

REVELATION: HELP FOR LIVING, HOPE FOR LEAVING

Sermon no. 8

LUKEWARM AND NAUSEATING: THE USUAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH?

Laodicea of Revelation 3:14-22

If Philadelphia is the most exciting of the seven churches, the one we hope to become; the last one, Laodicea – is the one that should scare any church the most. Jesus saved the worst for last. And for this church to merit the harshest words, all they had to do was nothing. Keep the status quo.

Laodicea is typical of a modern church unconscious of its spiritual needs and content with beautiful buildings and all the material things money can buy. This proves that the greatest threat to the Christian church is not persecution, but prosperity. And that the worst attack to our faith is not from Satan but our self-sufficiency, which leads to a moderate and safe kind of Christianity.

So here is one long hurting, cutting statement from our Lord, but it is “hurt” that is meant to heal:

1. THEIR CONFRONTER: *These are the words of The Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Ruler of God's creation. (v. 14).*

2. THEIR CULTURE AS A CHURCH: (vv. 15-17)

- What they were: neither cold nor hot . . . lukewarm.
- What they faced: being spit out (vomited) by Christ.
This does not mean they would lose their salvation. This is a figure of speech that indicates intense disgust.
- What brought them there? Self-Sufficiency.
 - The greatest enemy of faith is self-sufficiency. Anything that you trust more than God, will replace God.
 - In contrast, the most powerful Christian is not the skilled Christian or the experienced Christian or the well-known Christian. It is the person who admits powerlessness before God and who has completely depended upon God. No one could be more powerful!

3. THEIR COUNSEL FROM CHRIST: (vv. 18-20)

- Jesus told them in v. 18: Take what Jesus gives! Doing this shows repentance, and at the same time meets their greatest needs:
 - For their Poverty: "gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich"
 - For their Nakedness: "white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness"
 - For their Blindness: "salve to put on your eyes, so you can see"
- Christ rebuked them because He loved them, which love would also bring divine discipline on the church. (v. 19)
 - Sometimes God will go to extreme measures to bring back a Christian or to remove from him/her self-sufficiency (Heb. 12:5-13)
- Jesus appealed to individuals in the church to open the door to His Lordship (v.20). This was an appeal to Christians rather than to non-Christians.
 - If the cause of lukewarm Christianity is self-sufficiency, the cure for lukewarmness is intimacy. The cure to lukewarmness is a relationship; to know Christ deeply, personally, intimately.

4. THEIR CONSEQUENCE (POSITIVELY). (vv. 21-22)

- v. 21 "To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with Me on My throne". The singular motivation Jesus used was heaven. "Stay the course. Keep the faith because of heaven," He said to those in Pergamos, in Thyatira, in Laodicea. "There's a tree of life up there, a crown for you, a new name."
- Making a name or making money will shrink in importance if we're constantly thinking about the bigger, overarching principle of eternity. Life is truly a vapor. Heaven is what matters most.

FINAL THOUGHTS:

Jesus rejects any kind of moderate Christianity, the kind that is satisfied with itself. There is nothing mediocre about Jesus. C. S. Lewis said, "Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and, if true, of infinite importance. The one thing it cannot be is moderately important." But how do you battle this self-sufficiency? Get to know Christ deeply personally and intimately.

As we finish this Executive Checkup for our church, where do you think we stand? What should we ask God to become? "He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches".