

"The Church of the Last Days"

Part 2

Revelation 3:14-22

Introduction: Last week we started a two-part message on the Church of the Last Days. In this study we were looking at the Church of Laodicea because this church represents what the church will be like when Jesus returns. In the Words of our Lord as He spoke to this church, we can see many warning signs for us as our world moves toward the Great Tribulation.

I want to do a short review of what we looked at last week and then we will pick up where we stopped.

➤ **The Condemnation**

We considered last week how there is no commendation for this church. In other words, Jesus had nothing good to say about this church. The church was just going through the motions, but they had no power. The Spirit of God was not in the church. The church at Laodicea had no idea that God's power was removed from them. **They looked like they were powerful, but it was all of the flesh or of Satan, who counterfeits God's power to deceive the church.**

Application:

This is also true of many churches today. They go through the motions, but they do not realize that God's power has been taken away. The Holy Spirit will have nothing to do with the church because sin has become accepted within the church and in some cases, it is even practiced.

Notice Revelation 3:14-16

Jesus tells them they are "lukewarm", and He will spue them out of His mouth.

History.

The city of Laodicea did not have their own water supply, so they built aqueducts and they piped the water in from about 5 miles away. The water supply however came from the hot mineral springs near Denizli. In the 5-mile journey the water would only cool down slightly and so it would arrive lukewarm. The remains of the aqueduct system are still there today, and it is full of mineral deposits from the hot water. When the water arrived as lukewarm it useless until it was heated or cooled. So, when Jesus referred to the church as

lukewarm, they knew exactly what He was stating. THEY WERE USELESS IN THE CURRENT STATE.

What does Jesus mean when He says they were lukewarm? Spiritually speaking they had become friends with the world. This church was no longer a light in the darkness.

History tells us that 100 years earlier there was believed to be 7500 Jews in Laodicea. John wrote this letter 100 years later and with the prosperity of the city there would have been thousands more by this time. Now listen to what I am about to say! In the early church the greatest persecution that came upon the church came from the Jews. With thousands and thousands of Jews living in the city it is alarming that there is no mention of persecution.

This church has made peace with the enemy. There was little Truth preached and so nobody was offended.

2 Timothy 3:12-13

12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

➤ The Deception Part 2

The city of Laodicea was very wealthy for several reasons.

1. They produced a glossy black wool.
2. They produced an eyesalve that was shipped around the world.

The city had their own medical school as well. So, the city was extremely wealthy to the point that after an earthquake they refused money from government money and used their own to rebuild the city. They were, therefore, independent.

The church had also become very independent.

The philosophy of the city had become the philosophy of the church.

The world had made its way into the church with no resistance.

Listen to the words of Seiss;

"The name Laodicea means "rule of the people." This church well represents a church run by majority rule instead of God. "Its name designates it as the Church of mob rule, the

democratic Church, in which everything is swayed and decided by popular opinion, clamour and voting."

Notice Revelation 3:17a

Here we see that the attitude of the city had made its way into the church. They claimed to be rich and increased with goods and were in need of nothing.

Listen to the words of Trench:

"Self-sufficiency is the death-knell of relationship with God for independence of God is sin! The town had independently recovered from a devastating earthquake in the reign of Tiberius without asking for or receiving help from the Roman senate. Its riches and success had influenced the thinking of its residents. Pride and self-sufficiency had crept into the culture and the culture had crept into the church."

There is a warning in all of this that is so important to see.

The Bible is very clear that man has a very difficult time handling blessing. Often when man is blessed the blessing turns into a curse because man is quick to drift away from the Source of blessing which is God. Everywhere, the pattern of history is that of a revolving wheel.

- 1. Men suffer lack and affliction and turn to God.**
- 2. God responds to repentance with provision and blesses.**
- 3. Men glory in their condition of prosperity and grow cold toward God.**
- 4. Judgment falls and the wheel goes around again.**

We live in a society of material wealth today and for this reason we must be very careful.

Jeremiah 9:23-24

²³ Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches:

²⁴ But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.

Luke 12:16-21

¹⁶ And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

1 Timothy 6:6-10

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

God had warned Israel and we need to pay attention to this warning.

Deuteronomy 8:11-15

11 Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day:

12 Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein;

13 And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied;

14 Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;

¹⁵ Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint;

We need to have the attitude of Agur in Proverbs.

Proverbs 30:8-9

⁸ Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me:

⁹ Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

Notice Revelation 3:17b

They had no idea of their true condition. They were spiritually bankrupt!

Hosea 7:8-9

⁸ Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people; Ephraim is a cake not turned.

*⁹ Strangers have devoured his strength, and **he knoweth it not**: yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not.*

They were wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. This church had completely lost their testimony. The word "NAKED" helps us to understand that they had not kept their garments and their shame was evident to all others but themselves. The people of the city could see right through their religion. They were not living lives of holiness. They were not separated in their walk. They were like everyone else, but they called themselves Christians. Even the world knows that Christians are to be different.

Application:

This is the condition of many churches today. There is no separation, there is no holiness. Many of the churches blend in with the world. They have not kept their garments unspotted and so their shame is evident to all who watch them. They have no testimony because they have allowed the world to control their thoughts and their actions.

They accept homosexuals and transgenders. They support those who support abortion and in so doing they too are guilty of their evil deeds.

2 John 1:9-11

⁹ Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

¹⁰ If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:

¹¹ For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

➤ The Offer

Notice Revelation 3:18

Jesus made 3 offers to this church:

1. Gold tried in the fire so that they would be rich.

I believe this is a call for them to walk by faith. This statement can be connected with what Peter wrote.

1 Peter 1:6-7

⁶ Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

⁷ That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

The believers at Laodicea were not walking by faith. They were trusting in their material riches and they were spiritually poor. Jesus calls upon them to let go of the world and trust in Him and walk by faith. This would make them spiritually rich as their faith would be strengthened.

2. White raiment that they would be clothed.

The "white raiment" would refer to righteous works. This would be works done in the power of the Holy Spirit. They were more concerned with spending all their energy on working for the STUFF of the world.

Ephesians 2:10

¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Revelation 19:7-8

⁷ Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

⁸ And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

3. Eyesalve that they might see.

This would be in contrast to the eyesalve produced in Laodicea. That eyesalve improved physical sight but what Jesus offered improved spiritual sight. This would be by the power and the work of the Holy Spirit. If they would repent and walk in fellowship again the Spirit of God would give them the spiritual sight to see what was actually happening in their lives and how far they had fallen.

Notice Revelation 3:18 again.

I want you to notice that Jesus exhorts them to "BUY" these things. The question is, "What does He mean?" Salvation cannot be bought so He is certainly not speaking of buying salvation. The idea here is that when the believer makes the choice to live for God there is going to be a cost. There are going to be sacrifices that need to be made. Not everyone is going to understand when we stand for the Lord. It may cost us friends, a position, the applause of men, peace within the family, peace within our work place, and possibly even our lives. There is a cost in following Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 11:24-26

²⁴ By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

²⁵ Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

²⁶ Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

Conclusion:

Notice Revelation 3:19-20

I do not know where you are in your relationship with the Lord but if you are living in sin, you are out of fellowship. Jesus longs to walk with you and to commune with you.

As a church we must be on guard at all times. We must NOT get caught up in the material wealth of this world and we must not allow the world's philosophies to get in.