

# Lessons from Laodicea

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Now for thy own name's sake, O Lord, I am thee, to pardon my men iniquity, for it is thank thee, Now as the Lord helps us, let us turn once more to the book of Revelation on chapter 3.

And again focusing on verses 14 onwards. 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.

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.

And so on. Just one or two thoughts on the words of the Lord to the church of the Laodiceans. The Lord at the beginning of the book of Revelation here, he addresses each of the seven churches that are named.

And he finds fault with most of them. And he addresses them as the one who loves them.

[ 2 : 0 4 ] As the one who cares for them. And as the one who sees the dangers that are around them, to which they are open.

And the church of the Laodiceans is one of these with which the Lord finds a particular kind of fault.

He says that this church is lukewarm. Neither cold nor hot. And who is it who says this about her?

Well, I'd like to say a few words. First of all, from verse 14, about the Lord, the way he describes himself here.

The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God. And secondly, the way he describes this church.

[ 3 : 0 6 ] He finds a number of faults with her. And again, the counsel he gives to her. Verse 18, I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich.

And so on. And then, finally, a word on the visit that he pays to her. At verse 20, behold, I stand at the door and knock.

It's as if her door is closed against him. And he comes and visits her with these words.

And as I was thinking of this this afternoon, my mind went to that portion of scripture in the Song of Solomon that we have read together.

And the church, evidently, in chapter 5, at that point, from verse 2 onwards, she's described as being somewhat backslidden or lukewarm.

[ 4 : 1 3 ] She says, Exactly the same as he came to the door of the church of Laodicea.

And in verse 3 in Song of Solomon, chapter 5, we hear the church speaking in response to the Lord's voice at the door.

And the church there says, It's as if she's loath to open the door for him and receive him in.

But then she is asked later on. In verse 9, what is thy beloved more than another beloved? And she gives a long list of things that she finds so marvellously attractive about him.

Chapter 5, verse 10 onwards, And we see that the church in Laodicea, she was beloved of the Lord.

[ 5 : 57 ] That's why he's speaking in these chastening terms to her. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten, he says.

And the scripture elsewhere says, If we are without chastisement, we are bastards and not sons. So the Lord takes care of his people.

And he takes care of them in such a way that he has to chasten them from time to time. Because of their backslidings. Because of their embracing of worldly thoughts and worldly activities.

Not being at all witnesses for him as they ought to be. So, the Lord here describes himself, first of all, in verse 14.

As the Amen, first of all. These things saith the Amen. The truthful one. The one who speaks nothing but truth.

[ 7 : 04 ] And he says, the faithful and true witness. He tells it the way it is.

He doesn't gloss over the circumstances that prevailed in the church of Laodicea. He tells her exactly the way he sees things.

And his eyes are able to see right into her circumstances. Just like the psalmist in Psalm 139, which we just sang a few moments ago.

Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. You know my sitting down, my rising up. Ye, all my thoughts afar to thee are known. And the Lord here, he tells what he sees.

And then he tells also that he is the beginning of the creation of God. Or, as it might be translated, he is the one who created all things.

[ 8 : 10 ] He is the one who created the universe. And holds it in being by the word of his power. He is the one who created the new nature within each of his own people.

He is talking to this church as the one who has given her being. As the one who has given her life everlasting. He is the one who knows her.

As we spoke this morning. That the Lord knows his sheep. He knows them from all eternity. And now he says to this church.

I am going to say something to you. I have made you. I know you inside out. And then he comes. And he tells her what he sees.

And in verse 15. As a witness for Christ.

[ 9 : 21 ] She is lukewarm. She is lacking in fervour. Lacking in commitment. Lacking in hands on for the Lord Jesus Christ.

She is lacking in enthusiasm of a spiritual nature. The apostle Paul. In a number of his letters.

Mentions a number of people. Who were used to refresh him. As he engaged with the heavy work of the gospel.

For example. He talks about somebody. And he says. That he refreshed my soul.

This is something that was lacking. In the church of the Laodiceans. They weren't drawing aside. To encourage.

[ 10 : 32 ] To strengthen. To refresh. Those. Who were. Finding the journey. Difficult. And I ask myself.

How often have I. Thrown aside. To refresh someone. At least with the aim. Of speaking words. Of encouragement.

And strengthening. To my fellow. Christians on the way. In 1st Corinthians 16. At verse 12. Paul says.

Stephanas. Fortunatus. And Achaicus. Arrived. And they refreshed my spirit. These three men.

Who don't hear. An awful lot about them. Elsewhere in the New Testament. They are mentioned. But they aren't as high profile. As the apostle. And others. Nevertheless. The Lord used them.

[ 11 : 31 ] To refresh. And encourage. The man of God. And then. Where there is.

Coldness. The coldness. Of spiritual lethargy. We need somebody. To draw near us. To warm us.

Do we not? That's what the Lord here. Is talking about. I wish he said. You were cold or hot. Cold to refresh me. Warm to warm me.

And encourage me. And I was thinking this afternoon. Well. When Elisha. The prophet. In the Old Testament. He spoke to the Shunammite.

Woman. And he promised that she would have a son. But after some time. Her son died. Saying. My head.

[ 12 : 30 ] My head. And he passed away. And. The woman sent for. The prophet. And the prophet.

Came. And says he went up. And lay upon the child. And put his mouth upon his mouth. His eyes upon his eyes. His hands upon his hands.

And he stretched himself upon the child. And the flesh of the child. Walks warm. He returned. And walked in the house. To and fro. And went up. And stretched himself upon him. And the child sneezed seven times.

And the child opened his eyes. And so on. I know that was. A miracle. Of the child's soul. Coming back. And that. The prophet was used.

In that particular way. But the point I want to highlight is. That we ourselves. As the Lord's people. We need to ask the Lord.

[ 13 : 30 ] To give us. That warmth of spirit. In order to encourage. And warm the hearts. Of those who may be feeling. The coldness of sin.

And the hardness of sin. In their own particular lives. I know thy works.

He says. Thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm. Neither cold nor hot. I will spew thee out of my mouth.

You aren't fulfilling. The purpose for which I have called you. It's as if he's saying that to her. I have that against you. And then he goes on to highlight something else.

Verse 17. Because thou sayest I am rich. And increased with goods. And have need of nothing. It's as if worldliness.

[ 14 : 38 ] Had so enveloped her. And crept in. And taken deep root among her. People. That she felt. Self-sufficient.

Not really needing anything at all. There was. An industry of. A woolen manufacturer. In the area. They were producing a black.

A woolen cloth. That was very valuable. And around that industry. Grew. A banking sector. And people had plenty of money.

And also there was. A medical school there. And they had. Discovered or. Invented or. Put together. A particularly effective.

Powder. That would help people with. Problems with their eyes. So there was money coming in. From the woolen industry.

[ 15 : 39 ] And money coming in. From the medical side of things. And the banking world. Rejoicing as money was pouring in. And the church saying. Well I don't need anything.

I'm rich. Increased with goods. I have need of nothing. And all the time. She's cold. She's lukewarm. She's not at all hot.

Doing the Lord's business. The world has taken. A segment. Of her life away. And then the Lord said.

You know not. That you are wretched. And miserable. And poor. And blind. And naked. It's as if he describes her.

As. A church. That is more like a beggar. Than a child of glory. The church. Is more like the world.

[ 16 : 41 ] Than she is. Like an heir of grace. It's not a terrible thing. To have to say about her. And it's the true witness.

Who's saying it. The one who knows her. At her heart. And he says. You are. Wretched. Just like the beggars. Used to be taken.

And lay. At the rich man's door. They couldn't do anything. For themselves. And they're miserable. They have no real. Delight in life at all. In the real life.

And she is poor. She's spiritually impoverished. Because the world. Has crept in. And she is blind.

She can't see herself. She can't see it. Although we have the scriptures. Telling us what we're like. Really. If the world has. Blinded us.

