

Laodicea

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[0 : 0 0] Let us turn now to consider the passage you read in the book of Revelation, the Revelation of John, chapter 3, from verse 14, the message of Christ to the church of Laodicea.

And with this message, of course, we come to the end of the series of studies of the messages to the churches in Asia.

Perhaps there is no church, none of the seven, which presents a more frightening picture than this one.

And maybe because of the well-known words of chapter 20, it has become the most familiar of all the messages of Christ to the churches, behold, I stand at the door and knock.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. This city where the church was situated, Laodicea, was at the time, towards the end of the first century, famous for its banking and its clothing industry.

[1 : 5 4] It also had in its near vicinity a very famous medical school from which came the particular brand of eye ointment for which the district acquired a name.

And all these factors are made use of by the Lord when he addresses this message to the Laodiceans.

He, as the all-seeing one, knew the situation, not just the material, the temporal, the very affluent climate in which the church existed, but also knew the effect, the unfortunate effect, which that affluence had had upon this church.

And as on the other occasions we looked at the messages, we will look, we'll just wind our way briefly through these verses from verse 14 to the end of the third chapter.

And we'll look again firstly at the self-designation of our Lord. Now, we have that in verse 14. These things sayeth he, Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.

[3 : 1 8] Now, we always remember that the way in which he designates himself has a close connection with the situation in which the church was placed.

It has a bearing upon. Our interpretation and understanding of his self-designation has a bearing upon. And has a bearing upon the condition of the church. And really, we are to understand it in the light of the church's condition.

So what does this mean? These three things. The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God. Well, you know that in our Lord's ministry, this was one of the words that he was very fond of.

Amen, not verily. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Amen and Amen, I say unto you. When our Lord used these terms, he was always drawing attention to the truth that he was enunciating and to the trustworthiness of what he was saying.

That was absolutely true. And therefore, his character was guaranteeing the truth of what he was saying.

[4 : 45] And when he speaks to the church here, what he says here is this. I, in my character, and because of what I am, and because of who I am, I guarantee you that what I'm saying about your condition is absolutely true.

Therefore, he is the faithful and the true witness. The one who is the ideal himself.

He is the faithful and the true witness whose testimony never falls short of the truth. Whenever he speaks of God, he is faithful, he is true.

You and I, no matter how much we may know of God from the Word of God, if you and I start talking about him, it may be true. It may be that we will become, as Paul said, we won't become false witnesses of God.

We may attribute things to God that are not true. But when he speaks of them, he is true. When he speaks of anybody, what he says is absolutely true.

[5 : 56] You remember what the woman of Samaria said when she was converted, and she went back to her own people. She said to them, come sit and see a man who told me all things that ever I did.

It's not just the Christ. He is an unerring revealer of the truth. No matter what subject he speaks of, it is absolutely true.

And he is also the beginning of the creation of God. Now, there are some sects in the world who have built the doctrine of Christ upon a verse like this, and who take it and say that he is the first creature.

He is not God at all as we claim he is. He is the first, the beginning of the creation of God. And they take the word beginning in its passive sense.

But the word is not to be understood passively at all here. It is active. It isn't that he is the first creature or the first created being in the whole creation.

[7 : 07] But rather, he is the source of all creation himself. In the beginning was the word. And the word was with God. And the word was God, says John, writing in chapter 1 of the product to his gospel.

And that's Jesus that he is speaking of. Everything was created by him. And everything was created through him. And everything was created for him.

And he appalls all things himself by the word of his power. He is the source of all creation. And he is its governor, its controller.

And there's a special reference to Laodicea. Because the very situation in which that city found itself was visited frequently by earthquakes.

And here he reminds her that he is in control of all these things. He knows her situation materially. He knows her condition spiritually.

[8 : 15] And what he is going to say is absolutely factual. And therefore, it would pare to give ear to what he is going to say.

What is he going to say to her? Well, secondly, he speaks of the condition of the church. I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would that thou wert cold or hot.

Now, we have to be rather careful in our interpretation of this. What he is saying to her really is that she was lukewarm.

And the contrast he is drawing is this. He is drawing a contrast between lukewarm water and cold water or hot water.

And when he says, I would that thou wert cold or hot, when he says, I wish you were rather cold or hot, we have to be careful that we don't interpret that to mean this.

