

Letter to the Church in Laodicea

Revelation 3:14-22

“Taken as a whole the messages to the seven churches of Asia constitute a comprehensive warning from Christ Himself as embodied in the exhortation of each of the churches. There is a warning to the churches of today to ‘hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.’ The church at Ephesus represents the danger of losing our first love (2:4), that fresh ardor and devotion to Christ which characterized the early church. The church at Smyrna representing the danger of fear of suffering was exhorted, ‘Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer’ (2:10). In a modern day when persecution of the saints has been revived, the church may well heed the exhortation ‘Fear not.’ The church at Pergamos illustrates the constant danger of doctrinal compromise (2:14-15), often the first step toward completed defection. Would that the modern church which has forsaken so many fundamentals of biblical faith would heed the warning! The church at Thyatira is a monument to the danger of moral compromise (2:20). The church today may well take heed to the departure from moral standards which has invaded the church itself. The church at Sardis is a warning against the danger of spiritual deadness (3:1-2), of orthodoxy without life., of mere outward appearances, of being, like the Pharisees, whited sepulchers. The church at Philadelphia commended by our Lord is nevertheless warned against the danger of not holding fast (3:11), and exhorted to keep ‘the word of my patience,’ to maintain the ‘little strength’ that they did have and to wait for their coming Lord. The final message to the church at Laodicea is the crowing indictment, a warning against the danger of lukewarmness (3:15-16), of self-sufficiency, of being unconscious of desperate spiritual need. To contemporary churches each of these messages is amazingly relevant and pointed in its searching analysis of what our Lord sees as He stands in the midst of the lampstands.” Walvoord

- I. The titles Jesus uses of himself as he addresses a church that is smug with itself over its perceived success indicates to them that He is the only standard that a church is measure itself by. The church of Laodicea, like many churches today, didn’t look to Jesus to determine truth about itself, its spiritual state, its success as a church, whether they were in God’s will, living God’s will, living by the Spirit, holding onto the Word as the only standard of truth to live by, honoring His name, faithful, overcomers, or steadfast in the faith. Instead, they determined the state of their spiritual well-being by what they had, their surroundings, their life of ease, and their material success. They looked at themselves and were satisfied. Sadly, they became self-determined instead of Christ-determined.

Rev. 3:14

Col. 2:1, 4:3, 4:15

2 Timothy 2:13

Col. 1:15-17

Laodicea = "justice of the people"

- II. Jesus calls the Laodicean church and its pastor lukewarm because of its tepid, half-hearted, lackadaisical, lackluster, indifferent, unenthusiastic, apathetic representation of what it meant to be in a life-changing relationship with Him. They did not value his sacrifice, the power of His shed blood, their forgiveness, redemption, reconciliation, being made righteous, eternal life and its implications, his priesthood in their lives, living in the power of the Spirit, obeying His will to be salt and light as purveyors of the gospel to the lost and dying and certainly not His Lordship over them. The only way that they could keep Him from having nothing to do with them was to value and embrace above all else the true spiritual riches of salvation that only He alone could offer.

Rev. 3:15-18

ἐμέω eméō - to vomit, vomit forth, throw up

“It is apparent that there is something about the intermediate state of being lukewarm that is utterly obnoxious to God. Far more hopeful is the state of one untouched by the gospel and makes no pretense of putting his trust in Christ than that one who makes some profession but by his life illustrates that he has not really honored the Christ whose gospel he has heard and professed. There is no one farther from the truth in Christ than the one who makes an idle profession without real faith. The church at Laodicea constitutes a sad picture of much of the professing church in the world throughout the history of the Christian era and serves as an illustration of those who participate in the outer religious worship without the inner reality. How many have outwardly conformed to requirements of the church without a true state of being born again into the family of God? How many church members are far from God yet by their membership in the professing church have satisfied their own hearts and have been lulled into a sense of false security?” Walvoord

- III. Jesus didn't treat the Laodicean church as her sins deserved, instead he chose to knock on the door of their hearts to let them know that he was on the outside desiring to come in and love on them in life changing ways. His discipline, and their repentance, would enable them to overcome their apathy toward knowing that as believers, they will be given the expressed privilege of co-ruling with Him during His millennial reign. That's grace and receiving it would depend very much on whether they wanted what the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation desired of them.

Rev. 3:19-22

Heb. 12:5-6

2 Timothy 2:13 *If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.*