

# Queasy Jesus

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[0:00] Well, hey, good morning. My name is Ray Sweet from First Christian Church of Greensburg, Indiana. You can always check us out at FCCGreensburg.com or our FCC Greensburg Facebook page if you'd like any more information about the church or to hear past messages.

But I'm so excited that you have tuned in to this audio broadcast today. And we just want to welcome you. And listen, our heart is so simple. We simply want to get into the Word of God, but most importantly, we want to let the Word of God get into us and transform us daily more and more into the image of Jesus Christ.

Now, just a few weeks back, my family had the privilege to go to Mahoning Valley Christian Service Camp, which is just right outside of Rushville, about a 30, 35-minute drive from Greensburg. And our oldest was attending their third and fourth grade camp. Bethany and I got to volunteer all week with her leading a family group, me preaching the Vespers in the evening. And then our two girls just got to kind of tag along and play.

Now, as someone who didn't grow up at church camp, you know, my wife did. And she like is immersed in this world and loves everything about it. But I've had to kind of learn a little bit about it.

[1:13] And there's just a lot of fun things that they do. And one of those things is the worship songs that the kids sing, that they're very age-appropriate. And as you can imagine, they're designed specifically for these kids where they are.

And I want to teach you one of those songs that we did at camp. And listen, you just have to forgive my terrible singing and being off-key. And you're also kind of supposed to do this song a little dramatically.

But here's how it goes, okay? It goes, I think I'm going to throw up. I think I'm going to throw up. I think I'm going to throw up.

My hands to the Lord. He didn't see it going there, did you? Either did I when they first sang it. I think I'm going to throw up. Sing it with me. I think I'm going to throw up.

I think I'm going to throw up. My hands to the Lord. Here's the second verse. I think I'm gonna hurl. I think I'm gonna hurl. I think I'm gonna hurl my sins out the door.

[2:15] Okay, enough singing for me. Maybe Tyler, our worship pastor, can introduce that as a new song for Sunday mornings, okay? But no, I'm just kidding. We probably don't want to do that. But we've all had that moment where in the words of Winnie the Pooh, our tummies start to rumble, and then it's like, oh no, it's gonna happen. She's gonna blow. And the part I hate the most is how you can't do a thing about it. And right now, you might be thinking to yourself, why is he talking so much about throwing up? I was gonna go to El Reparo, but I don't think I'm gonna go anymore.

But you know that feeling though that you have right before you throw up, that awful feeling? Jesus actually had that same feeling as he writes to the church in Laodicea. And he says, basically, that that's how I feel about you. I'm about to throw you up because your actions and your hearts are so bitter and so far from what I need them to be that I just can't stomach you any longer.

And I'm about to vomit you. Man, what a tough statement to hear from Jesus. And let me just give this warning before we start pointing fingers at this specific church, because these letters in Revelation 2 and 3 weren't just intended for these seven churches in the first century.

They were written by a Savior who knew that our churches in 2023 could fall into these same traps. So he gives us the mirror of his word to look into to make sure we are doing church God's way and not our way. Because listen, it's easy to fall into man's ways. And sometimes we don't even realize it. Things like choosing entertainment over worship. Things like choosing to please people instead of Jesus. Being served by everyone else instead of actually getting my hands dirty and serving.

Even staying comfortable instead of getting out of the boat and walking on the water with Jesus. See, God blesses churches that do it his way according to his word. And it's always my prayer that we as individuals who come together to make the body of Christ will choose that road less traveled and even often less popular. Now, as you turn with me here to the last book of the Bible should be easy to find. The book of Revelation. There's no S on it. Just Revelation chapter 3.

Let me give you a little context into the city of Laodicea so we can really understand Jesus's words this morning. So this city was about 45 miles southeast of the city of Philadelphia. It was about 100 miles east of Ephesus. And out of the seven cities that Jesus wrote to in Revelation 2 and 3, this one was the wealthiest by far. It sat along a major trade route and was known for three important things. First, it was the financial and the banking center of the whole region. And in those days, it was pretty common for robbers to hide out along the trade routes. So you needed to secure your money and this was the place that you would do it. They were very, very wealthy. Second, they were known for their famous black wool, which was exported throughout the entire world.

[ 5 : 22 ] And then last, this city was known for its school of medicine, especially for its special ointment that supposedly could heal all kinds of eye defects. And people would come from all over the world to buy this expensive ointment to hopefully be able to see again. And here's how Jesus starts off this letter in Revelation 3 verse 14. He says to the angel of the church in Laodicea write, these are the words of the Amen, which means the one who speaks truth that sets you free. He says, these are the words of the faithful and the true witness. That means the one who is faithful through everything that he is the real deal. And then he says the words of the ruler of God's creation.

This literally means that Jesus is the origin, that he was in the beginning. And here's our here, our savior comes before this church in Laodicea, and he's about to shake them up with the reality of their situation. And not only does he want them to know that he speaks truth that will set them free, but that he is also faithful to them, even in their disobedience. But he also comes with the authority and the foreknowledge of saying, listen, I am creator God. See, before this church existed, before their city existed, before their world existed, there he was existing eternally. And through his power, through his grace, he spoke everything into existence, including each of them.

God's word is the authority. That's the authority. That's the expertise that he lays down before speaking to them. And if they were smart, they would have just kind of zipped that lip and listened in humility because this was God speaking to them. And even to us through this letter all these years later. And you know what? That's what God's word is for us. This isn't just a book of suggestions. The Bible isn't just a book of nice children's stories or Sunday moral lessons so we can pick and choose from it. God's word is truth 24-7. And when I picked up a Bible for the first time as an 18-year-old who was so lost in every way, and I started to read the New Testament for myself, I discovered life in a relationship with Jesus Christ. I discovered the living water that quenched my soul. I discovered the bread of life that truly filled me up. This is God breathe. And so when we have to choose between what's popular in God's word, we choose God's word, we choose life. When we have to choose between a federal judge's ruling and God's word, we choose life because I refuse to follow a bunch of blind sheep when I have the good shepherd. And the first lesson that we can learn from this church in Laodicea is don't fall into complacency. Don't fall into complacency. So let's look here at

Revelation 3 starting in verse 15. Jesus says, I know your deeds that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other. So because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I am about to spit you out of my mouth. Now the NIV here is being way, way too nice about this statement.

It literally reads in the Greek, I'm about to vomit you out of my mouth. Okay. The natural tendency without understanding this city of Laodicea is to kind of approach this like an old Western, where the good guy comes in riding a horse with a white hat on and the bad guy comes riding with a black hat. That way you always knew who to root for, you know, white hat, good, black hat, bad. So when Jesus says you are neither hot nor cold, our natural tendency is to think that hot means good and cold means bad or white hat, black hat. But that's just not what he's teaching here. Here's what the church in Laodicea in their context would have understood immediately. I told you that this city had a lot to be proud of and was probably even the envy of other cities with their size and their wealth. However, they had one huge, colossal, gigantic, enormous, okay, I think I've made my point problem. Their water supply was not enough for a city of that size. They had to pipe in water from

two neighboring towns. So 10 miles to their west was the city of Colossae that was known for their nice, cold, refreshing water. And then six miles to the south was the city of Hierapolis, which was known for their natural hot water springs that they were good for ailing bodies. It was good for healing.

[ 9 : 59 ] And they needed both. They wanted cold drinking water and they wanted warmer water for baths and relaxation. But here was the issue. By the time it took this cold water to be piped in from 10 miles away in those days, and the hot water from six miles, guess what they got? Yeah, they got lukewarm water that really isn't overly satisfying for anything. So here's his message to them.