[9 : 16] That Jesus would prefer a church to be cold or hot to her being lukewarm. And then speaking of it spiritually, take it in this context.

And this is the way that most people take it. And I must say that I cannot accept this interpretation of this version. That to be hot means that you are in a right relationship with Christ.

You are bubbling or boiling over. You are fervent in spirit. You're enthusiastic for the things of Christ. You're full of love and full of faith for the Lord. That's fine.

But cold is the very opposite of that. So they say, you're opposed. You have no interest in the things of God at all.

You're an enemy of Christ. These things don't bother you and you don't want to be bothered by them. You are lifeless, motionless, insensitive and insensible.

[10 : 12] You don't feel a thing. You're cold to the things of God. And Jesus saying to the church, I would rather you were like that than to be lukewarm.

That is to be sort of half-hearted and careless and indifferent regarding the things of the Spirit of God. Now, for the life of me, I cannot accept that interpretation. Because nowhere in the Bible do I find God commending a coldness of heart towards himself.

In the sense in which it is generally interpreted as I have brought it before you. I don't find the Lord at any time saying that he prefers someone to be against him than someone to be half-hearted on his side.

I rather accept this interpretation of it. And I must say that in all my reading on this passage, that I fail to come across this interpretation.

Since the time I heard it many, many years ago. In a church, I believe, in Glasgow. From a minister who used to minister this island.

[11 : 18] The late Reverend Donald Gillis of Loughes. And I accept the interpretation that he had as this. That water is always at its best.

At its most useful. When it is either icy cold. Or boiling hot. That is water at its most useful.

In its best condition. You use it yourself. Either on a hot day. There is nothing to touch a cold drink.

And you also use it for washing. Hot water. It speaks of the usefulness of this commodity. In its cold state or in its hot state.

And what he is saying is this. I would wish you to be useful. To be in a condition of usefulness. Cold or hot. Rather than in your lukewarmness of attitude.

[12 : 25] To me and to the things of God. The church was useless. Really. She wasn't witnessing the way she ought to have witnessed. She wasn't living the way she ought to have lived.

She wasn't warm to the Lord Jesus Christ. And Christ couldn't use her. That was the condition of this church. And he was bringing this before her.

No. This was something which the people of Laodicea knew something about. Literally. Literally. Because it seems that the hot spring waters from an area called Hierapolis.

Quite close to Laodicea. By the time these hot springs filtered through into Laodicea. They had become lukewarm. They had become tepid.

And he says this is your condition. A symbol of your condition spiritually. You are lacking in fervency of spirit. You have lost your enthusiasm.

[13 : 37] Your love. Your devotion. Your earnestness. Your self-denying and self-sacrificing zeal. You are not serving the purpose that you ought to serve in this world.

You are of no use as one who claims my name and to honor my name. And I wonder how many professing Christians can this be true of tonight?

Not only throughout the world but in this building itself. How many have lost their usefulness? How many have lost their zeal and their devotedness and their earnestness in the things of the Lord Jesus Christ?

How many have ceased to be what they once were of use in the hand of the Lord?

And as if that weren't enough, the condition was even worse. Because, he says in verse 17, thou sayest, 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.

[15 : 00] This, it's almost unbelievable that any Christian could come into this condition, degenerate into this condition that they were rich and increasing and needed nothing.

Now, when the Bible uses this term, thou art thou art thou, you say that you are rich, it usually applies this term to the gifts with which God enriches the life of an individual spiritually.

And we all know what these gifts are. He enriches an individual with a gift of grace, with a gift of love, with a gift of righteousness, with a gift of peace and patience and so on.

All the things that he gives us, these are the things that enrich us. What do we have? But what we have received. And we have received them from him. And she says, this church, well, I'm rich.

Not really that, I'm increased with goods. My own efforts, my own activities have got me where I am and I need nothing. She was quite self-sufficient, proud and arrogant.

[16 : 14] And maybe it was the very affluence, her material affluence which had infected and affected her spiritually.

No recognition of her own spiritual condition. You don't know, he says, that this is, that you don't realize that your assessment of your own condition is so wrong.

You have no consciousness of your true need. You know that in the Old Testament, the prophet Hosea said to the people of Israel in his day, he brought this imagery before them and he said to, you know, he says, speaking to them, do you know what you're like?

