

The Lukewarm Church

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 20 March 2016

[0 : 00] Revelation 3 verse 14! It tells us about the angel of the church of Laodicea, and John is told unto the angel! The angel of the church of Laodicea writes.

And the context here is of an audit. I know in some places of employment where I've worked they have audits where they check things and you get scrutinised and they check all the people, everyone's got all the I's dotted and the T's crossed and everything's just in place that needs to be in the environment where I work.

And the context in Revelation 3 is of an audit. An audit, like a checking. And the Lord Jesus is here undertaking this audit. He's the auditor if you like.

And in Revelation 2 verse 1 it says that he walks around in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. These seven lamps of the seven churches.

And our Lord is actively watching and checking, observing what's going on in his name, as I believe he still is. He's inspecting the churches, auditing them, checking them, inspecting them.

[1 : 21] And it's been said that the devil wants to get control of the church, to pervert it, to make it spiritually barren and rotten. And an old time writer, E.M. Bounds, who wrote a lot on prayer said this, he said, a spiritual church converts souls from sin soundly, clearly and fully.

And it is its chief and only business. To convert sinners to holiness and perfect saints in holiness. The devil wants the church to be worldly.

And it is said that the less power a church has, the more entertainment it needs. It's got to fill that void. The Lord is doing an audit here of these seven churches and he comes to the last one, the church of Laodicea.

So we read there from verse 14, it says, Revelation 3, 14, Paul, John is told by the Lord, and unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, these things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.

The saying here, the Lord is the Amen, means he is faithful, he's true. You can believe what he says. The Lord Jesus is the Amen.

[2 : 41] It's a mark of his divinity, of his deity. He is the word of God and he is the truth of God. In Isaiah 65, 16, we read that God is the Lord, is called the God of truth.

The God of truth. And elsewhere it says about Lord Jesus, that he is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. He is the beginning, not had a beginning, he is the beginning.

He is the originator and the source, the creator. He says, verse 15, I know thou works, that thou art neither cold nor hot.

I would that thou work, cold or hot. God wants his people, each one of you and me, believers to be on fire for him.

On fire. Laodicea had a problem, they were neither cold nor hot. It was a lukewarm church.

[3 : 43] Verse 16, we read on, so then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew them out of my mouth. Very strong language there, isn't it?

This church was lukewarm. Who has ever had a lukewarm cup of coffee? If Julie's cup gets cold, I've got to go to the microwave and eat it back up again.

And lukewarm just doesn't suit her. And it's the same with God. He is sick of lukewarmness. He doesn't like lukewarmness. This church, this lukewarm church, it had no zeal, it had no heart.

Lukewarmness was a big problem here. Truly it's been said that the greatest enemy of the church is complacency and apathy. Complacency and apathy.

In the hearts of believers. It's like someone was asked to define these words and they said, I don't know and I don't care.

[4 : 48] That's the thing, that's the sense of it, isn't it? I don't know and I don't care. Apathy, I don't care, I don't know. Lukewarmness. Lukewarm people tend to be hit and miss, yet the godly will want to worship.

They will make time. Lukewarm people rarely witness for their faith. Yet our Lord orders us to, he commands us to. It's not an option.

Lukewarm people do not love God with all their heart. There's other loves that crowd in and crowd his love out. Lukewarm people are more attached to the things of earth than to the things of heaven.

Lukewarm people cannot be counted on. Lukewarm people are most the same as the worldly. There's scarcely anything noticeably different. Lukewarm people say they believe in God but they don't strive to know him, to grow.

They say they believe in God but they live as though he doesn't exist. You know I read a story about how it was compared to someone driving a car.

[5 : 55] They're driving along and they suddenly see the police car and they slow down. I hope you didn't notice I was just a touch over the limit there. You know I'm worried about the police man catching you.

Yet God is watching you all the time. Do you care about that? Do you care about what he sees? And so, some people they live, they believe in God, they say they believe in God but they live like he doesn't exist.