Both hot water and cold water are good for something, but lukewarm water isn't good for drinking and it's not good for baths. And these people knew that all too well because they were just like us. They wanted their drinking water nice and cold and they wanted their baths nice and hot. And they usually didn't get either. And Jesus is telling them that when it comes to their faith, they're also just like their water. They're lukewarm. They become complacent, basically playing church, going through the motions, and they were meant for so much more than this. And listen, so are we. And we can fall into the same trap if we're not careful. So if you're following along on your outline, first thing I want you to see is let's be a healing body. Let's be a healing body. Let's always strive to be that church that knows our purpose according to God's word and like those natural hot water springs or even a nice hot tub that just kind of relaxes the body, soothes the muscles. Let's be a place where when someone walks into our churches, whether it's someone who's been with us for a while, who's maybe had a really tough week, or someone off the streets who's hurting and broken, maybe even caught up in an addiction. I don't know, but let's be that place of healing where we wrap our arms around those people, loving and leading them into the arms of Christ to find healing that only Jesus can bring. And I can't tell you how many stories I've heard of churches when someone walks in broken who doesn't dress or look the way that some people think they should. Instead of greeting them and loving them, instead of realizing that, hey, God has brought them here today for a reason that they may need the hope that Jesus brings, or maybe they just need some encouragement as a believer in Jesus. Instead, I've heard way too many stories of self-righteous Christians just beating these people up with their words or their stares or their unfriendliness. And man, that screams Pharisee. That's not a follower of Jesus. That's a Pharisee.

That's not a healthy picture of the church the way God intends it to be. Yes, we cannot compromise the truth. And listen, here at FCC, we stand on the word of God and we get hit on that all the time.

[ 12 : 42 ] I mean, people don't always like the fact that we refuse to budge when the culture says you should believe this, this, and this. But we cannot compromise truth. But we still have an obligation in holding to the truth to love those that God puts across our path. And one thing I've noticed is even when we stand so strongly, or even when those who do stand so strongly against God's teachings, when they encounter the love of Christ through people like us, their hearts melt and they too want what only Jesus Christ can offer. So whether it's a hug you give someone at church or a nice welcome or a listening ear, let's strive to be that body of believers, those vessels for Jesus where people can walk into a service or even see us wherever we are and they can find the healing that they long for. Because Jesus is all about bringing healing and salvation to those who are hurting. See, his purpose was what? To seek and save the lost. And we have to be that healing body as well.

And then second, he says, let's be a refreshing body. On a nice hot day, there is nothing better than a tall glass of ice water. It's just absolutely refreshing to our bodies. And that's a good picture of what we're called to be as a church. Not only should people be able to find healing when they encounter our church family, but life is so hard. We all go through things. And if you're like me, sometimes on Sundays, we come dragging in because of everything we've had to face through the week.

And yeah, it's normal for us to put on our mask and smile and say, everything's okay. I'm doing fine. When sometimes it's just not. And that's why God is making this parallel here saying, listen, we need to be a body of believers. That's also refreshing. So what does it mean to be a refreshing church? It means we got to fill people up with those things that truly do satisfy their souls.

I'm talking about worship. And as I think about the most powerful times of worship through music that I've ever had, did you know that every one of them was usually when I came empty, when I was worn out, maybe I was just hurting over something, maybe beaten up by life a little bit. And even when I didn't feel like singing and I didn't feel like worshiping, God would just open my eyes to

know that he was there, that he loved me, that everything was going to be okay. And then all of a sudden I was singing those words with everything in my heart. And if you read through God's word, especially the Psalms, you'll just see how refreshing praising God is for our souls. Now, another way we worship God is through his word. I've been asked by quite a few people where I've ministered over the years, how I knew what to preach based on something that was going on in their life. In other words, hey, preacher, I felt like you just preached exactly to me, like I was the only one in the room, okay? Well, listen, that's simple. What we do is we put cameras in each of your houses and we just take turns watching different families. No, I'm just kidding. That's super creepy. I promise we don't do that. But here's why that happens. It has nothing to do with a broken vessel like me. That's all I am, is a broken vessel that God chooses to use. And I'm so thankful that he does. But God's word is the living water.

And when we truly allow our hearts to be receptive to what God is teaching us through his word, then that word will come alive in that moment. And here Jesus is saying to this particular church, I wish you were this place of healing where the lost and the broken could come in and find refuge. I wish you were refreshing where people could come in from the hardships of life and be filled by the living water and strengthened to go back out into the world and be the hands and feet of Christ. He even says, I wish you could at least be one or the other.

