

Revelation 3:14-22
 The Church in Laodicea
 The Church of Ipecac – Part 2
 Study 16

14 “And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: **15** “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. **16** So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot,[g] I will vomit you out of My mouth. **17** Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— **18** 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. **19** As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. **20** Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. **21** To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. **22** “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.””

Our first study in this last letter of Jesus to the 7 churches only began to mine the depths of God’s heart regarding the lukewarm people of Laodicea.

- And I’d like to begin this morning, right about where we left off last week
 - And that’s with this - Lukewarm people do not please God
 - There is nothing pleasing to the Lord when people are lukewarm
 - As evidenced by His having nothing good to say to this church –
 - The only church in which He has nothing in which to commend them for
- When Jesus searches the hearts of those claiming to be Christian,
 - Yet they show no internal evidence of such change before God...
 - When He searches the hearts – He and He alone can rightly say “I know your works” that they prove you are “lukewarm”
 - And therefore I reject you

A lukewarm person is defined here in Revelation 3 as a man neither hot nor cold in their spiritual lives

- As we saw last week, one who is “hot” is one who loves the Lord.

- Someone who's daily passion is for the Lord
 - Who's every ambition in life is to be a passionate child of God,
 - to see the kingdom of God expand and finds joy in obeying His commands
 - He is the one who finds ultimate joy and satisfaction in Christ alone.
 - This is one who is "hot"
- A person who is "cold", is one who is unconcerned. One who is unconcerned with his or her spiritual needs
 - To a cold man, God is dead.
 - He feels, whether intellectually or emotionally or pragmatically
 - That there is no need for the notion of God
- There is no interest in a Creator; there is no profession of any faith in any god
 - There is no warmth towards the Almighty God in this man.
 - He is as far from hot as one could be – this man is cold
 - And therefore spiritually dead to the Lord.
 - This is a description of an unbeliever

The lukewarm man is an indifferent man. He is indifferent to spiritual things

- He is not hot. His singular passion in this life is not the Lord Jesus and obeying His commands
 - He is not cold. He may claim to have an interest but that interest can span many concepts. Many notions, many philosophies, many ideas
 - In our culture, this is one who would often claim to be "spiritual but not religious"
 - To this man, there may be an outward interest for God
 - And possible activity in the church of God
- Yet when reality is seen, it is all for show or for religious purposes
 - There is really no true conversion in this man's heart
 - There's no real thought to deepening his relationship with Jesus through the word,
 - Through humble prayers that go beyond "emergency flares"
 - There's no utter dependency upon a holy and loving God for all aspect of his life

- And a life of real worship does not exist for this one
- This is the lukewarm man
 - And a man who is not a Christian by faith – a Christian, perhaps, by man-made title only
 - He neither loves the Lord, nor hates Him
- He is who Jesus describes in Matt 12:30 that “whoever is not with me is against me”
 - He sits on that proverbial spiritual fence and in doing so,
 - Becomes an offense to God
 - This one, like that of the cold man, does not have a saving faith in the Lord Jesus
 - He is as lost as the cold while all along thinking he is like the hot

And it is this man - the lukewarm man -

- It is with this man, the Lord becomes sick.
 - Verse 16 tell us “So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.”
- With a bit of jest last week, I asked if we knew what the Greek says about this word for “vomit” or “spew” or “spit” (as some translations say)
 - It means just what it says “vomit”
 - The word is “<emeco>
 - It’s where we get our English word “emit”
- It’s also where we get our English word “emetic” – for those familiar with this medical term
 - An emetic is a mixture of glob that doctors give someone when they swallow poison to induce vomiting.
 - Like Ipecac which contains emetine – an emetic
- The illustration is striking:
 - A spiritually lukewarm church is a spiritual emetic that causes Jesus to vomit.