You're like a person whose hair is turning gray. And he says, hey, the evidences of advancing years are there. And he is not aware of it.

And this was the condition of the church here. Not aware of the declension in a spiritual life. And again it's a place where you and I ought to pause and ask, I wonder if this can be true of me and of you.

[17 : 35] You remember that? Take that Jesus through of two men going up to pray to the temple. One was a Pharisee, the other a poor tax gatherer, misrepresented and persecuted in the land of Israel.

The Pharisee went so near to the place of worship, he praised himself in the presence of God. He had no idea of his real spiritual need.

Whereas this poor sinner should have far off, he couldn't even lift his head as he smote upon his chest and said, God be merciful to me, the sinner.

What about you tonight? I'm not sure in the presence of so many people. What is your assessment of your own spiritual state?

Do you think that you are beyond needing help from God? Have you advanced to the state that you don't realize is not an advance?

[18 : 41] It's a going back where you don't really realize your true spiritual condition. And what was a true condition?

This says the Lord to her, this is really your state. You are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. The word wretched here is the word that is used for a man who has got a disease.

You are diseased. You are diseased. That's your condition. And to make it worse, you're miserable. And the meaning of the word miserable is a person who has a condition in which he cannot help himself.

You know what? Those who compile the short of catechism used this word brilliantly when they gave the answer to the question, what is effectual calling?

It's a work of God's Spirit. Whereby, and I'm just going to highlight one or two things that the answer gives.

[19 : 44] We are convinced of our sin and of our misery. What happens when the Spirit of God convinces a sinner of his need?

This is what happens. Not only do I know that I'm a sinner in the presence of God, but my condition is so miserable that I could do nothing about it. That's my misery.

The Bible says to me, believe that you may be saved. And I have to respond, but I can't believe. And that's my misery.

And this he says to the church is your true condition. You're diseased. And you cannot help yourself. And you're poor.

You don't have the wherewithal. You're like a beggar. Even if you knew what you needed. You cannot put your hand in your pocket to meet your own needs. You don't have it.

[20 : 40] You're blind. You have no spiritual perception. You cannot see the way you ought to see. You are naked. You are barely clad.

You have nothing before God. You think you're it. But all your best works are as filthy rags before me. That's your true condition.

And because of that, the Lord gives her this warning. I tell you, he says, I will spew you or spit you out of my mouth.

But her attitude, her profession, her belief was nauseous to God. Self-satisfied with her own profession of Christianity.

Careless and listless in the things of God. Her whole profession was a sham, a pretense. She had the form but no power.

[21 : 45] And the Lord wasn't angry with her. The Lord wasn't grief-stricken. The Lord was disgusted with her condition. Because you are lukewarm. This is what lukewarm, the idea here is that lukewarm water, when you take it, it almost, it makes you sick.

This is what he's saying to the church. You make me sick. And therefore, I am about to spew you out of my mouth.

And here you come across one of these many instances of the graciousness of God. Even in his warnings, he gives her time to repent.

I am about to do this. What does it mean, out of his mouth? Well, I think there are two ways in which this could be understood.

When you think of the church in the mouth of the Lord, that is the church witnessing, the church being the Lord's mouth in the world.

[22 : 48] The church is as witness in this world. And what he says to her is this, I am so disgusted with your whole aptitude. I will get rid of you as my witness.

This letter was written 96 AD. They maintain. Some years afterwards, Christ's witness in Laodicea was gone.

He had got rid of her. It may also mean something else. I think that this is even more terrifying. The mouth of the Lord, he intercedes on our behalf.

He pleads for us. He mentions us before his throne. I wonder if this could be taken out of it for an awful thing not to be mentioned by Christ in the presence of God in heaven.

Rather be forgotten by anyone than be forgotten by him. He gives her time. I am about to do this.

- [23 : 59] Therefore, he gives her this counsel before it happens. I counsel thee to buy of me gold tied in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, white clothing to clothe yourself, that the shame of thy naked does not appear, and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

Now, I mentioned already that the district was famous for its commerce. It was a great commercial centre, one of the banking centres of the known world then.

It was famous also for the black cloth that was manufactured there, and was famous for the eye ointment that was dispensed there.

