



Laodicea: The Lukewarm Church Rev. 3:14-22 Sept. 14, 2025

Rev. 3:14-22

14 "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: **15** "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. **16** So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. **17** Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— **18** I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. **19** As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. **20** Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. **21** To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. **22** "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." ' ' "

Video: Laodicea

- A. Welcome to Laodicea. We come to the last of the 7 letters to the churches of Asia Minor.

This letter is the most serious of the seven.
Unlike the church of Philadelphia that received only commendation from the Lord Jesus Christ, Laodicea received only condemnation.

In fact, the other 6 churches at least received some form praise from Jesus Christ, but not Laodicea. They received not one word of praise.

Why?

- B. Well, that is what we want to uncover this morning.

What could a church do to bring about the condemnation & the rebuke of Jesus?

What could a follower of Jesus do make Him say, "I will spew you out of mouth."

Surely, there would be no such church/Christian that would cause such reproach from our Lord.

- C. But as you are going to discover, there are some churches (and followers of Jesus) Jesus will NOT applaud. There are some people in the church Jesus is not impressed with.
- D. And that's what God wants you to see with your spiritual eyes this morning.

He wants to you to look at yourself (and others) from HIS perspective this morning.

- E. Why is it so important that we look at everything from Jesus' perspective.

Well, notice what Jesus says:

Rev. 3:14

'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

- (1) **The Amen** – Why is Jesus called “the Amen.”
What's the last word you say when end your prayer?
Amen!

Jesus is saying He is the “Amen.”
He's the final word.

- (a) In other words, guess who gets the final word about you? Guess who gets the final word about your walk and talk with God? Guess who gets the final word about your church?

It's not YOU. It's Jesus.

- (b) And He doesn't just have A word. He has THE word.
And He has THE TRUTHFUL WORD.
The word, “Amen”, is the Hebrew word for “truth.”

Ex. When you end your prayer with “Amen”, what are you saying? “So be it.” “May it be true.”

- (c) Jesus is saying that He is the God of Truth, and whatever He says about you...Guess what? It's true.
It's not just His opinion.
It's not just His viewpoint.
It's what's true about you!!

Ask people what they think about you, and I guarantee, many will be glad to give their opinion, but ask Jesus and He'll give you the truth!!

- (2) **The Faithful and True Witness**

Jesus testifies to the true character a person. He testifies to the true character of those in His church.

Think what you want about someone (or yourself), but there is only One who is going to cut it to your straight about that someone.

And His testimony is 100% accurate; 100% reliable.

- (3) **The Beginning of the creation of God** – many cults have used this verse claiming Jesus was created by God... stripping Him of His divinity, but to the contrary...

“Beginning” does not mean Jesus was the “first” being created. The word means “source or origin” of creation.

In other words, all creation finds its source in Jesus.

- Guess who created this world? Jesus
- Guess who created the universe? Jesus
- Guess who spoke this universe into existence? Jesus

- (a) Let me pause to say, what a way to begin a letter!! It is as if Jesus is saying...

- As the “Amen,” I’ve got the final word.
- As the “Faithful and True Witness” don’t even begin to make excuses about yourself. I’ll give it to you straight.
- And as the “Beginning of the creation of God” I’m the source of all things. I’m the source of your life. I gave it to you, and I can take it from you.

Therefore, young man/young lady, I have all authority in what I’m about to say, so you better listen up.

What do you think Jesus knows to be true about the Christians of Laodicea?

What do you think Jesus knows to be true about you?

Let’s go to Dr. Jesus and get an examination of your heart.

F. Notice, how Jesus describes the church folk at Laodicea

Rev. 3:15-16

“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. **16** So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

- (1) Jesus uses a physical example to describe their spiritual condition.

- a) Laodicea was booming with everything, but the most important thing: WATER

They had a brilliant idea to get water. They built extensive underground aqueducts from 2 nearby cities:

Colossae with its cold, refreshing mountain waters, and Hierapolis with its hot springs.

They piped in that Cold water nearly 10 miles away.
They piped in that Hot water some 5 miles away.

