



Building Wholehearted Disciples of Jesus

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**Laodicea-Lukewarm Christianity: The American Predicament  
Part 2  
Revelation 3:14-17**

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**Series:** Revelation: Apocalypse

**Topic:** Laodicea-Lukewarm Christianity: The American Predicament Part 2

**Description:** The vexation of the church in Laodicea is the same in the American church today—a lukewarm form of Christianity. Of the 7 churches in Revelation, the Church in America is closest to the Laodicean church.



## **Laodicea-Lukewarm Christianity: The American Predicament Part 2**

### **Revelation 3:14-17**

**Last week we began our study of the Laodicean church, the last of the 7 churches we have studied in Revelation 3-4.**

- Last week: we looked at the problem, the lukewarm, the halfhearted state of the Laodicean church.
- Tonight: we look at what Jesus counsels.

### **Revelation 3:14-22**

**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, 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—**

- Christ rebukes them for being neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm, for being compromised in their faith.
- This metaphor comes from the water supply of the city.
- Laodicea was part of a triad of cities with Hierapolis and Colosse.
  - Colosse was known for its cold refreshing mountain stream.
  - Laodicea had a twin city, Hierapolis, 6 miles away, that was known for its hot springs.
  - These hot spring waters were delivered to Laodicea, by an open aqueduct.

- So by the time the water reaches Laodicea it is tepid, dirty, and foul.
- It tastes awful, it is unhealthy, and it has none of the positive effects of clean, cold or hot water.
- Water is made to be either hot or cold. On our well in Black Forest the water comes up cold. When we've been working hard, we love that cold water drink!
- Hot springs are made by God for relaxation and medicinal purposes. We used to love going down to this one island off the coast of Tokyo every summer and sit in the hot mineral springs next to the ocean. Go snorkel in the frigid ocean and then come in to relax in the hot springs next to the sea!
- Lukewarm water is incredibly foul. Sometimes I have my water bottle in my truck and the water gets lukewarm...I have literally spewed that water out of my mouth...
- God made us to be hot and cold—to be refreshing; to be medicinal, to be joyful, to be fired up, to living off of the “springs of living water” of the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus is comparing those who are half-hearted. People who have one part of their heart in this world and one part in God.
  - Lukewarm people aren't flowing!
  - Lukewarm people aren't producing!
  - Lukewarm people are half-hearted and bored with their spiritual lives!
- **Hot People; Cold People** are those who are:
  - Excited and spiritually alive in their faith;
  - They possess a fervency and passion for Christ that speak of a transformed life;
  - They are living out and sharing their faith.



- **Lukewarm People** are most often those who:
  - Once walked closely with Christ but are now rejecting or ignoring Him.
  - Choosing not to be Spirit filled, not to walk in obedience, not to give their hearts and lives to Christ each day.
  - They are tepid, too comfortable to be worried about their condition.

**What are the reasons for a tepid lukewarm form of Christianity? I might use the term “Half-hearted”**

1. Emotion based Faith. Unbelief. A Flimsy Emotional Faith vs. A Firm Conviction based Faith.
  - a. A lack of faith to trust God through hard times.
  - b. Easily manipulated by their feelings and unable to trust God when hard times come.
2. Arm Chair Christianity. Comfortable. A “Just Good Enough” Walk.
  - a. They don’t want to be challenged, have to change anything.
  - b. Sounds counterintuitive but the comfortable don’t need God. They are just fine without God.
  - c. They have all of their comforts and the easy chair is their home.
3. Untrained Civilian Mentality. An Ignorance from Experience.
  - a. Never learned to fight; never been around authentic wholehearted disciples.
  - b. So many Christians today are completely ignorant of the warfare around them.
  - c. They can’t imagine that they can fight in prayer and win the day.
4. Distracted and Busy Minded. Just No Time for God.
  - a. They have so filled out lives with good things that we have lost the best thing!
  - b. No time for church, no time for youth group, no time for a devotional life.

- c. So, divorce is on the rise, drug and alcohol abuse is on the rise. Suicides are on the rise!!

**“I will vomit you out of my mouth” (that means “puke” or “hurl”)**

- I hate when that “puke thing” hits our house! It’s gross!!
  - Fevers and buckets...it’s terrible.
  - The noises and toilets...oh it’s awful.
  - Vomiting is when you are violently rejecting something that is vile and ill health or hurting the body.
    - This is what Jesus is saying to this church...God violently rejects this church.
    - Jesus gets the stomach flu with lukewarm Christians.

