

Are You A Lukewarm Christian?

Scripture: Revelation 3:14-22

Haddon Robinson once wrote,
Blessed is the church that, when it decides to be a church, does what a church is supposed to do!

Or the negative is even stronger:
Cursed is the church that, when it decides to be a church, fails to do what a church is supposed to do.

It is tragic for a church that starts off hot and ends up lukewarm.

At Sea World, in southern California, one can see trained parrots roller skating. Little roller skates have been made that strap to the birds' feet, and they skate around all over the park.

One man who saw them said,
They could skate all right, but I could tell their hearts just weren't in it.

Is that not a picture of a church that is lukewarm?

The church at Laodicea is a perfect example.
It had been a church full of promise, hope, potential, gifted people, and wealth, but along the way it began to drift.

In less than forty years, the Laodicean church became the perfect example of all that displease the Lord.

It was lukewarm, self-satisfied;
It was a shell of religious works without heart-felt worship.

The church that had been so hot, so fervent for God, had become a sickening group of Christians to the Lord Jesus.

Of the seven churches of Asia mentioned in Revelation 2 and 3, this church is the only one for which Jesus has not one word of commendation or compliment.

They had fallen before the most subtle, yet most deadly, enemy of the church, lukewarmness!

The biggest enemy the church faces is this very enemy, lukewarmness.

Our biggest problem is not attack from the outside, not atheists and agnostics convincing members there is no God, not denominational groups stealing our sheep, not foreign governments attacking us and persecuting us.

It is attack from the inside, in the heart, an "I-just-don't-care" attitude.

To make matters worse, this enemy is the hardest of all to combat and overcome!

The Lord's statement, "I would thou wert cold or hot", implied, "It is easier to deal with one who is cold and opposed to Me than one who just does not care".

Let us go to Revelation 3 and see the church at Laodicea.
Let us also take a look at ourselves.

I. THE PATHETIC PICTURE

The Church's Condition (3:15, 16)

Jesus says, "I know thy works".

He knows not only the action, but also the motive and heart behind the action.

Suppose you went to the doctor for a checkup and he took a chest x-ray. A computer printout accompanied the x-ray that told every motive and thought of your heart for the world to see.

Revelation 3 says that Jesus knows all the motives and heart behind your actions!

You possibly can kid others, but you cannot kid Him!

He says, "Thou art neither cold nor hot" and "I will spew thee out of My mouth".

Think of the coffee drinkers.

Some love their coffee black, some with sugar, some with cream and sugar, some with ice in it during the summer, but *no one* likes it lukewarm.

Imagine this conversation:

“How do you want your coffee?” “Lukewarm” please”. Nobody likes coffee lukewarm!

The church at Laodicea was not some far-out liberal bunch.

It was not a pagan, idolatrous bunch.

It just did not care!

One commentator said it was a church characterized by “goodishness”.

That is, it did all the right things and was goodish (rather good) in the community, but being lukewarm, having no heart, therefore there’s no commitment!

Christ’s Criticism (3:17)

The church gave its own evaluation:

“We are rich, wealthy, and do not need a thing”.

Is it not something how independent folks get when they obtain riches:

“I do not need anything!”

But Jesus’ evaluation was this:

“Thou art the wretched one and miserable and poor and blind and naked.”

The most disturbing of all is the phrase “You do not even know”.

They had been kidding themselves!

They were like the man who keeps looking in the mirror as the years go by and convinces himself he is as young looking as ever, as agile, athletic, and strong as ever.

But the truth is he is not even *close*!

Some of you fall into this same category, spiritually speaking.

You have been kidding yourself and giving yourself an “A-OK” as time has passed, but inside you are as lukewarm as the Laodicean church.

What would Jesus’ evaluation of you be?

Would He say you are hot, cold, or lukewarm?

How does He evaluate your feeling about giving?
Evangelism?
Benevolence?
Encouraging those who are down?
Blessing those who hurt?
Commitment?
Would He say you are hot, cold, or lukewarm?

Christ's Counsel (3:18, 19)

Counsel is really an important word.
Jesus tells them what to do.

Suppose you had a medical problem and went to the doctor for tests and evaluation.

After it was all over he said, "I know your problem".

He pointed it out to you in detail and then *left*.

How would you feel if he never told you what to do about the problem?

"Come to Me for: true wealth, true righteousness and real sight," Jesus says.

"Be hot" is the literal rendering of verse 19.

Our basic task is to be hot for God.

A couple on their fifteenth anniversary were riding in a car. She was over against the door and said, "Remember fifteen years ago how close we used to sit? Now there is so much distance". He had a great answer: "I haven't moved".

God has not moved.

He is still hot in His love for you and in His desire for your salvation and service unto Him.

Have *you* moved?

Have you shut the door on Him and closed Him out of your life?

Christ's Call (3:20)

Jesus says, "I stand at the door and knock! Let Me in! I want to be in among you".

We use this as an invitation to non-believers.
It is difficult to remember this is addressed to Christians.

Do you remember the painting by Holman Hunt?
Christ is at the door of a huge heart knocking.
One who saw the painting said, “You forgot to paint a door knob on it”.
Hunt said, “No, the latch to the door of every heart is on the *inside*”.

How true!
Jesus never forces Himself on you and will never stay where He is not wanted!
He actively seeks every person to open the door and invite Him in!

Notice that He does not ask the masses, but the individual.
Put your name in verse 20.

II. THE PERSONAL PLEA

Sometimes we say to a person,
“I do not want you to take this personally, but. . . . I do want you to take this personally!”

Take a personal look and evaluate.
Are you lukewarm?
Are you drifting in the direction of “I don’t care so much anymore”?
Do you realize the perils of staying in that condition?

Charles Swindoll tells of breaking his hand, going to a doctor, and having surgery.
In the post-operative visits, he became friends with the forty-year-old surgeon.
His next appointment was in ten days, but the doctor said he must see his assistant
because the doctor himself was to have minor surgery.
A small mole was to be removed.
When Swindoll returned in ten days, the doctor was dead!
He died of cancer two days earlier.
The mole had been the tiny, visible sign of a body full of disease.
What a lesson!

Are there any small signs as you look at your life that may point to the disease of lukewarmness?

Is your attendance on and off?
Is your Bible reading and prayer begin to falter?

Has your giving dropped off and become irregular?
As you worship, do the songs and sermons all seem the same, boring?
Do you still have evangelistic spirit?
Do you feel burned out?
Look for the *mole!*

CONCLUSION

Each congregation has a city to win!
We cannot win a city with lukewarmness.

We have a congregation of people to minister to.
We cannot do it with lukewarmness.

We have a work to build for Christ.
We cannot do it with lukewarmness.

We have teenagers to lead.
We cannot do it with lukewarmness.

We have families to win.
We cannot do it with *lukewarmness!*

“Blessed is the church that, when it decides to be a church, does what a church is supposed to do!”

A lukewarm church is unthinkable!

Let us reject lukewarmness with all our might and be hot for God, forever!

Don't let that fire in you begin to fade.