To me, this is a clear rejection of this church; showing that this was a church by name only and not a true gathering of genuine believers

- It was a gathering of unregenerate people
 - Who believed they were Christians because they called themselves such or aligned themselves with the institution –
 - And sadly nothing more

- ***The words of our Lord gives a clear warning to those that are indifferent to the things of God***
 - ***You cannot be indifferent to the things of God and be right with Him***
- And if you are here this morning and you can take or leave spiritual things – things of God; things of Christ; things of the Bible
 - When the commands of the Bible and the things of Jesus aren't that big of a deal to you
- And maybe your reasoning for even coming to church is religion or maybe community is the priority
 - But following Jesus in everything and conforming your life to that of His – meh!
 - By the way you live you can take it or leave it
 - This indictment should serve as a loving warning to you

This was the indictment to the Laodiceans. Because of their indifference Jesus rejected them

- But graciously the Lord does not stop there
 - Gives them the reasons WHY. He tells them why He vomits them out
 - And I love that!
- This letter is being read out loud to this entire church in one fell swoop. Publically before all in this so-called church
 - And Jesus is saying - "Listen Laodiceans! I know your hearts. I now your works.
 - I have seen them for what they truly are and I reject you! You make me sick!"
 - And you can just feel their hearts being arrested in holy fear – at least you would hope so.
- And of course the shock causes the question to enter every mind in the church – **but why?**
 - And Jesus tells them!
 - And even in the pain of hearing the "why", we have to think that some of them said "thank you!"

He tells them the reason they are so rejected, is because they are ignorant to their spiritual state of being.

- Verse **17** “Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked”
 - Wow. Look at the severe contrast.
 - The Laodiceans thought that they were rich. That they were wealthy and didn’t need anything
 - But Jesus shows them that in actuality they were wretched.
 - That they were miserable and poor and blind and naked.

What a shock this must have come to them. You can almost hear them rationalize their lives

- But Lord, we are rich. We have your blessings upon us – therefore we are good with you, no?
 - But “‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’
23 And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’” (Matt 7:22-23)
 - They really thought they were good with God
 - Because they refused to measure their lives by the word, rather than the world

And this is what happens when we are not in His word seeking to be conformed into His image

- We start using the worlds measuring stick for our spiritual state,
 - rather than allowing the word of God to reveal what really there
- What I found interesting this week is that when I read a number of commentaries on this verse
 - I found that many concentrated on the riches of the passage
 - Teaching that it was the rich that made them indifferent to Jesus
- And of course that’s an issue – this was a banking community.
 - This was a very, very rich city
 - And apparently the church adopted the world’s attitude with money
 - And certainly this is a warning to Americans as well – who are in the top 5 richest nations in the world
- So sad that many preachers are preaching riches rather than repentance

- And many people are becoming Christians to gain the material riches that are being taught
 - Both will have their rewards in the end

But, to me, the reality of their spiritual indifference is not necessarily because they are rich –

- Though the Bible warns about the perils of riches.
 - In fact, that’s the central message to those that are rich – warning!
- But I see their indifference not caused by their riches
 - But rather caused by being insensitive to their real spiritual condition
 - They were unaware because they were unwilling to see what God had already shown them in His word
 - Look again at verse “Because **you say** [*this shows what was in their heart - out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks*], ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’ —**and do not know**

That’s it right there! – **They do not know!**

- Their spiritual state was measured by external and worldly calculations
 - They were trusting in their selves, they were trusting in what they had become
 - And in doing so – they did not know that they were “wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked”
- And there’s a lesson here for you and me.
 - If we begin to trust in ourselves and our ingenuity and ability to self-govern
 - We will become ignorant and blind to our real spiritual state of being before God

Jesus tells describes them in five (5) ways and each way stands in stark contradiction to what they thought they were :

- They were saying “I am wonderful. I have everything I need. I am living my best life now.”
 - But Jesus said “you are spiritually wretched”
 - This is the same word Paul used in reflecting on who he really is with out Christ