And the Lord uses all these things to give her the spiritual counsel. Look, you buy of me gold tied in the fire.

Now, you know that this is a term which the New Testament is very fond of, and it uses gold tied in the fire, I think, of two things.

- [25 : 09] First of all, of faith. Peter used it like that. The trial that you're passing through at the moment, say, to these Christians, is meant to bring your faith out like gold.

Precious metal, say, put in the fire, and it came out intact, delivered of all the impurity and all the dross that attached to it.

And this is why God tries the faith of his people, so that at the end of the day, as Job says, Pride, I will come forth like gold. No, he says, I counsel you.

Take from me the faith that you need. But perhaps there is something beyond and above that. He himself is the most precious thing of all.

And he was tried in the fire, in the fire of God's wrath. And he is the church's gold. There is nothing that enriches the church like Christ himself.

- [26 : 11] And he says to her, this is my advice to you. Take me. Get me. Buy me. And you may ask, what does it mean to buy?

Well, it's a very simple transaction. You do it every day. You go into a shop and you buy something. You hand over what you have and you receive what you don't have but what you want.

You've got to part with something that you may receive something else. And you know that when the gospel of tradition is given in the Old Testament, this is the same term.

Oh, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters. Buy and eat. And the idea here is this, that Christ will give you something that you don't have.

But you have to give what you have. You may ask, what can I give so that I can get him?

- [27 : 09] Do I have to earn salvation? No, my friend. That's not the idea at all. The idea is this. You have to part with whatever stands between you and him.

Whatever it is that has driven him out. Whatever it is that has brought this lukewarmness in. This unspirituality of life and of mind and of heart.

Whatever has caused you to lose the newness that you once had. And the joy and the delight of the gospel, whatever it is, must go.

As you hand your money over the counter to the shopkeeper. So you have to part with whatever has come between you and your Lord. And there is no other way.

There is no other way. Whatever it is that has brought this personal ease. This self-esteem into my life.

- [28 : 12] This awful spirit of self-righteousness and deadness of life and heart. Whatever the practice that has caused it. Must go.

There is a self-denial. A self-renunciation in all this. That we may receive him. Ah, you see, what you give does not enrich him.

But what he gives will enrich you. And also he says white clothing. And as we have seen before in our study in these letters. I think there is always a reference here.

To a proper way of life. Get rid of the sham. And live the way you ought to live. By taking counsel from him.

That's what he says. And then I save. You're not seeing things the way you ought to see. And you're not seeing things the way you used to see.

[29 : 12] And there is no doubt that what this reminds us of in the Bible. I don't want to over-spiritualize any of these things. But there is no doubt that what the Bible speaks to us here is this.

That what you and I need is the convicting, invigorating, enlightening power of the Spirit of God in our heart. The Spirit who shed light for me upon the truth.

And upon myself and the light of the truth. Upon my needs. And God's provision for me. And when you live a life which is a sham. When you drift away from the Lord.

You lose that spiritual perception. That spiritual vision. The Spirit of God. Is not working with this convicting power in your life.

And in your heart. The way he used to. You need your self-deception destroyed. And your spiritual vision restored.

[30 : 10] And he alone can give you that. And then he says to her. And before I come to the final part. He reminds of the principle on which he governs his church.

As many as I love. I rebuke and chasten. Be salacious ever and repent. And I cannot help but think that what he is saying to her here is this. Instead of being angry with me.

For bringing your true condition before you. You ought to be thankful that I love you so much. That I rebuke you. And that I chasten you. Because we live in a day.

When it isn't right to chastise. Either within your home. Or even in the school. Chastisism is becoming an ugly word.

Rebuke. It's becoming a bad word. We shouldn't do these things. You may very well come. You may very well in days to come. Find yourselves as parents.

[31 : 13] Unable. To chastise your child. In case you are persecuted. Prosecuted rather. Under the law. And of course. The further away people go from the word of God.

And the principles of the truth. The more. The more. These teachings come to the fore. The parent.

Who loves his child. Will chastise. Because he loves. Will chastise and love. And will chastise for a purpose.

Therefore. He says. Be zealous. And repent. When God speaks the truth. He's not speaking for the sake of speaking. He's speaking so that the church will react.

When God chastises. When God rebukes. Whatever means he uses. He does these things. For the purpose. When God brings difficult providences into your life.