- b) But by the time the waters reached Laodicea, they were neither cold nor hot, but only lukewarm; and the hot spring waters from Hierapolis were dirty and foul. And that cold water was blah.

- 2) Jesus is telling the Christians at Laodicea their true spiritual condition. And what's their true condition?

Whatever it is, they were useless for Jesus.
So useless, Jesus spits them out of His mouth.

Jesus is not against you being cold.
And Jesus is not against you being hot.
Both are refreshing.

Ex. I love my coffee one way, hot.
I love my water one way, cold.
But if you put lukewarm coffee or lukewarm water in my mouth, guess where's it going? OUT

- 3) In fact, notice Jesus says, "I could wish you were cold or hot."

It's not cold or hot Jesus is concerned about.
It's lukewarm He's concerned about.

So, the big question we need to answer is this:
What does Jesus mean when He says you're lukewarm?

I think Jesus means 3 things:

1. Jesus Sees Your TREASURE

17 Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'

- A. The Christians in Laodicea were very rich, but Jesus doesn't have a problem with Christians being rich.

In fact, throughout the Bible, many followers of God were rich:

Abraham
Jacob
Moses
Joseph
David
Solomon
Matthew
Zacchaeus
Nicodemus
The Apostle Paul, just to name a few.

- B. And truthfully, if you live in the US, you are rich.
In fact, the poorest American is wealthier than the average person in many countries.

Ex. If you have a family income of \$50K, you make more than 99% of the world's population.

- C. Jesus is not concerned with you having riches.
But He is concerned when your riches have you;
and more importantly, when WHAT you have becomes more important than WHO you have.
- D. If there is anything God warned Israel about when they escaped from Egypt, it's this:
They would have it so good in the Promised Land that they would no longer depend upon God.

Deut 8:11-18 (NIV)

¹¹ Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. ¹² Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, ¹³ and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, ¹⁴ then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ¹⁵ He led you through the vast and dreadful wilderness, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. ¹⁶ He gave you manna to eat in the wilderness, something your ancestors had never known, to humble and test you so that in the end it might go well with you. ¹⁷ You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." ¹⁸ But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.

In other words, their riches turned their heart away from God. And they thought they didn't need God. And they thought they could survive and thrive without God.

- E. And that's exactly what happened to the Christians in Laodicea.

Don't think history won't repeat itself.
Don't think your heart would never turn away from God.

It happened to the Christians in Laodicea:

v. 17, "I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing"

- F. Jesus was no longer their TREASURE.

They treasured the stuff of earth and not the TREASURE of Heaven.

And Who's the Treasure of Heaven? JESUS.

What does it mean to not TREASURE Jesus?

It means:

- (1) You don't TREASURE (hold with utmost/supreme value) the WAYS of Jesus.
- (2) You don't treasure the WANTS of Jesus.
- (3) You don't treasure the WILL of Jesus.

It means you are all about your ways, your wants, and your will.

G. And when it's not in your heart to want what Jesus wants, and what Jesus wills, and the Jesus way, JESUS SAYS you are like lukewarm water; you're useless; and the only thing you're useful for is to be vomited out of His mouth.

H. Doesn't Jesus mean something to you?

That's your problem.

Jesus doesn't want to mean SOMETHING to you.

He wants to mean EVERYTHING to you.

Jesus doesn't want to be PART of your life.

Jesus wants to BE your life.

I. And as long as Jesus is just SOMETHING to you, truthfully, HE'S NOT MUCH TO YOU!

And proof is in the pudding:

- How MUCH of Jesus' way, wants, and will do you seek?
- How MUCH of this world's ways, wants, and will do you seek?

For many church people, Jesus is just a ticket to get them out of Hell. They want all the blessings of Jesus, but they don't want the ways of Jesus, the wants of Jesus, and the will of Jesus. They just don't want Jesus.

J. In fact, answer this question:

If you could have Heaven with no more sickness, sorrow, sin, Satan, all your family, all your friends, an eternal life of rest, peace, prosperity, and beauty, would you be satisfied in Heaven?

Now let me ask it another way:

You can have all of that, and would you be satisfied if there was no Jesus in Heaven?

K. But is that not how many of us live here on this earth?

You want the blessings of Jesus, but what you should want more is the BLESSER.

