except this one.

He's telling the churches how to correct their behavior. If He didn't love them, He wouldn't even write them a letter. He's doing this because they are hurting themselves. That's the reason He's rebuking or correcting them.

"Because you say, 'I am rich and have become wealthy and have need of nothing.'" Revelation 3:17

They needed something that none of the other churches needed. Water. They had no wells. They had no mountainous runoff. They had no springs. They had to build an aqueduct, and then later, clay pipes, which you can see the remains of still today. They piped in water from two cities that were close by, Hierapolis and Colossae.

Laodicea was about six miles south of Hierapolis and about 10 miles west of Colossae.

Paul wrote an epistle to the Colossians. Paul also wrote an epistle to the Laodiceans. It didn't make it into the Bible.

Colossians 4:16 says, "Now, when this epistle is read among you see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea."

They built an aqueduct from Hierapolis, and then they later installed lead pipes. They had problems with the lead pipes. They had clay pipes from Colossae. Hierapolis was famous for hot springs. People went there to bathe in the hot baths. Colossae was famous for cool springs and fresh, cold water. They build an aqueduct from Hierapolis with hot water, but by the time the hot water got to Laodicea, it was lukewarm.

Laodicea became famous for lukewarm water. He said, "I wish you were cold or hot."

I wish you were hot like Hierapolis or cold like Colossae, but you're neither. You're just lukewarm.

"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. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. Because you say, 'I am rich and have become wealthy and have need of nothing,' and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. So be earnest and repent. Behold, 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. 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. Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches." Revelation 3:14-22

The water in Laodicea didn't have a good water filtration system. It had sulfur in it and smelled like rotten eggs. You couldn't stand the smell of it. It also had sediment and lime from the pipes, and it would make you want to spit it out. It would make you gag and want to vomit.

Jesus is using an analogy that they can all understand. Jesus says, "I wish you were cold or hot but because you are lukewarm I am going to spew you out of my mouth."

“So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.” Revelation 3:16

Jesus said, “You make me sick,” which is shocking because some churches like Thyatira was struggling with immorality, Pergamum was fighting idolatry, and Sardis had lost its soul, but this church receives the strongest rebuke. What would warrant such a stinging reproof?

Jesus introduced Himself, *“These things says the Amen.”* Revelation 3:14

“For all the promises of God in him are yes, and in him amen, to the glory of God through us.” 2 Corinthians 1:20

Jesus is God’s confirmation that He will keep all of the promises that you find in His word. Jesus is living proof that God does what He says.

For hundreds of years, the Book of Revelation was not called the Book of Revelation in church history. It was called by the first five words of the book: *“The Revelation of Jesus Christ.”* Revelation 1:1

He is consistent. *“He is the faithful and true witness.”* Revelation 3:14

He is in control. *“He is the beginning of the creation of God.”* Revelation 3:14

This does not mean that He was the first created being because Jesus is not a created being, *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”* John 1:1

Jesus is the creator of everything, and therefore the controller of everything. Everything in this universe is under the direct control of the Lord.

Colossians 1:16-17, *“For by him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers. All things were created through him, and for him. He is before all things and in him all things consist.”*

- The desperate condition of the church

I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.” Revelation 3:15-16

This church was in worse condition than any of the other six churches. It was a lukewarm church.

They were a little too cold to be hot, and a little too hot to be cold. They were a little too bad to be good, and a little too good to be bad. They were too cold to boil and too hot to freeze.

The church at Laodicea was not fighting Jesus. It just wasn't fully following Jesus. It was just kind of straddling the spiritual fence.

A recent Gallop survey after the pandemic concluded that 10% of all church members cannot be found, 20% never pray, 30% never attend church, 40% never give to any cause, 50% never go to Sunday School, 60% do not attend church consistently, 80% never go to a prayer meeting, 90% never have family worship, and 95% have never won a soul to Jesus Christ.

- The deception of the church

“and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.” Revelation 3:17

It did not even realize the miserable condition it was in. It was a sick church, but thought it was well. It was a dying church, but thought it was healthy. This was a church that thought everything was all right, when everything was all wrong.

It was deceived by its arrogance.

“Because you say, ‘I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing!’...” Revelation 3:17

Jesus told them, “You're poor, blind, and naked.”

Laodicea was famous for the largest bank of all seven cities. They had a banking center. They were wealthy. Their wealth came from gold. He said, “I counsel you to buy gold.”

They were the wealthiest of the seven cities. They had plush malls, exotic car dealerships, and fancy restaurants. If you were a Christian in that city, you could afford to shop at all those places.