And so, this Lukewarm church makes the Lord sick, physically sick. It's a graphic picture. He's disgusted. It's a disgusting sight. He's disgusted with this church.

And this is the one church, the one church in this whole list of seven that our Lord has nothing good about. He has nothing good to say about it. It's a half-hearted church, a lukewarm church.

So, let us learn from this as we see our Lord conducting this order, if you like. And it's easy for all of us to have an easy going kind of Christianity where it's just, we lack that passion for God.

[7 : 03] It's grown dim, it's grown cold. There was a story about several years ago in a college that a group was formed on a college campus and it was called the Apathy Club.

The Apathy Club. And the officers of this club, they advertised a meeting of the membership and not one soul showed up. The Apathy Club. They couldn't care. They didn't care.

They couldn't be bothered. And you know, that's the kind of story that causes us to laugh. Yet, Apathy, couldn't care less attitude is a serious spiritual virus that's afflicting the church.

Someone has said that there's 90 churches closing every day. Wow. You know, pastors are giving up. Churches are shutting their doors, being turned into nightclubs or bottle shops just up the road at Gawler.

Or being turned into, you name it. Pastors are giving up. Churches are closing down. There's many that we could cite such examples of that.

[8 : 08] You know, in some communities where there used to be church buildings, they'd just been converted into second-hand shops. You name it. Or just bulldozed. And to make room for houses.

What is Apathy? The dictionary defines Apathy as a lack of feeling or emotion. A lack of interest or concern. An indifference. Couldn't care less.

Do you believe that Christians are living apathetic lives? Apathetic spiritual lives. I do.

I believe that's a common, commonplace problem. And we all can, I pray, take heart and be stirred up individually to consider this.

Not to condemn, but to exhort. And although lost people are living all around us, some of us don't care enough to try to reach them, to bring them to the Lord.

[9 : 08] And although people are in all kinds of need, it's like we don't care enough to call them, to contact them, to reach out, to pray for them.

You know, it's easy to miss people even in churches when there's a big gathering especially. Someone can be left on their own. Just sitting left without anyone bothering.

I was encouraged this morning to see someone take the effort to go and talk to someone who couldn't go to them. He was in a wheelchair. Now let's be mindful of these things and try to be considerate, compassionate.

The church of God. Our Lord comes as an auditor and He takes an evaluation, He makes an evaluation.

Let's make an honest self-assessment. Presently, would you say that you have a great spiritual passion for the work of the Lord or are you spiritually inactive? I've been encouraged lately to see some take the mission of these English language classes.

[10 : 13] What a mission field to reach out to people from other cultures and to encourage them and show Christian love and care and be thoughtful. And what a mission field.

There's whole numbers of people from the nation of Sudan that are just at our doorstep. We can be a missionary to Africa right here where we live.

How passionate are you for God? Someone has said people can be passionate about many things such as cars, houses, clothes, political views, movies.

But they dare not be passionate about Christ and His kingdom. But what greater cause? The church has lost its passion for the things of the Lord. Now the hymn book of the lukewarm church is songs like these.

The hymn book of the lukewarm church, take my life and let me be. Where He leads me I will consider following. I surrender some.

[11 : 13] Pillow of ages fluffed for me. A comfy mattress is our God.

My hope is built on nothing much. It's the hymn book of the lukewarm church. Lukewarmness, it's a terrible thing isn't it? It's a horrible affliction. And God hates such false religion.

He's heartily sick of it. Violently, physically sick of it. And there's a man, a preacher called Vance Hampton who said this, The cause of Christ has been hurt more by Sunday morning beach warmers.

Who pretend to love Christ. Who call Him Lord but do not His commands than like all the publicans and sinners. Our Lord continues His order in verse 17.

Because thou sayest that I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing. And knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.

[12 : 14] This is a proud church. A materialistic church. They've got everything moving and shaking. Everything just so in verse 17. We'll stay with verse 17.

