

Spiritual Maturity

The Church in Laodicea: The Luke Warm Church

- Laodicea was a very prosperous city!!!!!!
- It was the Banking Center for the region with vast gold resources.
- A type of “5th Avenue” of the day.
- This letter from Jesus was written to a Church that had excluded Him from their lives because of their affluence.
- Laodicea was so prosperous that they actually refused Rome’s help after the A.D.17 earthquake that devastated the region. They said, “No worries...we got this!”
- Even though Laodicea was prosperous and had everything it needed there was one thing it lacked.....WATER!!!!
- They brought in water by aqueducts from miles away!
- From one direction cool springs were brought from Colossae and from the other direction hot springs were flowing from Hierapolis! (Remember this for a later explanation!)
- Please remember, as with all the letters Jesus wrote, He uses their unique context and circumstances to express His desire and truth!!

Revelation 3:14-22 (NLV)

14 “Write this to the angel of the church in the city of Laodicea: ‘The One Who says, Let it be so, the One Who is faithful, the One Who tells what is true, the One Who made everything in God’s world, says this: 15 I know what you are doing. You are not cold or hot. I wish you were one or the other. 16 But because you are warm, and not hot or cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. 17 You say that you are rich and that you need nothing, but you do not know that you are so troubled in mind and heart. You are poor and blind and without clothes. 18 You should buy gold from Me that has been tested by fire that you may be rich. Buy white clothes to dress yourself so the shame of not wearing clothes will be taken away. Buy medicine to put on your eyes so you can see. 19 I speak strong words to those I love and I punish them. Have a strong desire to please the Lord. Be sorry for your sins and turn from them. 20 See! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and we will eat together. 21 I will allow the one who has power and wins to sit with Me on My throne, as I also had power and won and sat down with My Father on His throne. 22 You have ears! Then listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.’”

- I. Jesus once again begins His letter to Laodicea by establishing Himself as Lord and God!!!!
 - A. The faithful One who always tells the truth and the One Who has been around long enough to know!!! (vs. 14)

Colossians 1:15-20 (NIV)

15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

1. It is good to know that my Savior happens to be the Creator!
2. That means that I am at the mercy of nothing and no one!!!!
3. The One who provided my redemption is the One who provided all life in the first place!!
4. Thus.....this is a letter from God!!

B. After establishing His deity once again Jesus then explains how they are lacking as they allow their “self-sufficiency” to deceive them into a false sense of well being!!!!!!!

1. Remember, Laodicea was a wealthy banking center with a lack in very few things!
2. Much like we in America experience each day and most of us all of our lives!!!!!!!!

C. Jesus is quick to point out that they were deceived to the core and didn't realize their true condition! (vs. 17)

1. They were wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked!
2. Some other translations use these words: miserable, pathetic, poverty stricken, a beggar, threadbare and homeless!
3. The bottom line is that unless we allow the Lord to define our spiritual condition we can assume “all is well”!

II. The first context or “teaching tool” Jesus uses with the Laodicean Church is that of water!

A. Remember that Laodicea had all the resources it needed..... except water!!

1. Remember as well, the statement that they brought by aqueduct water from Colossae and Hierapolis.

2. Colossae was known for its cool springs and Hierapolis for its hot springs!
3. Jesus uses and common problem that the Laodiceans constantly struggled with.
4. By the time the waters traveled through the aquatics from Colossae and Hierapolis it was tepid instead of cool and hot!!

B. In other words Jesus was saying, "Because you have wandered so far from the source, you are lukewarm!!"

1. "I am your life, not your wealth!"
2. "I want to be the passion of your life, not your pleasure!"
3. "Life and ease have taken you so far from the source of life that you have ignored Me!"

1 John 4:10, 19 (NIV)

10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 19 We love because he first loved us.

C. Then Jesus explains WHY they are lukewarm!!!!

1. They say they do not need anything!
2. Like Laodicea told Rome, "Hey, we've got this!"
3. We may never verbalize this, but our actions often say this out loud!

III. Jesus explains the proper approach to all of our circumstances in life!!!

A. We are completely and totally dependent upon Him in life.

1. He is the designer of life and He not only knows best how to live it but He also empowers us to live it!!!!!!

Revelation 3:18 (NLV)

18 You should buy gold from Me that has been tested by fire that you may be rich. Buy white clothes to dress yourself so the shame of not wearing clothes will be taken away. Buy medicine to put on your eyes so you can see.

2. Jesus is saying, "I am your resource in life, I am your way to live with your creator and only seeing things through My eyes can you really accurately see things as they are!"
3. Yes, we are totally and completely dependent upon God!!!

Isaiah 64:6 (CEV)

6 We are unfit to worship you;
each of our good deeds is merely a filthy rag.
We dry up like leaves;
our sins are storm winds sweeping us away.

Titus 3:5-7 (CEV)

He saved us because of his mercy, and not because of any good things that we have done.

God washed us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

He gave us new birth and a fresh beginning.

God sent Jesus Christ our Savior to give us his Spirit.

Jesus treated us much better than we deserve.

He made us acceptable to God and gave us the hope of eternal life.

B. Jesus then expresses His heart for us!!!

Revelation 3:20 (NIV)

20 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.

1. We must first realize that this request is NOT one of evangelism because this letter was written to the Church. The redeemed!
2. Jesus is saying, "I want to be with you - a part of your life. I want to spend time with you in fellowship!"
3. To fully appreciate this verse you have to realize what a middle eastern meal was like!
4. It was a drive through. A run in and out. It was an event!!!
5. Having a meal was huge! It took lots of time and preparation!
6. Jesus is saying, "Prepare for me, take time, lets fellowship!"