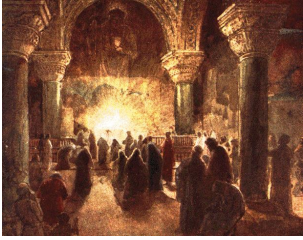


Revelation 3.14-22

“What makes God Gag?”

Recently Pastor said to Me “Our church is like Early Church – Alive & Real”

Common Idea > Early Church > GOOD OLD DAYS



For 6 weeks been STUDYING Ancient Churches >

Like Modern Churches

Doctrinal Precision > Little Love for God or People: Ephesus

Rejected by their Neighbors > Considered Aloof: Smyrna

Compromised with Political and Social Leaders: Pergamum

Secret Sexual Scandal spread across the Congregation: Thyatira

Impressive list of Activities but All Image > No Substance: Sardis

Small Minority struggling to Hold On in City that Hated Them: Philadelphia

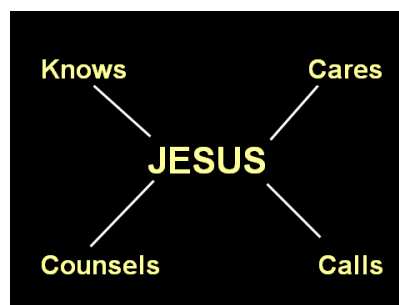


Laodicea > 80 kms. South-East of Philadelphia

Rich Commercial Center

Laodicea in Lycus Valley: Inct. 3 Imperial Trade Routes

Antiochus named the city after his wife (& sister?) Laodice



1. Jesus Knows

v. 15 “I know your deeds” > NOTHING NICE to Say to this church!!

Knows True State Each church: Strength & Weakness, Faithfulness & Failure

a. Lost their Drive - No Persecution from Without / No Heresy from Within

v. 15 “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other!”



City’s Major Weakness > Lack of Adequate Water Supply >

10 kms. across Lycus valley > City of Hierapolis > Famous for Hot Springs

Hot Medicinal water of Hierapolis > PIPED 10 kms from the North

Cold, pure water of Colossae > PIPED 18 kms from the West

Hot & Cold Water thru Stone Pipes Arrived LIME LADEN, TEPID, SICKLY

Adjectives “hot,” “cold,” and “lukewarm” NOT describing Spiritual Fervor

Church in Laodicea > had Neither COOL Refreshment for Spiritually Wary, nor

Healing for Spiritually Sick > Totally Ineffective > Distasteful to its Lord

SIN not Temperature > ABSENCE of GOOD WORKS

2nd Law of Thermodynamics > Closed System Moderates > No Energy Produced

Laodicea > Closed Church > God Himself locked OUTSIDE their Door

“The Laodicean church was a halfhearted church. Perhaps none of the seven letters is more appropriate to the 21st century church. It describes vividly the respectable, sentimental, nominal, skin-deep religiosity which is so widespread among us today. Our Christianity is flabby and anemic. We appear to have taken a lukewarm bath of religion.”

John Stott

We often FLATTER OURSELVES > but JESUS Sees and Speaks the TRUTH

b. Lost their Discernment

v. 17 “You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’”

Smug Satisfaction // Self Confidence > Arms too Full to Reach Out for God

“Affluenza: An array of psychological maladies such as isolation, boredom, passivity and lack of motivation engendered in adults, teenagers and children by the possession of great wealth. An unhappy condition of overload, debt, anxiety, and waste resulting from the dogged pursuit of more.”

We can EASILY Grow PROUD and SMUG - Think we DESERVE

All the BLESSINGS and MERCIES God has Freely Given in Christ

“What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?”
1 Corinthians 4.7

c. Lost their Dress

v. 17 “But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.”



Laodicea > Wealthiest city in Phrygia >

Fertile ground good grazing Sheep > Carefully Bred FAMOUS

Soft, Glossy Black Wool > Great Demand FASHION BRANDS

Naked > No Garments of RIGHTEOUSNESS to APPEAR before a Holy God

Bible > ‘Nakedness’ symbolized Judgment & Humiliation

In God’s Sight > Laodiceans were SPIRITUAL STREAKERS

Like Emperor’s New Clothes > Did not REALIZE they WERE NAKED

Medical School > Famous Teachers > Eye-salve from “Phrygian powder” & Oil

Blind > No Awareness of SPIRITUAL POVERTY and ETERNAL DANGER

Agricultural & Commercial Prosperity > brought Banking Industry to Laodicea

After Devastating Earthquake of A.D. 60 City Rebuilt w/out Financial Aid

REBUILT City on OWN FUNDS > Refused Imperial Loans

Poor > Nothing to purchase FORGIVENESS and ENTRY into God’s Kingdom

“The pride of Laodicea was infectious. Christians caught the plague. The spirit of complacency crept into the church and tainted it. Members of the church became smug and self-satisfied. Jesus Christ needed to bluntly expose them.”