[32 : 12] He's saying something to you. And what he's saying to you is this. Be zealous. Get back to that condition.

In which. You are. Boiling over. With love for the Lord. That's what zealous means. Reaching a. Boiling point. In your Christian experience.

How many of us. Are at that stage tonight. Is it not true. That you and I have. Some considerable distance. To travel. Before we reach it.

And is God. Therefore speaking to you tonight. Leading you. To that point. Be zealous. And repent. Again.

The same idea as by. Repent means. Don't say. Don't even have to say. Oh Lord. Yes. I'm sorry. It means being so sorry.

[33 : 08] That you part. With the thing. That has caused the estrangement. And that's why. He speaks to the church like this. Oh I know that.

As I've said this some weeks ago. Connection with. And this is. I'm not. This isn't a searching sermon. This is a searching passage. From the word of God. My sermon isn't searching.

But the word of God is. God. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. And there are some people. Who don't like being searched. Who don't like the truth being said. Being told.

And very often they react. And they say. Ah well. It's a pity that man wouldn't speak in the spirit of love. Well. I know that we should always speak in the spirit of love. But you see. When you speak in the spirit of love.

That doesn't mean. That you don't tell the truth as it is. There's no point in closing your eyes to your own situation. If this is your condition. No point in saying.

[34 : 03] I wish you would dry up. Let me out of here. I'm sick. Tired of hearing the same things being said to me. That I should be this. And I should get back to my old condition. That I should give up the things that have caused the estrangement between myself and my Lord.

I've heard that so often. Well my friend. It may be that you haven't heard them often enough. If that's your attitude.

To this kind of passage. The Lord loves you so much. That he's pleading with you. To return. And that's what opens up to us this last thought.

This most wonderful of all pictures that we have in verse 20. Behold. And I would almost like to put this word into it. Because I don't think it's doing any despire to the word of God.

Behold. I still stand. At the door. And knock. If any man. Will hear my voice. And open the door.

[35 : 08] I will come in to him. And will sup with him. And he with me. Now. Here we come across one of these passages. Which opens the door. For all these kinds of theological niceties.

These theological. These theological difficulties. The great questions. The burning questions of the day. Is this. How are you going to fit. How are you going to fit your doctrine.

The sovereignty of God. Into this kind of passage. How are you going to extricate yourself. From being labelled. As an Arminian. For daring to suggest.

That the unconverted. Has the power. And the ability. To open his own heart. To the Lord. Who stands at the door. And the way that I get out of it. My friend. Is quite simple.

It's as easy. As ABC. The Lord. Is here. Standing outside. The door. Of his professing church. That's the answer. To your question.

[36 : 05] About all. Your theological niceties. It's the church. Of Laodicea. That he's speaking to. It's the man. And the woman. The boy. And the girl.

Who's made the profession. That he's speaking to. It's the man. And the woman. The boy. And the girl. Who's life. Is not what it ought to be. That he's speaking to. And he's saying to them.

I stand at. Your door. And I know. This is not the picture. Of a Christ. Who has always been. Outside the door.

This is a picture. Of a Christ. Who has been inside. But who is now. Outside. This is a picture. Of a door. Who has just been. So clogged.

With rubbish. Whose hinges. Have become. So rusty. Whose locks. Have been so long. Unused. That they're tight. Held tight.

[37 : 00] Shut. Against the Lord. And he's saying. To that individual. I am still. Standing. As he said.

To the church. In the chapter. We read. Tonight. In the song of Solomon. I am here. He says. Outside the door. And my locks. My hair is wet. With the dew. Of the night.

And I wonder. How many people. In this building. Tonight. Can it be true of me. Of the office bearers. Who is it true of. That Christ. Has been excluded. And long excluded.

From your life. In the way. In which he ought. To be in the life. I stand. At the door.

And know. Christ. I take it. Outside the door. Of a professing. Christian's. Heart.

[37 : 57] And Christ. Taking the place. Of the suppliant. This is the person. Who said. In the days. Of his own ministry. To his own hearers. Knock.

And it shall be opened. Unto you. Seek. And ye shall find. And here he is now. Saying to those. Who knocked. And you found. I stand.

Outside. The door. Of your heart. And I want. To get in. What tenderness. What patience.