[ 16 : 33 ] But instead, you're lukewarm. Man, you're just going through the motions. See, I believe that churches truly thrive when we know whose we are and what we're here for. And we actually live out that purpose. And like Craig Groeschel, a pretty influential pastor, has once said, he said, God is not calling us to just go to church. He's calling us to be his church, the hope of the world. So let's not fall into complacency. Let's be truly faithful and committed to walking with Jesus every day.

Now, the second lesson we can learn from this church is this. Don't let pride seep in. Don't let the pride seep in. So flip back to Revelation chapter 3 with me. And let's read verses 17 and 18. Here's what Jesus says. He says, you say I am rich, I have acquired wealth, and I do not need a thing. But you do not realize that that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy from me, gold refined in the fire, so that you can become rich and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness, and salve to put on your eyes so that you can see. You know, one word here that comes to my mind is the word pride. And it's always so easy to see it in others, but it's the hardest to see in ourselves. And I bet you, because this church was full of wealth and people who thought they were big shots, I bet they had all the bells and whistles in their church, whatever that looked like in the first century, okay? I bet they had the finest everything money could buy. I bet they didn't mind telling you about it either. I bet they had some who held their money over others, maybe even thought, like you even see today, that their money gave them power in the church. But Jesus had some strong words for those people then, and even those people who act that way today, he says, listen, I know you have money. I know you define yourself by it, but spiritually, which is what matters, you are bankrupt. I know you have your fancy eye salve or medicine, but spiritually, you're blind. I know you have this fancy black wool that you think is all the rage, but people think 2,000 years from now is going to think it's absolutely hideous, but you are spiritually naked. And by the way, naked carries with it a tone of being humiliated. And if we're not careful, pride can so seep into our churches and our hearts individually, it's so easy to just place our identity in things like church attendance or a special event that we're known for or how nice our facilities are or whatever, when we must find our identity in Jesus Christ and in him alone. And if he chooses to bless us with things like attendance or more outreach opportunities or nicer facilities, then praise God, because that's all him and it's not us. See, almost 400 years ago, a man by the name of Thomas Brooks talked about this same problem that plagued Christians and the church since the beginning. And he said these words, he said, where pride hath possessed itself thoroughly of the soul, it turns the heart into steel, yea, into a rock. See, we have to be on guard not to ever let our hearts get heartened by the pride of worldly pursuits. But let's find our hope and our identity in Jesus. And I pray that these words from this famous hymn will be true of you and me today. It says, turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in his wonderful face and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and his grace. Now, the third lesson that we can learn from this church is don't ignore

[ 20 : 26 ] God's correction. Pick back up with me in verses 19 and 20 here in Revelation chapter 3. It says, those whom I love, Jesus says, those whom I love, I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. Here I am. I stand at the door and I knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the

door, I will come in and eat with that person and they with me. You know, some of us right now are thinking, God must really, really love me because I got a lot of discipline, right? A lady I served with in Rush County used to call them spiritual spankings. And as much as Jesus is coming at them right now, pretty strong, not happy because they're making a mockery of his church and he has every right to be upset. As much as this bothers him, he also loves them. He loves us enough to discipline us and get us back on the right path. See, I truly believe that those parents that love their kids the most are those parents that aren't afraid to discipline their child in order to set them on that godly path.

Those parents that realize that their job isn't to be their child's best friend. Listen, they're going to find those in school or wherever. What they need the most is a parent because they only get two of those. And that's one of the roles that the Lord plays in our lives. He loves us enough to correct and discipline us because his ultimate goal for us is holiness so that we can look more like Jesus every day. And one thing I've learned is that when I am receiving God's rebuke, when I'm asking for his forgiveness and getting my heart back where he needs it to be, those are the time where I am walking the most in his joy and his peace. Because more than anything, God wants what he says here in verse 20.

