

“Laodicea The Complacent Church” by E A Terry
Delivered 10 04 20 Talking Points

2nd Timothy 3:1-6; 2nd Timothy 4: 1 – 5; Matthew 5:13- 16; 1st Peter 1:13 - 22; **Revelation 3: 14 – 23**

The church in Laodicea was most likely founded by The Apostle Paul.

Colossians 4:16 tells us that Paul actually wrote a letter to the church at Laodicea but unfortunately that letter was lost.

The city of Laodicea was known for 4 things.

- 1) Laodicea was known for its wealth. Laodicea was the financial and banking center of the whole region.
- 2) Laodicea was known for the production of fine quality wool which was exported throughout the known world.
- 3) Laodicea was famous for its school of medicine and particularly for a special eye ointment they made there.
- 4) And Laodicea was also known for its horrible water supply.

The city of Hierapolis was approximately seven miles north of Laodicea and it was famous for its hot springs.

Colossi, was approximately ten miles away and it was known for its cool water.

But Laodicea did not have a decent local water supply.

So an aqueduct was built to bring water to Laodicea from the hot springs that was 7 miles away.

The water cooled off in the aqueduct so it was lukewarm when it arrived in Laodicea.

Jesus used Laodicea’s water supply problem to allegorize a spiritual truth.

In verses 13 & 14 we read; **“I know your deeds, that you are not hot nor cold. I wish you were 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: 13 -14)

Jesus was saying I would rather you would be spiritually beneficial like a refreshing drink of cold water or that you would be like the soothing warmth of the hot springs!

If I defined a lukewarm Christian or a lukewarm church with one word it would be complacent.

Complacent means indifference, smug, self-satisfied, content with the status quo.

Lukewarm Christians and / or lukewarm churches are only partially committed to Jesus.

The church at Laodicea was self-righteous, they lacked enthusiasm, and they lacked initiative.

Jesus said the Christians at Laodicea were spiritually wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked and they did not even know it!

If we were to apply that definition of lukewarm, we would say that lukewarm Christians and lukewarm churches just go through the motions of worship.

There is no excitement in worship and the focus of their worship is on themselves not on Almighty God. Lukewarm Christians are not regular in church attendance and they do not volunteer to do jobs around the church.

There is no enthusiasm in their singing and their minds wander when they pray.

Lukewarm Christians are not interested in studying the Bible and they do not apply God's word to their daily life.

Lukewarm Christians do not want or expect to be changed by God's Word.

Lukewarm Christians do not tell their unsaved friends about Jesus.

Lukewarm Christians do not visit the sick nor do they care for those people in need.

Since Lukewarm Christians are not doing anything to advance The Kingdom of God they are of no benefit to Christ.

In verse 16 Jesus said that because they were lukewarm, they were of no benefit to Him.

"... I will spit you out of my mouth."

The Greek word used here means "to vomit."

Lukewarm or complacent churches are not fulfilling their purpose so they are of no spiritual benefit to Jesus.

Individuals who fail to use their gifts and fail to let their spiritual light shine are of no benefit to Jesus and their complacency makes Jesus want to vomit.

Jesus' message to us today is crystal clear, if we are simply going through the motions of being a Christian we are of no benefit to Jesus!

If we are not living like Jesus taught that makes Jesus want to vomit!

I don't know about you, but that thought scares me!

This morning we all need to examine our commitment to walk with Jesus every day.

God's word to us today challenges each of us to honestly evaluate our contribution to furthering The Kingdom of God while we are on this earth.

The second spiritual problem with the church at Laodicea was their love of material things.

The Christians at Laodicea were so ***“caught-up”*** in their physical wealth, that they were unaware that they were spiritually bankrupt!

In verse 17 Jesus contrasted the Church’s spiritual condition with the things the city of Laodicea was noted for.

Verse 17 says ***“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”*** (Revelation 2: 17)

Jesus said the Christians at Laodicea were poor, blind, and naked.

Remember there was plenty of money in Laodicea, but they were spiritually poor.

Remember, Laodicea was known for their eye salve, yet all of the salve in the world wouldn’t cure their spiritual blindness.

Remember Laodicea was known for the finest wool in the world however all of the wool in the world could not cloth their spiritual nakedness.

This is a very important warning for us today!

Americans have been really blessed materially.

Compared to most of the world, Americans are a modern-day Laodicea.

“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.” (Revelation 2: 17)

This morning as we mediate on verse 17 we need to examine our priorities.

Have we gotten to the point where we have so much and we are doing so well that we have become slaves to our material possessions?

Are our priorities such that we put leisure and acquiring more material things in front of having a personal relationship with Almighty God?

As we mediate on verse 17 we need to examine our thankfulness.