What rebuke. What chastisement. Is this. That it could be. Outside. The door.

Knocking. Annyeong. Knocking. knocking through the word knocking again through this passage tonight knocking through the sermon knocking through the blessings that he bestows upon you knocking through the difficulties through which you have to pass he's there and he's knocking and he's reminding you of this that the responsibility to let him in rests entirely with you oh yes it's not your wife or your husband it's not your son or your daughter it's not your mother or your father it's not your brother or your sister who's going to let him in it's you the responsibility for your condition tonight rests with no one but yourself and you didn't pass it on to someone else it's yours and then he gives her this promise if any man hears are you hearing here tonight is this applicable to you in your own spiritual state if you hear his voice and if you open the door i will come in he says and will i will sup with him and he with me here's a sharing sup this is a reference to the jewish to the jews a most important mean of the day what we would call dinner it was supper with them in the evening where they sat down to a hearty meal and there was at that meal communion fellowship he will sup with you and you with him there's a sharing you notice that the two-way traffic you give to him and he gives to you and you say ah but what i what can i give to the lord what have i got to give him i've got nothing to give him oh well anything that you do give him that he will accept you remember this will be his own as we you know that there are beautiful pictures in the song of solomon but that you could take as typifying christ and his own people the graces that he delights in faith love joy peace and so on he loves to see these things in your life but the point here is this whatever benefit he will get from you and it's difficult for us to envisage him getting any benefit from any one of us it is not difficult at all to envisage out getting benefit from him he will sup with me he will give you everything that you've lost everything that you lack tonight everything that you've lost along the way there's a story told a table of course of of the the story of the piece of persian clay which was taken up by a persian moralist and the clay was questioned in this way by the moralist how is that you smell so sweetly when you are just a piece of common clay and the answer came i laid for many years in the sweet company of a rose until at last i drank in its perfume and that's what makes a christian a warm-hearted christian

[42 : 50] the person who is close to christ and there's no answer to your condition and mine tonight but that no answer what you and i need tonight is to get close to him get side by side get into this sharing into this fellowship into this communion he has to start hearing from you often so that you and you are to start hearing oftener from him he is to you are to start giving more to him and you are to start receiving more from him communion fellowship sharing that's what left the psalmist at that time of his life as he put himself in psalm 45 my heart he says is bubbling over i must speak about the king and then he goes on thou art fairest of all men grace in thy lips does flow therefore blessings evermore on thee does god bestow when did you last speak like that of christ when have you last extolled the virtues of his name the virtues of his name and the glories of his grace and the preciousness of his blessings when did you last pour out your heart before his throne when did you say to him lord my heart is so cold fill it with a sense of thy love behold i stand at the door and knock is he standing at your door tonight is he pleading with you to let him in is he asking for restored fellowship in your life then he says finally to him that overcometh to him will i give to sit with me in my throne even as i also overcame and i'm set down with my father in his throne now i haven't got time to deal with this and i wish i had because there are beautiful thoughts that our lord brings before us in these words for example look at the way in which he speaks of the throne of god this is the place of power and the place of of authority the place from which he rules the throne and he speaks of it in a two-fold way it is my father's throne and i sit with him because i overcame you see our lord tonight is exalted at the right hand of god why because he overcame he was given a word to do in the world and he persevered and he overcame and therefore he rules with his father on his father's throne it was given to him by the father but notice this he gives the church this promise if you overcome if you persevere you keep on going in the face of all the difficulties to which you are subjected you too will sit with me on my throne you see the throne was given to him by his father because he he overcame and this is the promise that he as the overcomer gives to all who will overcome in his name you will share with me in my glory and in my reign at my father's presence you see his father's throne is his by right and his throne is ours because it was purchased for us by him and we will share with him in it if

we overcome he that are near to here let him hear what the spirit says unto the churches the church and the church and the church and the church and the first century and there's a message here to you as there was to them and the accounts that he gives to you is the same as he gave them you've got an ear to hear listen to what is being said to you by him him take his counsel and you will never regret it let us pray oh god have mercy upon our soul fill our hearts with thy love and thy peace and thy blessing be our guide and our shield this night is the same as we are in our shield and help us to love thee and to serve thee in this world by thy grace keep us close to thyself and part us this night with thy blessing in christ's name we ask it amen