AND THE BLESSER IS JESUS.

And you only want Jesus when you TREASURE HIM ABOVE ALL ELSE.

You want His way, His wants, and His will more than anything this world can offer you.

- L. And if that is not in your heart, you're lukewarm – and Jesus says you're useless to Him on this earth.

Jesus sees your TREASURE

Lukewarm means:

2. Jesus Sees Your MEASURE

17 Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—**and do not know** that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—

- A. What does “do not know” mean? Why do these Christian “not know”?

Sounds like there's a leak in someone's sunroof.

Sounds like they're not the sharpest knife in the drawer.

Sounds like they're a few fries short of a Happy Meal.

- B. What's the problem?

The problem is they are not measuring their spiritual status and their personal relationship with Jesus.

They are not measuring their spiritual growth.

Ex. When I visit my grandkids, Nolan & Miles (4 & 1), there is a growth chart nailed to the wall in the hall. And Lara is measuring their growth (their height).

- C. Paul says we are to measure our spiritual growth.

Eph. 4:13

¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

In other words, Jesus is our measuring tape.

And we are to use the measuring tape of Jesus every day to see how much we are like Jesus today.

- D. We are to measure how much we talk like Jesus; how much we walk like Jesus; how much we think like Jesus; how we are loving like Jesus, serving like Jesus, working like Jesus, worshipping like Jesus, witness like Jesus.

How much we are growing in Jesus.

- E. And we even need to know where we are NOT growing in Jesus.

In other words, we ought to know where we're failing with Jesus.

Do you know where you are failing with Jesus?

Do you know where you are not measuring up with Jesus?

- F. Let me tell you about the Laodiceans Christians. They failed to know where they were failing.

They did “not know” their shortcomings with Jesus. They did not know they had some serious problems with Jesus.

They didn't know how proud they were.
They didn't know how selfish they were.
They didn't know how self-centered they were.
They didn't know how worldly they were.
They didn't know how spiritually blind they were.

- G. And when you have trouble seeing your faults, the problem is you're not using the right measuring tape. You're not measuring yourself by the standards of Jesus.

That's why you can lose your temper, tell half-truths, gossip, complain, criticize, and just be religious AND JUSTIFY ALL YOUR ACTIONS. And fail to see that those are marks of a person who is walking in the flesh and not the Spirit.

- H. And do you really want to know what Jesus says about your failure to measure up?

He says you're lukewarm – useless for Him in this world.

And there's a 3rd mark of being Lukewarm according to Jesus.

3. Jesus Sees Your CHARACTER

v. 17, —and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—

- A. Jesus is not determining the genuineness of your relationship with Him by your works.

Now, no doubt He sees our work – what we do. But works won't work when it comes to our acceptance by Jesus.

The only work that matters is the work of Jesus on the cross.

- B. You certainly can't be saved by your works. You're only saved by the work of Jesus – Who paid the penalty for your sins on the cross.

And when you show faith in Jesus, that's when His salvation become yours.

- C. You don't work to be saved, but if you are saved, you will work.

And do you know what work you will do?
It's not an OUTWARD work.
It's an INWARD work.

Jesus is not looking for how many mission trips you have been on.
Jesus is not looking for how many Christian retreats you've been to.
Jesus is not looking for how often you go to church, or how what you do at church.

Jesus is not looking at your credentials.
HE'S LOOKING AT YOUR CHARACTER.

- D. The Laodicean Christians were attending church, going on mission trips, attending retreats, and doing lots of church work.

They had great credentials, but what they didn't have was CHARACTER: the CHARACTER OF CHRIST.

Don't measure a person's spirituality by their CREDENTIALS. You better measure it by their CHARACTER of Christ.

Jesus said to the Laodiceans, "you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—"

- Wretched – someone who is frustrated and exhausted with their life; trying to be successful more than faithful.
- Miserable – no joy, just misery; always looking for greener grass; not content with God's hand and plan for their life.
- Poor – spiritually (not materially) – no real spiritual depth; not spending time on their knees or in God's Word.
- Blind – they only see what they want to see, but can't see what God wants them to see.