When the earthquake of AD 17 devastated the area and destroyed the city of Philadelphia, the Roman government offered help to Philadelphia, but Laodicea famously told the Roman government, “No thanks. We are fine to rebuild on our own.” Their governor said to the Roman Emperor, “No thanks, we have all we need.”

The believed they were powerful and self-sufficient and Jesus said, “You're poor.”

There is a danger of affluence crowding Jesus out of your life. The more we have, the more tempted we are to forget where it came from and Who is our source.

The church in China is a strong thriving church under persecution, but in recent years it has grown weaker as the persecution has been replaced by popularity and prominence.

Their national spiritual leaders would say, “Don't pray for deliverance. Pray that we will be faithful. Pray that we will have Jesus and not our own independence.”

In Deuteronomy, God warned the children of Israel of the danger of bringing them into the land with wells they didn't dig and houses they didn't build, because they would forget the Lord who gave it all to them.

“When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you. Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today.” Deuteronomy 8:10-11

The Laodiceans came to love the gifts more than the Giver of the gifts.

They also had the largest medical center of all seven cities and the largest medical school attached to it. Their medical school specialty was Ophthalmology. There was an eye salve produced in Laodicea that people came from all over the world to purchase. It was only sold in the city. Jesus said, “You're blind.”

They also had the largest clothing manufacturing factories because they had very fertile fields close by and they had black wool, which was very rare in those days. They bragged about the clothes they could make, and Jesus said, “You're naked.”

Most cities only had white wool, but Laodicea had black wool. If you only have white wool, you can only make color clothing with one color, but if you have both black and white, you can make all sorts of beautiful clothes with all sorts of beautiful colors.

They were famous for banking. Jesus said, “You're poor.”
They were famous for eye remedies. Jesus said, “You're blind.”
They were famous for clothing. Jesus said, “You're naked.”

Jesus knows everything about everything.

Jesus said, “Buy from Me.” I counsel you to buy.”

They thought their shops were exclusive. People could get things there that they could not find anywhere else. The best things in life are not free. The best things in life only come from Jesus Christ.

Isaiah has more Messianic verses in it than any book in the Old Testament.

“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.” Isaiah 55:1

Everything from Jesus is free, so why would Jesus say, “Buy it.” He said that because it does cost something. It cost Him His blood, but it costs you faith. You have to believe, and you have to put your faith in Jesus. He's talking about spiritual wealth, spiritual health, and spiritual garments.

Laodicea was a church that was blind, but it thought it could see. It was a church that was poor, but thought it was rich. It was a church that was naked, but thought it was clothed.

The story is told of how Thomas Aquinas once called upon Pope Innocent II. The Pope began to show him around one of the great cathedrals in Europe. As he took him through that beautiful worship palace, and showed him all the money they had in their coffers, he said, “Well, Thomas, the church no longer has to say, ‘Silver and gold have I none.’” Thomas was reported to have replied, “That is true, but the church also can no longer say, ‘Take up thy bed and walk.’”

If you lived in the city of Laodicea, you considered yourself lucky. The church at Laodicea was popular, prosperous, polished, and proud, but it was powerless and didn't even know it.

It was deceived by its ignorance.

“You do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked...” Revelation 3:17

The sad thing about a lukewarm church is that it doesn't even know that it is lukewarm.

Jesus gives a three-fold prescription that will cure the lukewarm condition of any church or any Christian.

1. Pursue Spiritual Wealth

“I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich.” Revelation 3:18

Being rich spiritually—He's not talking about material wealth. They understood gold, because most of their deposits were in gold. They had some of the largest gold mines in or around Laodicea. But being spiritually rich costs in faith.

Gold tried by fire would mean a person of character who had endured persecution and developed strength of their faith. The way your faith grows is to go through testing.

“...that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 1:7

That's what the book was called. Your faith, even though it's going to be tested, is going to prove to praise, honor, and glorify the revelation of Jesus Christ.

“...knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” 1 Peter 1:18

“Truth from your mouth means more to me than striking it rich in a gold mine.” Psalm 119:72

Take your mind off of worldly things. Set your mind back on heavenly things.

We begin to follow God, and God begins to put our life back together. Pretty soon, we get a better job, we can live in a better neighborhood, and we are blessed with some material things. If we are not careful, our heart begins to go toward those material things just like the church at Laodicea. That is what He is saying, “You need to buy gold from Me.” “You need to get your heart fixed back on Me.” That’s why it says, *“The words of Your mouth are more precious than gold.”* Psalm 119:72 The blood of the Lamb that redeemed you is more precious than gold.