[ 17 : 40 ] To the reality of things. We just cannot see. The way we are. And you are naked. You think you're well clothed.

With this. Luxury. Woollen garment. But really. Spiritually speaking. You have nothing. To commend you at all. Is this a picture of me?

Is it a picture of you? It was a picture. An absolutely true picture. Of the church of Laodicea.

And they didn't know. How poor. And miserable. And blind. And naked they were. They didn't know. That they were impoverished. Because the world.

Had desensitized them. To spiritual things. But the Lord isn't finished with her. And the Lord says.

[ 18 : 45 ] I counsel you. To buy of me. Gold tried in the fire. That you may be rich. And white raiment. That you mayest be clothed. And that the shame of thy nakedness.

Do not appear. And anoint thine eyes. With thy salve. That thou mayest see. I counsel you.

To buy of me gold. Right in the fire. How can she possibly. Afford. To buy anything. After the Lord had said.

You are miserable. And poor. And blind. And naked. How can she. Buy anything. From a position. Of total impoverishment.

End. Well this is a marvelous picture. Isn't it. Of the gospel. At its very best. Because the Lord here.

[ 19 : 44 ] He says. Against. The poverty. That you have. I have provision. And I am encouraging you.

And counseling you. To buy of me. Gold. Tried in the fire. What does he say? Do they not have enough gold.

Stashed up in the banks. In Laodicea. Or he is talking about. A different kind of. Wealth here. He is talking about. Heavenly currency.

They were focused. On earthly currency. Whatever currency it was. He is focusing on. Heavenly currency. The gold. Tried in the fire.

In other words. He is talking about. His free grace. That he himself. Came into the world. To earn. For his people. If I can put it that way.

[ 20 : 41 ] He came into the world. As the savior of sinners. He went. To the cross of Calvary. And he paid. Everything. That needed to be paid.

On behalf of his elect people. And now he says. I am counseling you. To buy of me. This marvelous currency. That is available to you.

And she asks. And I ask. And you ask. How can I buy it? And there is only one way. Of this transaction.

Being a reality. I have to come. In my total poverty. Nothing in my hands. I bring.

Simply. To thy cross. I claim. I take you. At your word. And I come. Just as I am. Impoverished.

[ 21 : 39 ] And blind. And miserable. And naked. Nothing to commend me. And the Lord says. That's the way I want you to come. And that's the only way.

That this marvelous transaction. Can take place. To get heavenly currency. The currency. The currency of the grace of God.

I come. As I am. A sinner. With nothing at all. To commend me. Buy of me the gold.

Tried in the fire. It's been. Secured. At such a great price. The fire of God's wrath. Engulfed.

Engulfed. And enveloped. The son of God. As he suffered. And to death. Even the death of the cross. And he.

[ 22 : 37 ] Extinguished. That fire of God's wrath. Within himself. And in so doing. He.

Secured. An eternal inheritance. Incorruptible. undefiled. And fadeth not away. For those who come to him.

We see what he says. I counsel you to buy of me gold. Have you come. To buy. At this particular. Market.

The spiritual market. The heavenly market. Have you come yet? Why not? And then also it says.

I counsel you. To buy of me white raiment. That you may be clothed. And that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.

[ 23 : 35 ] You see. You see. They were. Focusing on these black. Woolen garments. But they were disregarding.

To a great extent. The righteousness of Christ. The white garments. That Christ. Bestows upon his people.

Or that God. Bestows upon those. Who believe in Jesus. That thou mayest be clothed. And the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.

And anoint thee with eye salve. That thou mayest see. Reference. To the ointment that was used to.

Improve the eyesight of the people. Produced locally. And the Lord says. I have something far better for you. Than the ointment that people around there.

[ 24 : 31 ] In Laodicea. Need to use. To improve their eyesight. I have the eye salve. Of God's word. Because the entrance of your words.

Gives light. And the word of God. Entering into our souls. Scatters our darkness. And gives us a true perspective on things. Gives us to see things just as they are.

Prioritise our lives. In such a way. That we will live to God's glory. And our own eternal good. Rather than live for the world. And the flesh. And the things of time and sense.