- E. In other words, Jesus said you have so much, but you lack CHARACTER – the CHARACTER OF CHRIST.

And friends, the Character of Christ is not optional for believers. It's essential.

Jesus didn't save you to make you a good, moral person.
Jesus didn't save you to make you a better person.
Jesus didn't save you to make you a nicer person.

Jesus saved you to make you a brand new person.

2 Cor. 5:17

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation;

Jesus saved you to make you like Jesus.

He saved you to live like, love like, serve like, be like Jesus.

1 John 3:2

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him,

Rom. 8:28-29

²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. ²⁹ For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son,

- F. And if there is no evidence of conformity to the character of Christ in and through your life, you may not truly saved. You're just fakin' it, hoping to make it.

Or, you're lukewarm.

And what does Jesus did with those who are lukewarm – vomits them out of His mouth.

Because you are useless to the work of Jesus in this world.

- G. So, Jesus shows you what it means to be lukewarm:
Your Treasure
Your Measure
Your Character.

But good news, Jesus has a solution to your problem.
What's His solution?

A. Rev. 3:18-19

18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. **19** As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

(1) TREASURE –

v. 18, Buy gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich!

The coins of Laodicea were all silver.

But God says buy gold that had been refined in the fire.

Gold was a much better and purer metal than silver.

Silver represented all that Laodicea offered.

Gold represented all that Jesus offers.

Jesus is telling you to stop chasing after the dull stuff of this world. Stop seeking the silvery, shiny objects that are inferior to God; and start seeking after that which is golden.

And guess what's golden? JESUS.

Chase after:

- HIS GOLDEN WAYS
- HIS GOLDEN WANTS
- HIS GOLDEN WILL FOR YOUR LIFE

And when you chase after Jesus, you'll be RICH.
Richer than Elon Musk; Bill Gates.

Make Jesus your treasure and you will have treasure that is out of this world.

(2) CHARACTER

V. 18, and white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed;

- (a) They were famous for their black clothes. Jesus said He's got better clothes. White clothes – symbolic of God's character; symbolic of God's righteousness.

Jesus wants you to commit to walking like Him, talking like Him; He wants you loving like Him, living like Him, working like Him, worshipping like Him, witnessing like Him.

Make that your passion, and you won't been taking the walk of shame. You'll be taking the walk of fame. Because people won't see you. They'll see Jesus in you.

(3) MEASURE

V. 18, and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

- (a) Laodicea sold a famous eye ointment that would help their eye diseases – helping them with sight.

And Jesus wants you to see – not physically, but spiritually. He wants you see everything in this world from His perspective – not yours, not your mom, not your dad, not your friends, not Hollywood, not FoxNews... HIS!

- (b) But you have to anoint your eyes with the right kind of salve (God's kind of salve; not your kind, not man's kind, God's kind)
Why? So you can discern God's way and God's will.

And that means you have to first look at things through the lens of God's Word.

Measure everything according to the Word of God.
Screen everything through God's Word.

And don't make God's Word say what you want it to say. Make sure it's what God is really saying.
(That's a sermon for another day)

But know this:

If it doesn't align with God's Word, it's not of God.

- God is not going to have you follow a false teacher.
- God is not going to approve you marrying an unbeliever.
- God is not going to lead you to disobey your parents.

(c) Whatever God leads, it will line up with His Word.
And if doesn't, don't do it.

B. And listen to Jesus' counsel:

Rev. 3:19-20

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

- A. Stop being a FOOL ("Repent")
Get on FIRE for Jesus ("be zealous")
And get in FELLOWSHIP with Jesus.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

- B. And you will FOREVER reign with Jesus.

21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Conclusion:

Charlie Kirk – Wednesday, Sept. 10, assassinated on a college campus in Utah.

Charlie was a bold believer in Jesus.

It was not a political assassination. It was a spiritual assassination. It was demonic.

The demons wanted to shut him up because he was standing up and standing out for Jesus.

He was not just assassinated. Charlie was martyred.

He lived his life:

Treasuring Jesus

Measuring His life by Jesus

And having the Character of Jesus.

And that's how Jesus wants us to live every day!

