

THE LETTER TO THE LAODICEAN CHURCH – THE COMPLACENT CHURCH! (REVELATION 3:14-22)

In the letters to the 7 churches, Christ revealed His thoughts and opinion of what each church was going through. By doing so, the Risen Lord also emphasized what He is looking for in a true and vibrant church. The Ephesian Christians were urged to return to their first love for Himself, while the Smyrna Christians were told that they will suffer because of their uncompromising position. The Pergamum church was to champion truth in the face of error, and Thyatira was to pursue holiness in the midst of moral corruption. In Sardis the need was for inward reality behind the church's outward show of spirituality. Before the Philadelphian church, the risen Lord had set an open door for the spread of the gospel, and He urged them to go forth boldly. The 7th and last letter was addressed to the church in Laodicea and comes with a fierce admonition for the Christians' complacency!

Question: Why preach on complacency? Because in every community, in every Christian, there's bound to be shades of complacency!

1. CHRIST'S TITLES (Christ's self-revelations)

In addressing each of the 7 churches, Christ revealed Himself with a specific title and this title has something to do with what He had to say to the particular church. Christ reveals Himself as "**the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the Ruler of God's Creation**"

What kind of opinion people have of the church is not that important compared to Christ's opinion. We cannot afford to ignore Christ's opinion of the church!

2. LAODICEAN CHURCH'S CONDITION

"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were cold or hot.

So then, because you neither cold nor hot, I will spit you out of My mouth ..." 3: 15,16

This is Christ's opinion & diagnosis of the Laodicea church, "**lukewarm, neither cold nor hot**" - 不燒, 也不冷！

- Half-hearted devotion to Christ - "that you are neither cold nor hot..."
- Complacency! "You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing...'"

Complacency is luke-warmness and luke-warmness is complacency!

Question: How could pride & complacency be so detestable to Christ?

Answer: Because the kingdom of God belongs exclusively to those who are spiritual bankrupts!

Complacent people, on the contrary, are self-satisfied people!

The Beatitudes (Portrait of a Christian) start with

"Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven..." Matthew 5:3

Being poor in spirit is to be constantly reminded that we are without resources, without self-righteousness, without self-reliance! "A spiritually bankrupt person has nothing to show God that he is good enough to get to heaven"

The whole intention of the Sermon on the Mount is to show us we can't make it on our own. Paul said the whole purpose of the Law is to render all persons guilty before God, thus driving us to Christ, who alone can make us right with God (Galatians 3:19-24)

The Laodicean Christians were self-sufficient & self-satisfied. It will be a very sad day when Christians have need of nothing. Without a needy heart, there can be no growth!

What is Christ's Answer to the lukewarm Christians?

3:16 "So, because you are lukewarm- neither hot nor cold - I am about to spit you out of my mouth"

This is a figure of speech. Where Christ is concerned, a "lukewarm" Christianity is utterly distasteful, makes Him "sick", makes Him "vomit", hence the phrase, "I am about to spit you out of my mouth", indicating God's strong displeasure with our complacency and pride.

3. CHRIST's remedy FOR THE LUKEWARM CHURCH

"I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, so that you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so that you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so that you can see" 3:18

"God is asking people to give up something they possess in exchange for something of superior value".

Love & discipline go together where Christ is concerned! (耶稣的斥备 = 耶稣的爱)

3:20 "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 him, and he with Me"

Whenever a church becomes lukewarm, complacent and half-hearted, it is guilty of shutting out the Lord Jesus! It is telling the Savior that we "don't need You to be around"

"If anyone hears..." Christ is addressing certain individuals in the church.

Christ is making an appeal to some people in the lukewarm church who have never invited Jesus Christ into their lives.

4. THE REWARD OF CHRIST

"To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with Me on My throne, just as I overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne..." 3:21

"The Christian is strongest when he's weakest and weakest when he thinks he's strong. Though he may be poor, he has the power to make others rich, but when he becomes rich, his ability to enrich others disappears. He has the most after he has given the most away, and has the least when he keeps the most. The victorious Christian may be closest to Christ when he feels most unworthy, and least defeated by sins when he's most conscious of sin's power" The Incredible Christian by AW Tozer