**Vs. 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.**

- This is a parable of their life...Jesus does that, he knows what we need to understand our spiritual condition.
- Primarily known for 3 industries: 1) banking; 2) wool; 3) medicine.

**“I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich;”**

- Strategic banking Industry that even Cicero, the famous statesman and philosopher, mentioned as the location where he cased his letters of credit.
- He is counseling: gold refined in the fire.

- **1 Peter 1 - In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 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,**
- We don't like that, but that is God's MO...He tries us, He disciplines us.
- We don't necessarily enjoy this, but what produces Christ in us is through difficulties and trials.
- The Gold Smith would take the gold and put it into the fire and boil it and the dross, the impurities, would float to the top and he would skim the dross off. He would know that the gold is refined enough, when he could see his face in the reflection like a mirror. It is an illusion, as God see's Christ in us.
- Learning to rejoice in difficulties is huge! A major paradigm shift. See my blog this week, "The Wholehearted Adjust."

**2 Cor 12:7** And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. **8** Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. **9** And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. **10** Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

**"and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed;"**

- And White raiment...not like the black wool of the area.
- The Textile Industry was very successful: they raised a special kind of black sheep that produced a deeply shiny kind of black wool, which produced beautiful carpets that were famous all over the world.
- They were naked spiritually...which represents defeat and shame all through the Bible.

- Put on White raiments, washed in the blood the Lamb—a new way of living, holiness and purity.
- Revelation 7:14 - "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.

**“and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.”**

- Famous school of medicine, especially it's eye salve, an aphalamic ointment, a Phrygian powder that we put in little tablets that looked like loaves of bread, with some kind of phosphoros in it, crush it in a combination of oil and powder that was mentioned by Aristotle.
- You need to be able to see spiritually.
- You need spiritual wisdom!!

**As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.**

- Hebrews says, “My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.”
- Expect to be rebuked and chastened by God! Just expect it and be zealous. Get fired up!

**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.**

- This is an appeal to two groups: one who doesn't know the Lord at all and those who have wandered away from the Lord.
- Jesus is knocking on the door of your heart!
- Jesus wants to come in and take over the Throne of your heart!
- You need spiritual gold, spiritual garments, spiritual eyes.

- He wants fellowship with you! He doesn't want anything from you, He wants your heart.
- He doesn't want anything from you...He gave it to you...He wants you.
- I don't want anything from my kids, I gave it all to them anyway, I want a relationship with them.
- He wants fellowship, He wants a relationship.
- He gently knocks...He continually knocks...He doesn't huff and puff and blow your door down.
- Famous painting by William Holman Hunt with Jesus holding a lamp and knocking on the door. Someone who saw the painting said you forgot to put the latch. "No," he said, "the latch is on the inside" We must open!
- Maybe God has been consistently knocking on your heart...you know that you need to get saved...you're tired of trying to do it on your own.
- You simply need to ask for forgiveness...there will be a day when the knocking stops and it will be too late.
- He appeals to you individually...you either open His door or you open another door...your choice.
- He wants to "dine with" you! At the end of the day, they would come together and take the whole night to fellowship and talk...that's what I want my family to be like: no phone, no computers, no TV, just talking and laughing...that's what Jesus wants with us.
- We have fast food fellowship...Drive thru Holy Spirit...No!
- He wants to share and give life, not take life...He doesn't want anything from you, He just wants you.

**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."**



- Overcomers don't quit. Overcomers have had to overcome—obstacles, troubles, difficulties, maybe persecutions and harassments.
  - Overcomers have a throne awaiting them, to sit with Christ.
  - Christ is not looking for Posers, Pretenders, or Performers, but rather He wants to sit next to and spend time with, Overcomers!
  - Do you have ears to hear? Are you listening?
1. Buy Spiritual Gold—genuine faith, faith that gets stronger as it goes through the furnace.
  2. Clothe yourself with white garments—holiness and purity.
  3. Anoint your eyes with eye salve—ask the Holy Spirit to anoint your spiritual eyes.
  4. Be zealous, open the door of your heart to Christ—that's an intimate daily relationship with Jesus.