

Living in Laodicea

***We have turned from your laws - To try to find a better way
Each man does today what is right in his own eyes
We will pay the price for our sinning - We can never know true living
We've exchanged God's truth for lies***

***For I've been living in Laodicea
And the fire that once burned bright - I've let it grow dim
And the very One I swore that I would die for - Oh, has been forgotten
As the world's become my friend, oh...
For I've been living in Laodicea***

(Lyrics from the Song "Living in Laodicea" by Steve Camp, 1984)

In Revelation 2-3 Jesus is sending a message to seven churches located near the coast of what is now modern day Turkey. The last church, Laodicea, Jesus had the harshest words for the church. In **Revelation 3:16** He says, ***"So, because you are lukewarm - neither hot nor cold - I am about to vomit you out of my mouth."*** Pretty strong words – but here is a moment where Christ felt ill to the bottom of his stomach. The question that remains is what was it that made Him feel sick? What if I told you that it was a congregation of Christians that made Him feel this way? In this last of the letters to the churches in Revelation we are going to see that this is a letter to a church which disgusted Christ.

Laodicea was an important center of trade and communication and was known for 3 things: It was known for its wealth for it was the financial and banking center of the whole region and had money to burn. It was also famous for its school of medicine and for a special ointment known for its ability to cure eye defects. Much of its wealth came from the production of a fine quality of famous glossy black wool which would be exported throughout the known world. But for all its fame, Laodicea was also known for something else. its horrible water supply. Despite its wealth, it did not have a local water supply sufficient to provide for its population and so an aqueduct was built to bring water from hot springs 6 miles away. On its journey overland to Laodicea, it cooled until it was lukewarm when it arrived.

"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..." Revelation 3:17

There were two problems in Laodicean church which affect many of our churches today: First, there was a problem with their commitment. This was a church that was lukewarm. Now in this instance, we might be tempted to think of a spectrum with hot as being spiritual and cold as being totally unspiritual but that is not a correct interpretation here. The whole image of the cold, hot and lukewarm Christian here relates to the water supply of the Laodiceans that was lukewarm and almost undrinkable. How many of us love a hot cup of coffee or tea? What about an ice cold soda? Would you prefer either lukewarm? Just as water is only useful if it is hot or cold, so too, in God's view, lukewarm comfortable Christians are useless and actually are nauseating to Him. God requires people who have zeal, passion, and a purpose – not lazy, apathetic, spirituality dead bodies who grace the pews of so many of our churches. ***"Then Jesus said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few." (Matt 9:37)***

The second problem with the Laodicean church was that they were evaluating themselves by the world's standards rather than God's standards. In the world's eyes they were wealthy, self-sufficient, comfortable, and accepted. But the church Christ desires isn't meant to be a country club run for the benefit of its members. His church is to be salt and light that makes a difference in the world. If we want to be spiritually useful (hot or cold), and spiritually strong we need three things: faith, righteousness and spiritual sight. ***"This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe." (Rom 3:22a)***

In **Revelation 3:20** there is a description of Jesus who is standing at the door, knocking, and wanting to come into our lives and the church to commune and have intimate fellowship. Some of us when we accept Christ we open the door and say, *"Come on in the house, Jesus...but stay in the living room. Don't wander around."* We give God permission to occupy parts of our life, but the rest is off limits. We say, *"Jesus, you can have Sunday morning and maybe one night a week on occasion, but stay out of what I do in my free time... Jesus, I'll give you my emotional troubles, but you can't have my sexuality... Jesus, you can have some input on my career ... but don't tell me what to do with the money I make from that career. Don't start messing with my finances."* Will we surrender all to Jesus or continue to live in Laodicea?

"When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." (Luke 21:28)

Bro. Andrew