Have we gotten to the point where we have so much and we are doing so well physically that we forget that God gives us the mental ability, the physical ability, and the opportunity to earn money?
(Deuteronomy 8:18)

We must never forget that the ability to earn money and any and all of these material gifts that we work so hard to acquire can be taken away from us in the blink of an eye. We all need to ask ourselves ***“Is giving thanks to God a daily priority for me”?***

As we mediate on verse 17 we also need to examine our giving to The Lord.

I recently read that Christians in America give less than 2 % of what they earn to The Lord.

Sadly, most Americans give a waitress at a restaurant a bigger tip for than they give to The Lord each week.

Sadly, most Americans Christians spend more money on discretionary things than they give to The Lord each week.

And as you know discretionary things are things that we could easily do with out.

As we mediate on verse 17 we need to examine our self dependence.

Have we gotten to the point in our lives that we have so much and we are doing so well that we think we do not need God?

The reason God hates lukewarmness is because it robs its victims of any possibility of spiritual growth!

This is true because lukewarmness is a byproduct of independence and self-satisfaction.

This Laodicean church was satisfied and content with the way things were.

They had all the knowledge of God and all the spiritual power they cared to have.

They lost their quest for knowing God and for knowing The Lord's direction for His church!

You see without knowing The Lord and knowing His direction, their purpose for existence ceased!

Jesus wrote the letter to the church at Laodicea.

Today would Jesus say that Mt Paran is only a lukewarm church.

Since the church is made up of individual Christians, the more important question we all need to ask ourselves is; *"would Jesus say my relationship with Him is a very close and passionate relationship" or "would Jesus say my relationship with Him only lukewarm?"*

The truth is the closeness of your relationship with Jesus is just as intimate as you want it to be.

The truth is most Christians have as much of Jesus in their life as they want to have.

You see it is up to you. The Lord has offered many invitations for you to have a close personal relationship with Him.

King David said these words to Solomon. ***"And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches every heart and understands every desire and every thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever."*** (1st Chronicles 28:9)

In 2nd Chronicles 15:2 we read; ***"The LORD is with you when you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you"***

Psalms 119:10 says; ***"I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands."***

We have The Lord's promise in Jeremiah 29:13 ***"You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."***

The key to a close personal relationship with Jesus is seeking Jesus with our whole heart ***"when you seek me with your whole heart."***

We all know what a half-hearted attempt is and / or what a half-hearted performance is.

The first requirement to seeking The Lord with our whole heart is to love The Lord.

Proverbs 8:17 says; ***"I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me."***

So, what exactly does with ***"seek me with your whole heart"*** mean.

Seeking Jesus with your whole heart is to have a burning desire to grow closer to Jesus.

To seek The Lord with your whole heart means to have a hunger to really know more about Jesus.

The truth is the closeness of your personal relationship with Jesus is just as intimate as you want it to be.

It is up to you!

The most loving Beatitude is; ***"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled"***. (Matthew 5:6)

Notice, Jesus did **not** say blessed are those who are righteous.

Jesus said, ***"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled"***.

In Revelation 3: 20 we see Jesus is taking the initiative to have a closer relationship with each one of us.

"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."

We all need ask ourselves; *am I hungry for righteousness?*

In verse 15 Jesus said; ***"I know your deeds ..."***

This is a sobering reminder to us as a church and to us as individuals.

Jesus knows our thoughts, our motives, as well as our actions.

We are all accountable to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Mark 4:22 reminds us that ***"... for nothing is hidden, except to be revealed; nor has anything been secret, but that it should come to light"***.

And in Romans 14 we are told ***“We will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.” So then, each of us will be accountable to God.*** (Romans 14:10b-12)

In our lesson from 2nd Timothy 3 we read that in the last days ***“people will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— having a form of godliness but denying its power.***

That is a modern-day picture of the church at Laodicea.

That is why Colossians 3:17 commands us ***“... whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus”.***

Fortunately, Jesus gives us the cure for a lukewarm relationship with Him.

You see our lack of enthusiasm can be revived.

Our lack of interest in studying the Bible can be rekindled.

Our half-hearted attempt at seeking The Lord can become a whole-hearted quest to know The Lord.

Jesus wants to cure our compliancy.

God’s word to us today challenges each of us to check our spiritual temperature.

*Ask yourself; “am I on fire for The Lord? **OR** am I just a lukewarm Christian”?*

“Is my relationship with The Lord Jesus Christ intimate or indifferent?”

“Do I look forward to spending quality time with The Lord studying the Bible and meditating on His word to me”?

“Am I closer to Jesus today than I was last month?”

The warning is clear to all of us today; ***“He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit has to say to the churches”***

AMEN