- In Romans 7:24 “O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 I thank God— through Jesus Christ our Lord”
- They said, “We have all that we need and are happy. We have material wealth and good a stature in the community. We’ve even appeared on Oprah and people love us”
 - But Jesus says to them “you are miserable”
 - As some translations have it “you are pitiable”
 - Jesus said “you think you’re happy, but the reality is you should be pitied”
- They said, “I have been blessed with so much wealth, so much material goods. I have a big house, a nice car, and a boat that sits on my summer beach home. I am really satisfied and content in this life.”
 - But Jesus says “you are spiritually poor”
 - You have nothing.
 - They may have been rich in material goods, but they were poor in the wrong way – spiritually poor to God
- They claimed to see clearly. Well educated, wise in the ways of the culture and world
 - But Jesus tells them that they are “spiritually blind”
- But we are well clothed. Have tailored suits from the finest wool
 - But Jesus says they are spiritually naked

Truly, this is a most pitiable group of people. Blind to their real spiritual state before God

- And so when we read here that Jesus took it upon Himself to reach out to this group
 - To lovingly show them their real spiritual state
 - We can’t help but be reminded of the grace and mercy of God
- So much does Jesus love these people, that He gives them instructions on how to get out of their spiritual poverty
 - **18** 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. **19** As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

Look at verse 19 again. “As many as I love I rebuke and chasten”.

- What is the basis for the correction of the Lord?

- What is it that drives Jesus to come to these lukewarm people and publically rebuke them?
 - It's His love.
- And in His love for them – in His love for us – what is it that He hopes to accomplish in His chastening and rebuke?
 - Repentance and zeal for God!
- Is this the result of God's rebuking and chastening in your life?
 - Does it cause you to repent and become more zealous for Jesus?
 - I would say if it does not, then the problem lies with you.
 - We should always and readily accept God's rebuffing in our lives because it will always produce Godly fruit

Jesus tells this spiritually wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked people

- to recognize their spiritual need and that Jesus Christ alone can meet that need
 - **18** "I counsel you..."
- Do you need counseling today?
 - I think we forget that we have the greatest counselor ever in the Lord Jesus Christ
 - And people would be far more healthy spiritually if they were to receive His counsel and seek His council
 - Before and in place of that of men – amen?
- And what is Jesus' counsel to them (and to us)
 - "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."
 - This counsel really revealed the deep spiritual need of these people

Listen, spiritual man. Listen, you who call yourself a Christian yet are exposed as lukewarm

- Do you really know what your need is?
 - Do you really understand what your spiritual needs are?
 - The Lord here is rebuking those here who think they don't have need.
- When lives are in shambles and things aren't going well
 - It's so easy to see the need
 - But when you have become self-reliant, self-sufficient

- It's so difficult to see those needs because you have become blind
 - And so Jesus here is telling you here that you have serious needs
- And these three lessons are not only for the non-believer
 - But they are applicable to you and me when we are in need of counsel
 - I also find them applicable to those of us to use when we counsel others

First need Jesus points out - they were in need of spiritual riches

- "I counsel you buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich"
 - Many are focused on worldly good; worldly satisfactions; worldly counsel
 - But in the end, that leaves people poor. Spiritually poor
 - And so Jesus tells them to buy purified gold from Him
- 1 Peter 1: 7 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,"
 - Isn't that interesting that our faith, the genuineness of our faith, is formed through the fire
 - And that's the principle here - ***Spiritual riches are often developed in the furnace***
- And many times in our walks with the Lord, He allows this trials – He allows the fire to burn and reveal the dross
 - That it can be dealt with and our relationship with Him might be pure
 - Buy from me gold purified by fire –
 - the gold that He is speaking of here is a faith that has been refined by the fire
 - And when it is, you become more rich than you could ever imagine

Next need Jesus points out - they were in need of spiritual clothing

- Buy from Me "white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed;
 - What a contrast Jesus is using here on a people who were famous for their specialized and luxurious black wool garments
 - And look, it's these white clothing that only He has
 - That would allow us to not be ashamed

