

SERMON NOTES

The 7 Churches of Revelation – 7 Laodicea

This is the last of the seven letters written around 95 AD - Ephesus (1st love), Smyrna (persecuted), Pergamos (compromising), Thyatira (corrupt), Sardis (dead), Philadelphia (faithful with open door), and Laodicea (Luke warm).

LUKEWARM = nominal religion without life or power. Like an anaesthetic or inoculation - it just gives you enough so that you are prevented from getting the real thing.

The Solution -

- Remember, repent etc from other churches' letters. "Be zealous and repent"
- Hear His voice and open the door of your heart

<p><u>Revelation 3:14-22 (NKJV)</u> - 14 "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness (Rev 1:5), the Beginning (Rev 1:8,17) of the creation of God:</p> <p>15 "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.</p> <p>16 "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.</p> <p>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--</p> <p>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.</p> <p>19 "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>22 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. " " "</p>	<p>Laodicea = "rule of the people"</p> <p>Trustworthy - true source of reality and true information "all your precepts I consider to be right" <u>Ps 119:128</u></p> <p>Why would He rather "hot or cold"? What does "vomit from mouth" mean? Symptoms of lukewarmness.</p> <p>Causes of lukewarmness... - Comfort - consumerism - lost touch with truth & reality</p> <p>The Solutions: - "buy" - Exchange at a Cost. - Gold - true riches. Faith. - Garments - righteousness - Eye salve - see real truth</p> <p>Zealously Repent - described in <u>2 Cor 7:10-11</u></p> <p>He is calling now. A response is needed. You must open the door. Closeness with Him is the result</p> <p>Heaven experienced even now cf <u>Eph 2:6</u></p> <p>The importance of Churches and Messengers.</p>
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Other relevant verses:

2 Timothy 3:1-5 (NKJV) - 1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:

2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,

4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

1 Timothy 6:17 (NKJV) - 17 Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.

1 Peter 1:7 (NKJV) - 7 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,

Ephesians 1:16-2:6 - Paul's prayer that the Ephesians would see with their "heart eyes" of faith how God has raised them up with Christ's power.

Hebrews 12:6-7 (NKJV) - 6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives." 7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?

Mark 5:6 (NKJV) - 6 When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. (The man with a "legion" of demons could still come to Jesus)

A REMINDER OF THE SARDIS CHURCH MESSAGE WHICH IS SIMILAR:

- They had a reputation of being Spiritually alive but were not
- They were at risk of having their names "blotted out" of the book of life
- The Solution = Remember, Hold Fast, Repent / Remember, Repent, Re-Do Your First Works

HOW COULD OUR NAMES BE "BLOTTED OUT"?

It is extremely difficult to lose one's salvation:

John 10:28-29 ""And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand."

But it can happen:

2 Timothy 2:11-13 "This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. 12 If we endure, We shall also reign with Him.

If we deny (DIVORCE) Him, He also will deny us.

13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself."

The "sign" that I have rejected Him is that I can no longer repent:

Hebrews 6:4-6 "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame."

How does one get to this stage?

We have already said that one does not do this by "mistake", and that it is extremely hard to do, and that God is working very strongly to keep us with Him. But the way this happens is as follows:

- When I sin - I give Satan a foothold in my life which he uses to further hurt and deceive me. (Eph 4:27)
- When I choose not to obey God's voice and promptings, I harden my heart and conscience so that I am less sensitive to Him and His voice. (Heb 4:7)
- When I sin, I can be overcome by guilt and start to hide from God. (Gen 3:10)
- When I sin and refuse to glorify or obey God, my mind is darkened and I cannot think properly anymore. (Rom 1:21, 28)
- If I persist in this apathy and self-deception, allowing Satan to influence me and resisting God's voice and His people, I can eventually "stop believing" His gospel and I could reach the "divorce" point, after which I am no longer able to (or willing to) repent.

How long this takes, or what sins are involved, cannot be quantified. All we know is: I should stay "on fire for God" and close to Him, and if I can still repent, I have not reached this point.

WHAT IS THE TEST FOR BEING TRULY SPIRITUALLY ALIVE? - "EXAMINE YOURSELVES"

2 Corinthians 13:5 (NKJV) — Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified. (fail the test).

Internal Tests -

1. Do you love Jesus?

John 8:42: Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me..."

2. Is He your Lord?

Matt 7:21: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

3. Do you trust Him and His finished work alone for your righteousness and salvation?

Galatians 2:16, 21 - 16 "knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified....

21 "I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."

External Tests -

4. Do you talk to Him, worship Him, listen to His voice, read His word, fellowship with His people?

John 10:27: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

1 John 5:1 (ESV) - 1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him.

5. Do you Love people? Is there anyone you hate? -

1 John 3:14-15 - 14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death.

15 Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

6. Righteous living (increasing and absolute) -

1 Jn 3:6 (NIV) - No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

1 Cor 6:9-10 (NIV) - 9 Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

7. The witness of the Holy Spirit - "Abba" -

Rom 8:15-16 - 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."

16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDES

Remember that the aim of the small group is to foster discussion and community, rather than for the leader or one individual to preach to everyone.

1 - Often an **Icebreaker question** is a great way to start discussion. You could ask a question like:

- What were the highs or lows of your week?
- What is your earliest memory?
- If you had to describe yourself as one animal, what would it be and why?
- What is your favourite type of holiday destination?

2 - Next, **read the passage**. You can ask various people in the group to help by each reading a portion of the passage.

3 - These are the **main questions** to ask to understand the passage:

- What is the main message of this talk / passage?
Allow discussion and even diverging from the main topic if it is helpful.
- What did you find particularly helpful or challenging?
- What did you not fully understand?
- What can we do PRACTICALLY in response to this teaching?

4 - Close by offering **prayer** for each person.

- Ask, "how can we pray for you / each other now?"
- Ask each person to pray or you, as leader, pray for each person's need

The blessing and opportunity in Small Groups is the possibility for...

- Each person to contribute and/or ask questions,
- People to pray for each other and to ask for prayer,
- People to learn to use and grow in their gifts,
- Community, friendship, and intimacy in relationships.

God Bless you in this very important ministry.