2. Put On Spiritual Garments

“I counsel you to buy from Me white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed.” Revelation 3:18

White in the Bible always denotes righteousness. It’s as if Jesus is saying, “Come let Me wrap Myself around you so that you may approach a holy God.” They could live Godly lives free of guilt and shame. They could not buy that anywhere in Laodicea.

Jesus said, “I'd like to cover you with My garments to cover the shame of your nakedness.” He doesn't want you to live in shame. Some of you may have been convicted of pride, of not walking in humility. Some of you may have been convicted about being focused on material wealth and not spiritual wealth. I don't know. I don't know what the Holy Spirit said to you.

“I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness.” Isaiah 61:10

It is by grace that God gives us righteousness, which is right standing with God. The church at Laodicea is not the first church that He talked to about white garments.

In the letter to the church at Sardis, *“You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments...”* Revelation 3:4

“And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright is the righteous acts of the saints.” Revelation 19:8

It is only by the blood of Jesus that we are in right standing with God. If I don't live righteously, it defiles my garments. It defiles my conscience. It defiles my passion for Jesus, my passion for my family, and my passion for the things of God.

These three things about returning:

Set your mind on things above, walk in humility, and drive sin out of your life.

3. Practice Spiritual Health

“I counsel you to anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.” Revelation 3:18

“Bring out the blind people who have eyes, and the deaf who have ears.” Isaiah 43:8

Spiritual blindness and spiritual deafness have been a subject in the Bible for a long time.

“Hear this now, O foolish people, without understanding, who have eyes and see not, and who have ears and hear not.” Jeremiah 5:21

“Son of man, you dwell in the midst of a rebellious house, which has eyes to see, but does not see, and ears to hear, but does not hear; for they are a rebellious house.” Ezekiel 12:2

What causes spiritual blindness?

“Who is blind but My servant, my own people, or deaf as My messenger whom I send. Who is blind as he who is perfect.” Isaiah 42:19

Pride causes spiritual blindness. Spiritual blindness is caused by people who won't admit they're wrong.

The scribes and Pharisees were the most spiritually blind people that were on the earth when Jesus was on the earth. They knew the Bible better than any people on the face of the earth.

The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed, *“God, I thank you that I'm not like other people.”* Luke 18:11

Spiritual blindness causes pride.

What is the world telling us to focus on right now? Making money, physical fitness, fashion. It's how you look and what you wear.

Jesus says, *“I'd like for you to be concerned about how spiritually fit you are, how spiritually wealthy you are, and how spiritually you can see in the Scriptures.”*

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and dine with him.” Revelation 3:20

The Jewish people knew exactly what He was talking about. Breakfast was very minimal, usually just a piece of bread. Lunch was normally like a snack that was bread or some sort of dried fish.

The word “dine” in the Greek is where we get our word “dinner.” It was the evening meal, which was a long and leisurely meal. It normally lasted three hours, and it was a feast. It wasn't just a feast, it was a fellowship.

Jesus stands at the door of your heart, and He knocks. If you open your heart to Jesus, He will come in and feed you.

Not only will He feed you when you open the Bible, but He will sit with you for hours and fellowship with you and spend time with you.

The greatest thing is not what we're learning when we read the Bible. The greatest thing is Who it is who is talking to us when we're reading the Bible. We're dining and fellowshiping with Jesus.

It's not just the words on the pages, it's Who we're eating with. That's what is so wonderful.

The singularity of the sentence. "He" is singular. "Who has an ear" is also singular. It doesn't say, "They who have ears." "He who has an ear, let him hear."

I'll meet with him personally, and he with Me. Anyone is a compound word. It's when you join two words into one. "Any" is a word. Is there any pie left? "One" is a word. If any one person.

Jesus says, "If just one person will hear My voice and open the door, I'll come in and I'll meet with that one person, and I'll spend time with that one person teaching him the Bible." There's one thing you have to do.

Last week in the letter to Philadelphia, Jesus said, "I have the key of David," so I can open any door. The God who can open any door, the God of the universe, stands at the door of your heart and knocks. He will not open that door. You have to open the door.

My prayer is that all of us will restart our relationship with Jesus today, that you will hear Him knocking and will open that door to Him. When you do, He'll come in and sit down and fellowship with you and teach you this book.

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." Revelation 3:22

There is some area for all of us that we need to restart. It's different probably for many of us, but we need to say, "Lord, I want to restart today." I just want you to do that right now, please. I want you to open the door of your heart and tell Him, "Lord, I'm opening the door. I know You're knocking at my heart. I will open the door and let You come in."