- By inference, Jesus is saying that all other attempts to spiritually clothe ourselves would cause us shame in His presence
 - Think Adam & Eve and the coverings they created
- What He's saying here is that you need to be clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ
 - Look at how those garments are made white
 - Rev 7:3 "Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" 14 And I said to him, "Sir,[b] you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."
- What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus
 - We are washed clean only one way! By the precious blood of Jesus
 - And those who refuse, those who are wishy-washy about it, those that are lukewarm
 - Will be embarrassed and shame-filled in His presence
 - because they have not clothed themselves in the garments that only He can give.
- But we don't ever need to be ashamed
 - Because Jesus provides the way!

The last need Jesus points out - **they were in need of spiritual vision**. We need the right spiritual perspective

- He says - and buy from me eye salve that you could "anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see"
 - Again, we can see the obvious usage of eye salve here with the Laodiceans who were famous for their physical eye salve
- Psalm 119: 18 "Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law."
 - Lukewarm and spiritually blind people need their eyes anointed by God so that they might see rightly
 - We need our eyes spiritually open to God's truth
 - This was Paul's prayer in Eph 1: 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power toward us

who believe, according to the working of His mighty power **20** which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, **21** far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come

- This is His counsel to those that are spiritually apathetic and indifferent to the things of God
 - To get from Him a pure faith
 - To be clothed in Christ's righteousness and not their own
 - And to have their eyes anointed that they might see spiritual truths

But how? How do we buy these things?

- Jesus already said to them that they were broke, that they were poor;
 - so how does He expect this poor people to buy such riches?
 - If Jesus says you are poor and blind and naked
- How do you buy gold when you are broke? Jesus knows we're broke. He just said so in verse 17.
 - And not just broke, but blind—we can't work.
 - And not just blind, but shamefully naked—we can't even leave the house.
- So how do you buy gold and garments and salve when you are poor and blind and naked?
 - How do you get the wealth of Christ, the power to be clothed with obedience,
 - and the wisdom to see things like God does,
 - when your house is empty, and you are too frightened and ashamed to venture out?
 - What is the currency in which to buy these spiritual

You receive His love, repent and invite Jesus in!!

Verse 19 “**19** As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and

opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. **21** To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. **22** “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.””

Isn't it a wonderful thing that we see Jesus so displeased with this church,

- Yet He doesn't abandon them!
 - Instead, He gives a continuous, always open invitation to repent and invite Him in
- Look at His position: He stands at the door
 - And look at His plea: “and knocks” – in the Greek this is a continual, all the time, never stopping knock
 - The only time it stops is when you invite Him in
- That's what Jesus does.
 - He loves you. He continually knocks, asking you to come to the door and open it
- And that's our part here
 - “if any man hears My voice and opens the door”

What is the door? I like all the things I read about it

- 1. The door of the church in Laodicea
 - It's to the church in Lao, and so it's an invitation to those in an apostate church to come out of the church
- 2. The door of an unbeliever's heart
 - And I can see that. We often use this verse in evangelistic times
- 3. Others say it's the door of the believer's heart
 - For those who are carnal and weak in faith that this is an invitation for them
 - And of course that gets back to the discussion on hot and cold and so forth
- 4. The door through which Jesus Christ will come again
 - Do you remember the church of Phili, where He said He sets before you an open door
 - And He has the key of David
 - And back there it dealt with opening up the door of heaven
 - That people may have eternal life – but only through Him

Personally, I think all have application, but what I really think

- Is that this is an invitation to those who think they are Christians
 - But have no relationship with Him
 - Because He starts to use the singular
 - “I will come in to **him** and dine with **him**, and **he** with Me”

Jesus desires such a deep relationship and such fellowship,

- that He pursues – He knocks – until either someone answers the door
 - Or they continue to ignore Him
 - To those who open the door He promises “**21** To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne”