

Revelation 2-3:14-22
Laodicea: Someone's Knocking at the Door

INTRODUCTION

We all have a certain point where our gag reflex kicks in – it may be certain drinks, food, Gummy Olympic items, smells, medicines, pre-medical procedure concoctions, etc.
Rarely do we think about Jesus' gag reflex, but in this passage, we learn what it is.

Message to Laodicea

14 "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:

15 'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. 16 So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. 17 Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, 18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and *that* the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.

19 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore, be zealous and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come into him and will dine with him, and he with Me.

21 He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down 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.' "

Before we wrap up the last letter to the last of the seven churches, I want to remind us that one problem faced by all of the seven churches was their lack of an outward face toward the outside culture. This may have been because of the hostility coming from the unbelieving world or simply being too focused on themselves.

Along with that was a failure to be driven by the gospel in the context of community.

We need each other to spur us on to love and good deeds.

EX: athletic training – IF I were a runner (surprise, I'm not), I'm pretty sure that I would run faster and longer if I were running with someone. Having another person there would push me to try harder and do better.

Christian community is like that; **we are stronger and more perseverant when we are connected as we do life together.** EX: prayer

In this last letter to the Laodiceans, Jesus calls Himself the faithful and true WITNESS.

The church is always in danger of failing to be a true witness in the face of the spirit of the age. In every age the church faces the calling and challenge of having an outward face so as to bear witness to Christ who is faithful and TRUE.

As we begin, I want to ask, "What does an outward faced church or Christian look like? "
(not an exhaustive list)

There is an intentional effort to be as comprehensible as possible to folks all along the spiritual journey spectrum.

People are praying for unreached.

It's not something to do, but something that we can BE – a culture, not just a program.

Understandable – don't compromise beliefs but explain them.
Have an eye for those who may be here the first time.
Don't assume that everybody knows the terms and unspoken 'rules'
Seek to eliminate unspoken 'rules'
Relational, not programmatic. We make time to interact.
Not so busy with 'church life' that you can't invite people into your world outside of Sunday.
Genuine- you believe what you say, and it is lived out in the context of marriage, family, work, and play.

These issues of a lack of a gospel focus and no outward face may have been particularly true for Laodicea. The don't seem to be getting hostility from the culture, nor are they getting any commendation from Jesus for their faithfulness. In fact, He gives them what is the most severe rebuke –
“YOU MAKE ME WANT TO VOMIT”.

Have you ever thought or said that about someone??

I'll bet it wasn't a complement. Don't lead with that if you want to pursue a relationship or if you're seeking to win friends and influence people.

Oddly enough, Jesus can say it because “those whom He loves, He rebukes.” V. 19

You're not Jesus, so don't try that, even if you do love someone and need to rebuke them.

A word about **LAODICEA**...

40 miles south of Phil, 100 miles inland; 250 BC Jewish families resettled here.

Became very wealthy; two key trade routes through town.

BANKING was A major occupation.

Wiped out by earthquake but rebuilt and refused help from Rome – no federal stimulus package. Proud of their wealth and sufficiency.

MEDICAL SCHOOL – **optometry**, eye salve was popular

TEXTILES – soft glossy wool from the area was in high demand

BUT THERE WAS A Lack of WATER RESOURCE – no good local supply- (Wilcox lime-laden sickly water flowed from local springs, so aqueducts were used and the water that arrived became impure – lukewarm and gritty caused nausea

Hierapolis – hot water useful for healing what ails you was “pipe” to Laodicea but arrived lukewarm

Colossae – cold water from mountain springs is refreshing to your body and soul was also piped...

Laodicea had the hot and cold water piped into the city and by the time it got there it was lukewarm and had a bad taste.

The church is like the water- makes Jesus want to vomit.

Again, not a sentimental Jesus seeking to make people feel good.

v.15 both cold and hot have positive aspects. Bring hot water healing, or cold water church bringing water to quench thirst. Instead, they provide neither, no spiritual value to those around them.

Jesus isn't talking about their lack of spiritual zeal or their spiritual coldness in the way folks often think. In what way would a spiritually cold person be better off than one who is at least lukewarm?

I think Jesus is talking about their spiritual ineffectiveness. They are unproductive and aren't doing what they should do as Christians.

They are like the lukewarm water – not hot for healing, not cold for refreshing; just BLAH – he wants to spit it out. “Their spiritual condition is not better than their city's water supply” (Beale)

AD 95-96 Domitian enforces emperor worship and labor guilds give homage to their 'gods'. Christians are tempted to conform and keep silent which leads to a lukewarm condition.

This lukewarm taste of the church in Laodicea makes Jesus want to spit them out of his mouth – puke.

(Rayburn) A lukewarm taste comes from being self-sufficient or from a testimony compromised by a worldly life.

v. 17-18 indicate that it may be a bit of both. They certainly have become self-satisfied and 'have need of nothing'. Their boasting of their wealth indicates a worldly mindset. Such boasting is presumption and goes against the biblical teachings about the love of money, which is a root of all sorts of evil. Self-satisfied spiritual apathy is one dimension of such evil.

Jesus provides rebuke to give a true perspective. He unveils the truth about them and their delusion. In his eyes they are 'wretched, poor, blind, and naked.'

v.18 they confuse material wealth with spiritual wealth – early version of 'prosperity gospel'.

The Laodiceans are deceived as to their real condition v. 17-18

Jesus brings a spiritual diagnosis – poor, blind, naked.

Those three items hit home for a city known for wealth, eye salve, and valued wool.

They value the external material trappings of their world while ignoring the eternal riches of Christ. Their identity is wrapped up in their worldly status of wealth or approval or being in the inner ring or on the 'right side of history.'

When that happens, we don't want to rock the boat because we have too much to lose. We are lukewarm and we live for ease, comfort, and pleasure.

EX: Dan Hayes – "The cult of the comfortable is the curse of the Christian."

EX: parable of Luke 12

15 Then He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions." 16 And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man was very productive. 17 And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?' 18 Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry." ' 20 But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?

V. 18 -Jesus calls them to Himself to 'buy' what they need.

How do they come and buy???

Run to Jesus because what he offers is FREE – Is 55

1"Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters;

And you who have no money come, buy and eat.

Come, buy wine and milk

Without money and without cost.

Jesus can bring spiritual life and vitality to their souls better than the hot springs or cold water can bring healing and refreshment to their bodies. He can do it because He is **The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God,**

Because of that, it's NOT too late. Jesus has creation power. He has resurrection power.

If your soul needs to be revived, run to Him. He will not cast out those who come to Him.

If you find yourself lukewarm then remember that "someone's knockin' at the door". Open the door and let the hot fire of God's grace kindle a fire within you.

Let the refreshing water of the love of Christ quench your thirst.

v. 19 **Jesus reproves those He loves.** This severe rebuke is an act of love and kindness. While their condition is serious, it is not beyond hope. **Repentance is still an option and REPENTANCE IS THE DOOR TO CHANGE. (Because repentance opens the door to Jesus)**

If you don't like where you are spiritually, repentance is the door to change.

If you are in a relationship filled with tension, repentance is the door to change.

Identify your part of the conflict and lead with repentance. Someone must lead in that process. Will it be you or will you wait for the other person.

Repentance is the on ramp to a life of faith. It begins as we see that in ourselves, we are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. Then by faith, we lay hold of the transforming power, wisdom, spiritual vision, and righteous robes of Christ.

Turn from self-sufficiency to depending on Christ.

You can't think highly of Jesus and yourself.

If you think highly and correctly about Jesus, then you must see Him as Savior.

If you think rightly of yourself then you must see yourself as one who NEEDS a Savior, THUS you ought not think highly of yourself.

v. 20 They can have these true riches if they will open the door to Jesus- v. 20

They are so anemic that Christ isn't even in the church; he is outside knocking to get in.

V 20, THE BENEFIT- intimacy with Christ – a meal together with Jesus. A sign of communion. A picture of the eternal invitation to the Marriage supper of the Lamb.

Table fellowship with Christ is transforming – remember that next week as we go to the Table.

More importantly, remember that each day, for we can feed on Christ daily through His Word and prayer. He desires to dine with us each day. We don't have to wait until Sunday to feed on Christ. A relationship with Christ is a day-to-day reality.

Verse 20 has been used, one might say misused, as an invitation to non-believers to 'open the door of your heart to Jesus.'

At the worst end of that scenario the speaker presents Jesus who is such a gentleman that He simply knocks on your door and is waiting for you to act. He wants a relationship with you, but he is powerless to make it happen.

That is a poor portrayal of Jesus and how He functions.

This verse is spoken to believers, the church.

Jesus is telling them the benefit of repentance – intimacy with Him. Change happens by being with Jesus. He will knock and give the invitation to open the door.

I appreciate what Jack Miller says in the Dec 21 devotional from Saving Grace.

Jesus doesn't just knock on the door of our hearts; he moves in with us! Jesus doesn't wait for sinners to invite him in. He knocks and invites himself in. When we hear Jesus knocking, some of us bar the door. Jesus then sets a fire in the basement to get our attention.

The fire might be a bad habit we can't break, a husband or wife who is more than we can handle, a child who breaks our heart—whatever it is, Jesus knows how to use it, so we, in desperation, open the door and let him enter.

Then you discover that what you resisted is the most amazing gift in the world. Intimacy with Christ has come to your house. You are back on the path of being an overcomer as described in v.21

21He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Whatever you may lose in terms of this world by following Christ does not compare with the honor and glory to be revealed when Christ returns.

For what does it *profit* a man to *gain the whole world*, and forfeit his soul? Mk 8:36

Can you imagine being put in such a place of honor

EX: It would be like going to an event with important dignitaries and the key person comes and says, "You come sit up here at the head table with me."

In the world's system that doesn't happen unless you've earned it.

In God's system, Jesus earned it, but we get the benefit.

We don't deserve it, but it comes with overcoming with Christ.

Who wouldn't want intimacy with a Savior like that?

Is someone knocking at the door?

Do yourself a favor and let Him in.

--	--