That thou mayest see. When our eyes are opened. We see ourselves for what we are.

And when your eyes are opened. You see. Your plight. As a lost sinner. You had never been aware of it before.

[ 25 : 44 ] But when your eyes are opened. By God's grace. You realise the danger. In which you are. And you. You seek. You seek.

To have. Safety and salvation. When John Bunyan's. Pilgrim started off on his. Journey. He was crying.

That he wanted. Life. Life. Eternal life. And he met evangelist. And after having come. A distance.

The evangelist saying. Can you see. That. Wicked gate. Says no. I cannot see it. Can you see that shining light.

I think I can. Well he says. Keep your eye focused. On that light. The light of God's word. And it will take you. To the wicked gate.

[ 26 : 42 ] Gate. And the wicked gate. Is there. And Pilgrim went. And he knocked. And he knocked. And he knocked. Until. Someone from within.

Said. Who is it? And he told him. That he was a sinner. Seeking the way. To Zion. And goodwill.

Opened the door. And he went in. We only see. Our need. Through the grace of God.

And we are only able. To act upon the need. That we know. Through the grace of God. And the grace of God alone. Will answer the needs. That we have.

The gold. Tried in the fire. Will enrich your life. For time and eternity. That is. The grace of God. Will enrich your life.

[ 27 : 41 ] For time and eternity. The righteousness of Christ. Will clothe you. In such a way. That you are able to stand. In the presence of a holy God. Uncondemned.

And at the judgment seat of Christ. You'll hear these words. Come. You blessed of my father. Come into. This kingdom. Uninherited. It's been prepared for you.

From the foundation of the world. And with the new. Eyesight that you have. You'll see the beauty of Jesus.

Just like the church. In the Psalm of Solomon. Gave a long. Long. Catalogue. Of wonderful. And attractive.

Features. That she saw. In her saviour. What is your beloved more. Than another beloved. The fairest among women. And then she culminates.

[ 28 : 39 ] That long list. By saying. Yea. He is altogether lovely. Altogether lovely. And that's what you will see.

If you anoint your eyes. With this eye salve. Of the gospel. That's what you will see. And you will see it more and more. As time goes on. And in eternity.

You will see him. With greater clarity. Than you see him now. And then he assures her.

Verse 19. As many as I love. I rebuke. And chasten. Be zealous therefore. And. Repent. He isn't writing her off.

The Lord is not in the business. Of writing his people off. He is directing them in the way that they need to go.

[ 29 : 42 ] In order. To get. Onto the right track. And the way that we need. To go is the way of repentance. Be zealous and repent.

What is repentance really? Well the meaning of the word in the original is. A complete change of mind. A turning around.

Of our mind. Of our affections. Of our hearts. It's as if. You've been walking.

Due east. And if somebody says. You have to repent. It's as if you're turning around. And you're walking. Due west. It's a hundred and eighty degree.

Turn. Not a hundred and seventy. Or a hundred and seventy nine. A hundred and eighty. And that's what's true. In relation to the Thessalonian Christians.

[ 30 : 49 ] The apostle is talking about. When the gospel came to them. That they turned to God. From idols. To serve the living and true God. And wait. Wait for his son from heaven.

Ask the Lord to give you. And me with you. The grace of true repentance. Taking out place. At the footstool of Jesus Christ.

Confessing your sin. And turning from it. Unto God. With full purpose of. And endeavor after new obedience. But then he brings us to verse twenty.

And he says. Behold I stand at the door and knock. I think it's.

One of the Scottish theologians. I think maybe it was Mac Chain. Who was. Writing on these verses here.

[ 31 : 53 ] And it's as if. Mac Chain says. It's as if. The Lord. Has followed.

The church home. And she's closed the door on him. Not having listened. Or acted upon. Anything that he has. Asked of her.

Up until now. In this particular section. Of the scripture. It's as if she has. Closed her ears. And gone home. Not having responded. To what the Lord asked of her.