John Stott

Pitiful > opposite of Admirable > HAUGHTY Self Satisfaction is EMPTINESS

Wretched > opposite of Happy > Heading to Eternal Fire, and Gnashing of Teeth

FORGOTTEN “Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

Colossians 2.3

Nothing Compares to Surpassing Greatness of knowing Christ Jesus as Lord

2. Jesus Cares

NOT HAND GRENADE Thrower > Not Drive-by Rebuking > Email Critique

v. 19 “Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline.”

v. 20 “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock.”

GREAT MYSTERY Why He Loves Us? > BUT HE DOES > Unto Death

a. Jesus Labored for the Church

I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. Matthew 16.18

v. 21 “I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.” HE DID IT!

INFINITE COST > Life of SINLESS SON OF GOD > Church’s Master Builder

b. Jesus Lives in the Church > He is LORD among the LAMPSTANDS

“I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone "like a son of man"... the seven lampstands are the seven churches” Revelation 1.12,13,20

Criticized on Earth for Choice of Company > Tax Collectors, Sinner, Prostitutes

Now as Exalted Lord > Still AT HOME WITH THE HYPOCRITES!

v. 20 “I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.”

Ephesian Church > WARNED > LAMPSTAND Can be Removed

UNFAITHFUL > He MOVES OUT > Lampstand not Turned Off > Transferred

“Nothing can exceed the desolation and melancholy appearance of the site of Laodicea today. The fragments of aqueducts and theaters spread over a vast extent of country tell of the former magnificence of this city; but of its once famous church nothing survives.”
C.J. Vaughn

The Church with capital ‘C’ > Grows from Strength to Strength around World

Local churches with small ‘c’ > Opened and Closed on Regular Basis

c. Jesus Loves the Church v. 19 Those whom I love

“Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.”
John 13.1

OPENING Vision of Jesus in Revelation

“To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood” Revelation 1.5

WASHED Disciples Feet > WASHED Church with His OWN BLOOD

Book > HISTORY moving to Eternal CELEBRATION of This LOVE

"Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.
Revelation 19.6,7

JEALOUS LOVE > Passionate, Exclusive Love > Loves them enough to SPIT

v. 16 “So, because you are lukewarm--neither hot nor cold--I am about to spit you out of my mouth.”

Embarrassment RICH CITY > lacked Basic Resource > WATER TO DRINK

No Doubt > Laodician Citizens felt like SPITTING OUT their Tepid Water
STINGING REBUKE > Jesus : “That is how I feel about your Half-heartedness”

Their Tepid Religion is NAUSEATING to the Lord of the Church

Chose COMFORT instead of Christ > Made GOD GAG!

“The Laodicean church was blind to its own needs and unwilling to face the truth. Yet honesty is the beginning of true blessing, as we admit what we are, confess our sins, and receive from God all that we need. If we want God’s best for our lives and our churches, we must be honest with God and let God be honest with us.”

Warren Wiersbe

3. Jesus Counsels

a. Experience: Been There, Done That

v. 14 "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation."

Self-Designation > Most Explicit Ref. in Revelation to Preexistence of Christ

Dynamic agent of God’s Creation thru whom Created Order brought to Existence

Hebrew term: ‘Amen’ = What is Firm and True

“the God whose name is Amen... the God of Amen” Isaiah 65.16 New English Bible

“the faithful and true witness” Trustworthiness > Sharp Contrast to Laodiceans

“the ruler of God’s creation” > “the beginning” & “firstborn over all creation”

Colossae just 16 kms WEST of Laodicea – Believers in L. knew these Words > >

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Colossians 1.15-17

“For the sake of this disastrous church, Jesus presents himself as the beginning, the origin of God’s creation, the one who is able to go right down into the chaotic abyss of Laodicea’s failure and make her anew, as he once made the world.”