Yet God said this proud materialistic church was really poor, miserable. Poor, miserably poor. Like a beggar poor. Laodicea as a city was noted for its wealth, its luxury, its fine living.

This church was claiming great success and power. It was bragging on that it was increased with goods. You know, these chairs wouldn't have been good enough for the Laodicean church.

You know, you'd have to have padded and the latest and most comfortable chairs. And you know, this air conditioner wouldn't be good enough for the Laodicean church.

It would have to be much better than that. You could go on and on. The carpet, you know, all the chewing gum on the carpet. You know, you could see this carpet. And it wouldn't be good enough for the Laodicean church.

[13 : 15] But now this was the Laodicean church bragging on, increased with goods. And they were busily merchandising with their self-help books and their tapes and CDs and their cool t-shirts, their caps and their pens.

And this marketing mentality that they were cool and hip. Christian psychology, hip Christian clothing, Christian weight loss schemes. You know, some churches have got Christian yoga and Christian hip-hop and you name it.

And there's even a Christian Rubik's Cube on top. So there's some crazy things going on. They're increased with goods. And this was the kind of arrogance and ignorance of the Laodicean church.

And the exaltation of man. A lot of bragging goes on in churches about their power and the things that they have. And it becomes an unholy mixture. And we become idol worshippers.

We need to watch that. We don't want to get too professional. We want to be, keep humble. And that's why sometimes we don't have the greatest of things.

[14 : 20] But we want to have our priorities right. And so this Laodicean church, it got self-reliant, self-righteous, self-confident. And whereas for us as Christians, our sufficiency is of God.

He is the all-sufficient one who truly meets our every need. And this church had a form of godliness, but it lacked the power thereof. It wasn't real. It was a bankrupt church spiritually.

It was miserable and it was a shameful thing. A worldly church, wretched, hopeless, helpless.

There's an old-time man of God, Horatius Boner.

That's the name, isn't it? He said, I looked for the church and I found it in the world. I looked for the world and I found it in the church. The world in the church. There's an overwhelming ignorance, a spirit, a thinking of the world that's taken hold and taken over in some quarters.

There's a great neglect of spiritual things. To neglect God's word is a reproach for us, a dreadful thing. Today many Christians are not only having trouble sharing the gospel, but even explaining

what it is.

[15:28] And this common idea that you can lose your salvation, it's foreign to the scriptures. There's a whole lot of false teaching, a whole lot of false concepts that are just so prevalent.

Today there's great danger that the gospel is lacking. Check this out. Here's some statistics about the spiritual beliefs of the American church.

You could say Australia's just as bad. We tend to follow America, sadly. But 53% say the Holy Spirit doesn't exist. These are church goers.

30% say that Christ died but he never had a physical resurrection. 29% contend that when Christ lived, he was human and committed sins like other people.

29%. 25% agree that it doesn't matter what faith you follow because all faith groups teach the same lessons. Wow. 25%.

[16:27] 31% say a good person can earn his or her way into heaven. 31%. 12% don't know what will happen to them after they die.

And 47% say that Satan does not exist. These are church goers. These are people going to church who have got such ignorance about plain doctrine.

Campbell Morgan, an old time preacher said this. He said, Lukewarmness is the worst form of blasphemy. If there is anything abhorrence, hateful in other words, to the heart of Christ, it's a tepid church.

A lukewarm church. He goes on, This condition of being tepid is utterly repugnant to him. No emotion, no enthusiasm, no urgency, no compassion.

End quote. It's a great affliction. It seems like in churches today there's two extremes. You've either got wildfire or no fire. You've got people going crazy and nutty and mad.

[17:32] Wildfire. And then you've got the no fire ones. There's a church down the road, an Anglican church that I was just told today. So you walk in there and you're encouraged to join the Freemasons.

That's the ignorance. And they're so brazen with it apparently. This is blatant stuff. You know, go and join the Freemasons, the secret society. That when you get to the ultimate degree, you realise who they're worshipping.