You've heard the scripture used a lot to refer to those who aren't Christians, but if you actually read it in context, Jesus is talking to the church. And here's what he says in verse 20. He says, 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 that person and they with me. Now, if you found yourself feeling kind of distant from Jesus, if you found yourself caught up in a lifestyle that you know isn't pleasing in his sight, he wants you to know that he's not quit on you. In fact, he's standing right there, arms outstretched, knocking, arms open on the cross for you. And then also this picture of him knocking on the door of your heart. But we have to open that door. We have to lay our sins at his feet and then enjoy that relationship with him because he gives us that free will. And then the last thing I want you to see today is don't forget your eternal reward. See, verse 21 here in Revelation 3,

Jesus says, To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my father on his throne. Now, all throughout these seven letters, Jesus has left these churches with hope. Whether they were doing things the way that he wanted them to or even if they had made a mess of things like this particular church here in Laodicea, he leaves them with the ultimate hope that we have in Christ. And that is eternal life with him.

You know, I know that living in this world as a Christian is not easy. So many things that Jesus teaches us about life and love and purpose and selflessness are so countercultural to our world today that we become targets pretty easy. We'll be ridiculed if we stand with him. We'll be blacklisted if we stand with him. And the day is coming and to some extent is already here where we will be in legal and physical danger if we stand with him. But don't ever forget the big picture. Because just like verse 21 said, if we stand with him and love and remain faithful to him through it all, we will sit with him on his throne for all eternity in paradise. What an amazing promise. And so FCC and those listening on the radio who maybe are not a part of our church family, let me encourage you with this.

[ 24 : 45 ] Let's run that race, that faith race, that faith journey with perseverance, keeping our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. And let's be that healing and that refreshing church that people yearn to be a part of. That when people say walk in on a Sunday morning into our fellowship time, our worship services, that they just feel so loved by the Lord and that he uses people like us to do it. Because listen, I don't know about you, but I don't want to make Jesus queasy.

Okay? I don't want Jesus to say, I'm about to vomit you out of my mouth. I want him to see us as those who are faithful to follow him through everything life throws our way. Pray with me.

Heavenly Father, I just worship you today. You are so very good. And we too can be so much like this church in Laodicea. We can be so spiritually blind and we can get cocky and thinking that we got it going on because maybe we got this amount of attendance or we got these new facilities or whatever it is.

And yet we know that it's all about truly loving you with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and loving our neighbor the way that you call us to. And so Lord, help us to never become complacent, to never let that pride seep in and cause us to fall away from you. Help us to never become those Pharisees that Jesus fought so hard against. Help us to be faithful servants of yours who will walk in

eternity in heaven someday, who have hope right now on this earth and who have been given the power through Christ to be your hands and feet in this world. So Father, be our hope, our joy, our peace, our contentment, and help us to seek your face like you call us to. We love you, Jesus. We lift up these words from your word today and we ask that you will stir our hearts and cause us to be more like you every single day. I pray this in the precious and holy name of Jesus Christ. Amen and amen.

Hey, I want to give a quick invitation to you today. I don't know where you are. Maybe God brought you to this broadcast. This is the first time you've heard this. You have no idea who I am or who our church is, and that's okay because God has a way of directing us where we need to be. Maybe you listen every week, but maybe you have some faith questions. Maybe you have some questions, some things you struggle with that you want to talk about. We would love to come alongside you. Maybe you're ready to say, hey, I want to give my heart to the Lord. I want to be His. I want to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit. I want to be with Him for all eternity. Well, you have to make that decision to surrender your life to Him, to repent and be baptized into Him, just like the Word of God teaches. And so if you have any questions about any of that, we would love to come alongside you. Once again, my name is Ray Sweet. I'm the lead pastor here at First Christian Church of Greensburg, Indiana. And you can reach out to us. We have a few pastors on staff that would love to be here for you. You can call us in the office at area code 812-663-8488, 812-663-8488. Ask for Ray, Steve, Tyler, Mitch, any of us would be glad to help you. Or you can go ahead and email me at ray at FCCgreensburg.com. So God bless you, and I pray that you have a wonderful week as a child of God.