Michael Wilcock

v. 19 “Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent.”

Biblical Demand > Repent and Believe > Turn from Sin and Turn to the Savior

SEE God's Stern Hatred of Evil > Necessary part of his Love for People

Best Athletes & Finest Scholars > get Hardest & Most Demanding Training

Letter: STRONGEST REBUKE & SWEETEST ROMANCE from Jesus

b. Expensive: Spend More, Get More

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

JESUS TALKS BUSINESS WITH THESE FOOLISH TRADERS

Very COMFORTABLE & CONFIDENT in Selves > Jesus sees DESPERATION

Need to buy from Christ > "gold refined in the fire" > become Genuinely Rich

Gold = Spiritual Wealth passed thru Refiner's Fire > Totally Trustworthy

White clothes > Cover shame of Nakedness > Contrast with Black Wool of City

Confident of Clear Vision > Never Imagined they Needed Christ's Eye Salve

"For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind"

John 9.39

KZ "I cannot afford to buy cheap stuff" WHY? Spend MORE > Get ANOTHER

Poor > Christ has Gold // Naked > Christ has Clothes // Blind > X has Eye Salve

PURCHASE GOD'S GRACE? EARN SALVATION? Buy w/ No Money!

"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost."

Isaiah 55.1

4. Jesus Calls

East Africa BAD MANNERS to POUND on Someone's Door > Say "Hodi?"

If the Householder wanted to WELCOME you > Response "Karibou!"

Jesus stands outside CHURCH > your HOME > your HEART Calls "Hodi?"

a. To be Refreshed by Him

v. 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."



AMAZINGLY Jesus is OUTSIDE of this CHURCH in Laodicea

BORN > An OUTCAST placed in Animal's Feeding Trough

REJECTED > Only place world had HANG HIM ON A CROSS

EXPECT from WORLD > CHURCH LOCKED its LORD OUT!

Not Verse for Altar Calls > Addressed to CHRISTIANS

Will you RESPOND with a WARM > "KARIBOU!!!"

"The only cure for lukewarmness is the readmission of the excluded Christ."

G. Campbell Morgan

Our Life WILL BECOME 'hid with Christ in God'

Perhaps the WHOLE CHURCH will not Repent > But IF ANYONE HEARS...

What about YOU > You will STAND BEFORE GOD ALONE > Ready??

Does your HEART Cry KARIBOU! to the SAVIOR who calls YOU?

Invited Come & Feast!! > Symbol of Intimacy > Joy in His Messianic Kingdom

b. To Reign with Him

v. 21 "To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne"

Incarnate Son, Raised from Dead, Exalted in Glory, Enthroned at F's Rt Hand

45 X's in Revelation > GOD on His THRONE > SOVEREIGN GOD

“If we endure, we will also reign with him” 2 Timothy 2.12

Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Matthew 19.28

v. 22 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

7th and last time > Exhortation to hear what Spirit says to the Churches

To Churches of every Place & every Age, Therefore to Us in Our Day and Place

“Seven churches, different in so many ways from one another. Seven churches, similar in so many ways to the churches in which we live and serve Jesus... all churches need Jesus voice to fortify them against the enemy’s assaults, to make them savvy to his subtle stratagems, and to make them loyal to God and compassionate toward their oppressors?...His voice comforts our weak and wounded hearts, diagnoses our diseases, shatters our dreams of ease here and now, and calls us forward to the consummation of his victory in the new Jerusalem. His voice addresses us today in his letters to the seven churches of Asia, for each letter is what the spirit says to the churches.” Dennis E. Johnson

Revelation 3:¹⁴“And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: ‘The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation. ¹⁵“I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! ¹⁶So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. ¹⁷For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. ¹⁸I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. ¹⁹Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. ²⁰Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. ²¹The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. ²²He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’”

1. If Jesus took your spiritual temperature, what would it be? (v. 16)
2. What Laodiceans thought was their great strengths were actually their greatest weaknesses in the evaluation of Jesus. (v. 17) How can we avoid such faulty self-analysis?
3. Is having a lunch date with Jesus of real interest to you? (v. 20) Is your relationship with Him that intimate? What would you talk about?
4. Heaven will be a real long time of hanging out with Jesus; described here as “sitting with him on his throne” (v. 21). If you and He are strangers on earth, do you want to go to heaven?