And it's not God. It's Lucifer. It's Lucifer. So this is what's going on. Either wildfire or no fire. Dead. Cold. Nothing. And so, and it's happening all over.

I met with a couple who attend a large local church down the road. You can consider which one I'm talking about. Where they have a traditional worship service, followed by a contemporary one.

It features all the loud rock music, clapping, swaying, dancing. They told me that the genuine songs of worship would be out of place at the second service. Why is that? If it's out of place at the second service, why are they doing it?

[18:36] Why are they doing this? A preacher, Ravenhill, said this. The church has to discover two things. One, the majesty and the holiness of God. And the other, the sinfulness of sin.

The majesty and holiness of God. And the sinfulness of sin. The Bible says that some worship, God describes as just noise. Noise. Noise.

You know, it's like some of the music you hear in the neighbourhood. Yeah? It's, music isn't the word for it. It's just noise. And that's what you're hearing in some churches too. Music affects the spirit.

Will it be good, Christ exalted music with sound doctrinal foundation to it? Or will it be a compromised substitute with a worldly beef and emphasis?

In 400 BC, and this is the worldly source, a Greek philosopher Plato said this. If one listens to the wrong kind of music, he will become the wrong kind of person.

[19:35] God says sin. It's iniquity. Even the solemn meeting it says. Sin in the church is spreading like a plague of black death. Lukewarm churches are worldly.

Worldliness, it means basically disobedience. God says separate yourselves from the world and be holy. And man says no, I want more of it. I don't want to change.

I want to hang on to the world. The devil wants to blur the line between that which is holy and that which is unholy. But yet, there is a difference between the profane and the sacred.

Between the holy and the evil. A.T. Pearson, a preacher well known for advancing missions said, was asked, Don't you think that the world is getting converted already?

Well, he replied, I admit that the world has become a little churchy. But the church has become immensely worldly. Something is seriously wrong, brothers and sisters, when a church can get a big crowd for a picnic.

[20 : 42] Or to some kind of game or outing. But no one shows up for soul winning. Something is wrong when we make no effort to get out for the prayer meeting.

Never give out tracts. Never win souls to Christ. Vance Havanagh, the preacher again, said this. He said, People go where they want to go. Where their hearts are, their heels will follow.

Where their hearts are, their heels will follow. Our Lord rebuked the Laodiceum church as backslidden. One writer described it like this. Christianity of old quenched the flames of oppression. It lit the fires of freedom. It led two continents out of the darkness of paganism. Today's Christianity is known for bingo games. Softball leagues.

Milk toast preachers. Christianity of old toppled the Roman Empire. Today's Christianity cannot even rid the nation of legal abortion. There's many examples we could cite.

[21 : 41] Now I'm going to name a name here. And sometimes it's hard to name a name because people might think, Well, there's nothing. He's kind of halfway there. He's wrote some interesting kind of books.

There's some, you know, I've got some of his books. Rick Warren. Rick Warren, he's an example of this kind of problem in the church. Rick Warren, he's just an example. One of many we could name. But Rick Warren is an example of this kind of problem in the church. He neglects separation. He has spoken at Hillsong. When he spoke at Hillsong, he taught that all Christians should hear direct prophecies from God.

So extra-biblical revelation. Not biblical revelation. Extra-biblical. Outside of this book. Direct prophecies from God. Rick Warren is yoked together in partnership with other religions and ecumenical outfits, including praising the so-called Pope himself.

He has referred to the Pope as our Pope and Holy Father. It's in direct contradiction to the Word of God. To call the Pope even Pope, which means Father.

[22 : 48] But Holy Father is God's title. And Rick Warren, he often quotes from the Message Bible, which is a woefully bad paraphrase of the Bible. Rick Warren has been softening on homosexuality, partnering up with Elton John, a blatant homosexual, as he joins in joint endeavours with Elton John.

And he has also apologised for at one time promoting a proposition that would ban same-sex unions. He's watered it down. He's softening. He's weakening. Rick Warren has endorsed Catholics Come Home, which is an organisation whose goal is to undo the Reformation and bring everyone back together into the fold of Mother Rome, the Catholic Church.