But the Lord isn't finished with her. He says. Behold I stand at the door and knock.

Maybe that's the way. Some of us are. Maybe we've had warnings. We haven't acted on. Maybe we've been told the right way to go.

[ 32 : 54 ] But we haven't followed it. Maybe we've heard. Sermon after sermon. After sermon. And maybe we resolved at the time. To do something about it.

But. Then. The impressions wane. And nothing happens at all. But Jesus is following this.

This church. And he says. I am standing at the door. And knocking. Remember the picture. In the song of Solomon.

There he was standing. At the door. With his hair wet. With the dew. Of the night. Night has fallen.

It's as if the day is almost done. And he's standing there. And his hair wet. With the dew of the night. Is that the way it is with you.

[ 33 : 55 ] What does it take. He's standing at the door. And he is knocking. Is he knocking at. Your door of memory.

Is he reminding you. Of situations you've had. Upon which you ought to have acted long ago. No. But you still haven't done it. You haven't come out on the Lord's side.

You haven't broken with a particular sin. Some of your friends. Some of your friends. Have been taken away. From your side. By death. And you haven't changed.

The course of your life yet. Is he knocking. At the door of your conscience. Is he reminding you.

Of the sinfulness. Of that particular. Route you're taking. In your life. Is he reminding you. Yet again. That you haven't repented. Of that particular.

[ 34 : 57 ] Sin in your life. Is your conscience. Condemning you. As you hear his knocking. At the door. Of your conscience.

And of your memory. Is he knocking at the door. Of your heart.

Is your heart. Warming to the gospel. Well the Lord. Warms our hearts.

When the gospel. Deals with us. I know that. There are some people. Who. Rejoice at the preaching.

Of the gospel. And like the seed. That fell. Into the rocky ground. Where they spring up. As it were. And then. They die away. When the sun.

[ 35 : 53 ] Reaches. Full heat. Because they have no real depth. Of earth. Maybe it's an emotional response. Maybe it is. Some other kind of response.

That your soul. And your mind. Has to the gospel. But. It wanes. And it doesn't last. It's an emotional response. It's an emotional response. It's an emotional response. It's an emotional response. But what about.

When the gospel is preached. Even this evening. And the Lord is standing at the door of your heart. And he says.

Are you really. Going to let me walk away. Without opening. The door of your life. I am carrying with me.

The gold. Thried in the fire. To make you rich. I am carrying with me. The raiment of my righteousness. To clothe you. I am carrying with you.

[ 36 : 57 ] The eye salve. That will give you. Visions. Of God. And to look. Unto him.

Always. If any man hear my voice. And open the door. I will come in to him.

And will sup with him. And he with me. What an amazing. Promise that is. You remember the two on the road to Emmaus.

The way they had. Fellowship with the Lord Jesus. On the road. And their heart burned within them. And as they drew near. The place to which they were going.

Jesus made as though he would go further. But they said. No. Don't go. It is towards evening. And the day is far spent. And they constrained him.

[ 37 : 55 ] To stay with them. And he went in. And they knew him. In the breaking of the bread. Will you open the door.

Of your heart this evening. Will you yield. To the mighty working. Of God's spirit. By his word.

Will you. Receive the Lord Jesus Christ. Who is freely offered. In the gospel.

And those who do receive him. It says here. To him that overcometh. I will grant to sit with me. In my throne. Even as I have overcome.

And I am set down with my father. In his throne. What an elevation. What an honour. Not just that you will have grace.

[ 39 : 01 ] And all associated with grace. In the world. But also you will have glory. You will have glory at last. Sit with him.

In his throne. Even as I also overcame. And I am set down with my father. In his throne. And he finishes with these words.

He that has an ear. Let him hear what the spirit saith. Unto the churches. He said plenty to this church. He highlighted.

Her feelings. He highlighted her needs. He showed her. How he could enrich her. And even having heard of all of that.

He followed her home. And knocked at her door. What a saviour. He is mighty to save. To the uttermost.

[ 40 : 03 ] All who come unto. God by him. May God bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. Help us.