

The Laodicean Church

Revelation 3:14-22

Introduction:

- My wife was flying back from visiting her family in CA a few years ago, and I forget all of the particulars but she was to have a brief layover in Chicago on her way back to NY. I was expecting her to call when she landed for her layover, but I noticed it was getting late and she still hadn't called. So I hopped online and used a flight tracker to see what was going on. I saw her plane still flying in the air, and going around in circles- this continued for almost 1 hour! There was a bad storm, so the plane was stuck in a holding pattern
- Many Christians are like that plane- stuck in a holding pattern and not really advancing on their journey of faith
- Brethren, we are to always be advancing as Christians!
- Charles Thomas Studd had a passion for those who were lost and never got the chance to hear about the salvation of his Savior, Jesus Christ. With a motto of "Forward Ever, Backward Never" he led thousands to eternal life in China, India, and Africa. He was not afraid of anyone, anything or anyplace. All he knew was the complacent ideals of the Church were allowing millions to fall into a Christ-less eternity. He had the heart of the Father; that he was willing that none should perish but all come to repentance saying: "Some wish to live within the sound of Church or Chapel bell; I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell." –He was not a lukewarm Christian!

I. The Church was lukewarm

- a. These things says the Amen (let it be so) Jesus is the Amen, "the personification and the affirmation of the truth of God." (Barclay)
 - i. He has the last word, and will fulfill all the promises if God
 - ii. The Faithful and True Witness: This is Jesus, and this was a contrast to the Laodiceans, who will be shown to be neither faithful nor true.

- iii. Romans 3:4 says, “yea, let God be true, but every man a liar.”
 - iv. Our Lord said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).
 - v. Beginning- first in prominence, not in sequential order. He is the source, the origin- the beginner*
 - vi. By the way, Evolution is speculation, Creationism is Revelation by the Faithful and True Witness who did the creating!
- b. To each church he states, I know your works
- i. He is still observing today!
 - ii. I thank the Lord for the good workers in our ministry- who labor and sacrifice for the cause of Christ! I notice, and Christ notices too!
- c. Their spiritual condition- In this spiritual sense, lukewarmness is a picture of indifference and compromise. It tries to play the middle, too hot to be cold and too cold to be hot. In trying to be both things, they end up being nothing – except to hear the words, “I will spue you out of My mouth.”
- d. They are not hot or cold; they are not quite liberal, but they are not fundamental either. They are not pagan; but they are not Biblical. They are just a wishy-washy, lukewarm.
- e. Things that can make us lukewarm
- i. Skipping personal devotions
 - ii. Skipping church services
 - iii. Worldly media choices, even things with the name “Christian” in its description
 - iv. Neglecting the Great Commission (discipleship is reciprocal!)
 - v. Feeding our flesh, instead of walking in the Spirit
- f. Has there been a greater curse upon the earth than empty religion? Is there any soul harder to reach than the one who has just enough of Jesus to think they have enough?

- g. The deception of playing down the middle, trying to please both the world and Jesus.
 - h. Deep down, there is no one more miserable than the lukewarm Christian is. They have too much of the world to be happy in Jesus, but too much of Jesus to be happy in the world.
 - i. Why would he wish they were cold? Those who are cold eventually can feel their coldness and want to do something about it! At least the cold will make you shiver! Whereas the lukewarm Christian is unaware, and unwilling.
 - j. “The cause of Christ has been hurt more by Sunday-morning bench-warmers who pretend to love Christ, who call Him Lord but do not His commands, than by all the publicans and sinners.” (Havner)
 - k. Many are inconsistent, indifferent, and in trouble with God if they don’t get right!- I will spue you out of my mouth!
 - l. We often go through phases in our personal lives. And at each phase, Satan tempts us to draw back and fall into a holding pattern, and become lukewarm
 - i. Adulthood, career, family life, retirement, etc.
 - ii. Sometimes he uses earthly disappointments to distract us
 - iii. Galatians 6:9- And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.
 - iv. I Cor. 15:58- Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.
- II. The Church was spiritually poor
- a. V. 17- They said, “I am rich and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing.” The church at Laodicea lacked a sense spiritual poverty. They looked at their spiritual condition and said “rich.” They were the opposite of blessed are the poor in spirit Jesus spoke of in Matthew 5:3
 - b. The city of Laodicea was famous for its wealth, but the Christians of the city were spiritually wretched, miserable, and poor. Laodicea was famous for its healing

eye salve, but the Christians of the city were spiritually blind. Laodicea was famous for its fine clothing, but the Christians of the city were spiritually naked- sounds like America today!

- c. (Rev 3:18-20) What Jesus wants the church of Laodicea to do.
 - i. I counsel you to buy from me- seek after His riches not our own! (true riches)
 - ii. Our Lord uses irony here. Laodicea was known primarily for three things:
 - iii. Banking – “buy of me gold” (3:18), signifying genuine faith, not some cheap counterfeit.
 - iv. Wool cloth – “white raiment” (3:18), signifying righteousness.
 - v. Medicines, especially eye salve (3:18), signifying enlightenment and spiritual discernment. See through lies and deception of the enemy!

III. The Church’s opportunity- v. 19-22

- a. V. 19- With such a sharp rebuke, had Jesus lost His love for this wayward church? Not at all. Jesus’ great love was expressed in His rebuke. “It is, in fact, God’s final punishment to leave a man alone.” (Barclay)
- b. The ancient Greek word zealous comes from the same word as hot in Revelation 3:16
- c. Repent- turn away
- d. Behold, I stand at the door and knock: Jesus gave this lukewarm church The Great Invitation. He knocked at their door, asking entry to come and dine with them, in the sense of sharing warm, intimate time. This is Christ’s desire- unrestricted fellowship, community, intimate relationship with us!
 - i. Some families have dinner but other families have supper
 - ii. There’s a lot of food, close family bonding
 - iii. Work is ended and we are fully available
- e. We must first hear his voice! He that has an ear...
- f. It only happens as we respond to His knock, but the promise is made to all: If anyone hears my voice.

- g. The text does not say, 'If the church will open the door,' but 'If any man hear my voice and open the door.' It must be done by individuals: the church will only get right by each man getting right." (Spurgeon)
- h. Those who overcome the battle against indifference, compromise, and self-reliance, receive a special reward. They enjoy a place with the enthroned Jesus
- i. This is the worst of the 7 churches, and yet some of the most precious promises are available to them if they repent.
- j. Some bible teachers today believe that each church in Revelation 2-3 represent an "Age" or phase of the Church. They say we are in the Laodicean church age so what else can we expect except for dead, lukewarm Christianity.
- k. I certainly can see why. However, we should not see this as a sign that the latter day churches cannot see revival. Rather, it is a warning that lukewarm churches need to repent (3:19).
- l. I reject this teaching, because it is a defeatist position that does not square with my understanding of prayer, repentance, and revival. While modern Christianity definitely parallels this church, we are not unavoidably bound to their spiritual condition.
- m. The church was sick, but not incurable! V. 18
- n. Jesus was standing at the door knocking
 - i. The great Sovereign Lord is waiting for us to invite Him in
 - ii. He uses judgment, mercies, reproof, exhortation- but we must hear his voice and respond

Conclusion:

- The church at Laodicea had an opportunity- sadly it was a missed opportunity
- Don't waste any more time, Christian. Repent, and get on fire for God!