Come. Catholics, come home. Rick Warren's standing there. His name is on the CD. His face is on the propaganda for this project of the Pope.

And friends, today the Pope of Rome has not changed any of his devilish doctrines, of his damnable debt doctrines, of his demonic doctrines. The devilish, damnable heresies of Rome are just as damnable as they were when men and women of God went to the stake and were burnt to death because they objected to it.

They protested. They were Protestants. And this is just one example of the lukewarmness that prevails. What of our church? What of ours? Will we be a soul winning church? A church faithful, devoted to the word?

[24 : 23] The people of Laodicea were fooling themselves. We read on from verse 18. The Lord gave some counsel to this Laodicean church. He says, He says, I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich.

And white raiment, that thou might be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear. And anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see.

Here's a picture of several things here in verse 18. He talks about gold, refined gold. It's a picture of godly faith that's been through the fires. It's gone through those times of trial.

Refined gold. God wants you to be refined. You might be going through some tough things, maybe it's God refining you. God might have chosen you as a blessing for you.

Some of you are going to get bigger crowns than me. I may not even get one. The Bible says you can lose your crown. You can't lose your salvation, but you can lose your crown. You can lose your rewards.

[25 : 23] Hold fast your crown. Hold fast what you've got. And that's the big refined gold. That God's going to bless you for all the things you've gone through in life. You know, rejoice.

Jump for joy is what it says when you're persecuted. White robes. This symbolizes righteousness. The righteousness of our Lord applied to the believer. White robes.

And then it says eye salve or anointment of eyes so that you may see. There's no blindness more terrible than being blind to someone's own real condition before God.

And these people in Laodicea, they needed to see things as Jesus saw them. Verse 19. He says, as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous therefore and repent.

Here is this church, the great auditor. Our Lord is auditing, he's examining, he's scrutinizing this church. And this church is under God's judgment. And in love, he rebukes us.

[26 : 19] He rebukes us because he wants to restore us. That's what God does to us. Sometimes there's a rebuking. You know, it says reprove, rebuke. It's all, with all long suffering in doctrine. Sometimes we need a rebuke.

And it's because we do it in love. We can receive it in love. And God loves us so much that he tells us how to get things straightened out. And that's what he says here to the church at Laodicea.

The ones he loves, he rebukes. He chastens. He says he wants to restore us. So we can have a freshness, a zeal, a refreshing. It's been truly said, Spurgeon said this, back to the crowns again.

There are no crown wearers in heaven that were not cross bearers here below. There are no crown wearers in heaven that were not cross bearers here below.

So our Lord calls you. Deny yourself. Take up your cross. Follow me. Follow me. He says repent. Be zealous therefore and repent.

[27 : 20] Repentance is a change of mind that results in a change of direction. A change of mind that results in a change of direction. Some will find out too late that they were not saved.

We read in Matthew 7 from verse 22. Our Lord speaks in rebuke again. He says, Many will say to me. In that day, this is the context of judgment. Lord, Lord, have you not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils. And in thy name have done many wonderful works. Then, while I profess unto them, I never knew you. Depart from me, you that work iniquity.

Be zealous and repent. Don't settle for the superficial. Christian, man, woman, don't settle for second grade. For second rank. Be encouraged today.

Turn fully to God. Fully to God. Stop conforming to the world and playing in both camps. Instead, totally depend on God. Spurgeon said, It is harder a great deal to work for Jesus with a church which is lukewarm than it would be to begin without a church.

[28 : 28] Give me a dozen earnest spirits. And put me down anywhere in London. And by God's good help, we will soon cause the wilderness and the solitary place to rejoice.

But give me the whole lot of you, half-hearted, undecided and unconcerned. What can I do? You will only be a drag upon a man's zeal and earnestness. It's pretty strong language, isn't it?

He goes on. 5,000 members of a church, all lukewarm, will be a 5,000 impediments. But a dozen earnest passionate spirits, determined that Christ should be glorified and souls won, must be more than conquerors.

In their very weakness and fewness will reside capacities for being the more largely blessed of God. Better nothing than lukewarmness. That's a pretty strong review from Spurgeon.

In his church it said there was a continuous revival at 5,000. Yet there was a stirring there, there was a challenge there, that issue. And our Lord continues his challenge.

[29 : 35] In verse 20 it says, Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and suck with him and he with me.

The message for this lukewarm church, for our lukewarmness, is open the door and let Jesus in. Open the door and let Jesus in. Let us turn to God fervently in believing prayer.

Be zealous. There's many scriptures that speak of zeal. It says be zealous of spiritual gifts. Let us act like we care about the Great Commission. In Matthew 28, Go ye into all the world.

It's the Great Commission, not the Great Suggestion. It's the Great Commission. It's his call. It's his command. It's his challenge. It's his commission. It's his great commission, not the great suggestion.

And may the love of Christ constrain us. Let the love of Christ get hold of us and shake us and send us. And may we love one another with a pure heart, fervently.

[30 : 42] There's a lot of scriptures about fervency, about zeal. Let us earnestly contend for the faith, the faith. Let us get back to where we need to be, the old upper room.

You know, it's been said they didn't have Bible schools, denominations, programs, padded pews and pretty buildings. But they had the old power. The old power. The Holy Ghost.

The Holy Passion. And he's been moving since Genesis 1 verse 2. It says he moved on the face of the waters. The Spirit of God. He's still moving. He's not stopped moving.

And we need to move with him. And there's a sickness in the church, a liberalism, where there's too much machinery and too little power. Too many committees, meetings, organisation.

Too many preachers acting like managers running a business. We must get back to the old power.

The old power. The power of Pentecost. Psalm 92.10 it says, I shall be anointed with fresh oil.

[31 : 40] A fresh anointing. The same as the early church had. We can have the same anointing.

Not a noise, an emotion, but a true touch of heaven. Now, Lord gives us this promise in verse 21.

As we read on. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne. Even as I also overcame and am sat down with my Father in his throne.

He that hath him here to heal. And he hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. When we look at the church of Laodicea, We see the kind of church that we ought not to be.

And if we look at the opposite of the church of Laodicea. The kind of church that we ought to be.

That we ought to be the opposite of Laodicea.

So let's prayerfully seek to be such a church. A church of God's design. A people of faith. With the same heart. The same love.

[32 : 40] The same zeal. The same fervency. Not diluted and compromised. And just going on with every weird idea that the world wants to throw at us.

And the church just jumps on the bandwagon. Because it sounds like a hip thing to do. Not saying everything hip is necessarily wrong.

But the church of God is not meant to be tame and simmered. And just meandering along indifferent, inactive. Christians unmoved, uncaring, lifeless. But the church of God is meant to turn from this coldness, this deadness, this staleness, this lukewarmness.

And the church of God is made up of people, you and me. So when our Lord is rebuking a lukewarmness in one church, He could just as easily rebuke lukewarmness in this church, in our gathering.

So each one of us has to think of this issue. God wants each one of us, each one of us, to be that passionate people.

[33 : 44] That overcoming people. It's been said that a church that has passion is a church where discouraged folk cheer up.

Dishonest folk fessor. Sour folk sweetener. Closed folk opener. Gossipers shutter.

Conflicted folk maker. Sleeping folk waker. Lukewarm folk, fire up. Dry bones shaker. And pure potatoes stand up.

But most of all, Christ the Saviour of the entire world is lifted up. That's the kind of church we want to be, isn't it? Yeah. I pray so. And if we are truly to be His disciples, as one preacher put it, it will cost us our sins, our self-righteousness, our ease, and our worldliness.

There's a price. There's a cost. There's a sacrifice. And our Lord has conducted His order here of this church at Laodicea.

[34 : 51] What if He were to do the same to us, to you and me? What if He was to come and to walk around this church and have a good look? What if we were to conduct a self-ordid?

That's a good thing to do, isn't it? In my place of employment, we try to do self-ordids. So when the auditor comes, we've already got it all sorted. People know about auditing.

And so, what about if we look to kind of spiritually applying that, make it self-ordid, self-examination.

The Word tells us, doesn't it?

Examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith. We want this church to be such a church that we examine ourselves and tenderly be sensitive to God's Spirit about what He's pointing out.

I know someone this morning was telling me they're really trying to give up smoking. That's one little step that they're doing. Just one example is there's much worse things than smoking, honestly.

[36 : 01] But it's just one example that He is working on in His life. And that's a good start, isn't it?

To think about how can I make some changes in my life so that I'm a bit more effective as a Christian.

And so, examine yourselves. Do you love the world more than you love God? That's lukewarmness. Do you neglect to pray? That's lukewarmness.

Do you seek worldly interests above the interests of the Kingdom of God? Seeking first the Kingdom of God? That's lukewarmness. Do you care and worry more of this life that obsesses you and dominates all your thinking and conversations?

It's lukewarmness. You can't serve both God and the devil. Make a choice. One of the worst train disasters in history happened in Leon in Spain in January 1944.

Over 500 people died. Here's this train. It was a long passenger train with an engine on both ends. And on this particular day, the train entered this tunnel.

[37 : 09] The engine on the front stalled. And when the front engine stopped, the engineer on the back engine started up his engine to back the train out of the tunnel.

At the same time, however, the front engineer managed to get the front engine started again and attempted to continue the journey. Neither engineer had any way of communicating with the other. Both engineers thought they simply needed more power. They continued to pull in both directions for several minutes. Sadly, hundreds of passengers on the train in the tunnel died of carbon monoxide poisoning because the train couldn't decide, the train couldn't make up its mind which way to go.

The people on the train died because the train had one too many engineers. Many of us struggle as to which way we'll go with our lives, whether to Jesus or to remain in our sin.

And this indecision can cause us to miss out on the most important decision in our lives. Sometimes we think we can have it both ways, but we can't. Like this train in the tunnel, it couldn't work out where it was going.

[38 : 23] But we can't serve God and also serve the devil. Jesus himself warned about trying to live a double life. He said, no one can serve two masters. No one can serve two masters.

Are you zealous of good works? The Lord wants us to be a people. Hardened, fervent, vibrant, burning, stirring. Have you lost the drive, the fire?

The zeal. It changes people. The zeal of God. Gives us perseverance, eagerness, diligence, willingness. Let's not settle for being a half-way Christian.

Just to close a quick story here. There was a crowd of people one day standing in a field and a fence was dividing these groups of people into two groups.

A fence in the middle. And the Lord Jesus came and he took the little group who were on this side of the fence. And then the devil came and he took the larger group. And after this one man was left sitting on the fence.

[39 : 24] The devil came back and told the man, come with me. But the man said, I don't belong to you, I'm sitting on the fence. The devil replied, oh but you do belong to me.

I own the fence. I own the fence. Get off the fence. You can't have it both ways. Decide for Jesus. Either you're with him or you're not with him.

Don't sit on the fence. Don't toy with these things. Don't sit on the fence. Get off the fence. The devil owns the fence. And so lukewarmness is a bit like just trying to play the game, isn't it?

Being half-hearted. Lukewarmness, it means being self-righteous, self-satisfied, lazy, half-hearted. Let's not be lukewarm, but rather fight up with a white-hot love for God.

A burning zeal for him. A holy desperation to please and honour him. God wants you and me to be sold out for him. Sold out. Living godly, righteously in him.

[40 : 29] And so let's let go of that easy-going kind of Christianity that sits on the fence. That makes no demands. That carries no cross. Let's rather be that zealous, gutsy, passionate, earnest people of God.

Our Lord stood at the door and he knocked. Open the door and let Jesus in. Let Jesus in.

Let us pray. Let us pray.

Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray.