

Revelation 3:14-21

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Date: 23 August 2015

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[0:00] I guess I'm on. Well, good evening, everyone. Scripture reading tonight is Revelation 3, verses 14 through 22.

And you can find that in your pew Bible. It's on page 1030. So, tonight we're going to look at the last of Jesus' letters to the seven churches that we find here in the early chapters of Revelation.

It's been Jesus' pattern as he addresses each church. And these were real churches, by the way, that he was writing to in the first century. And it was his pattern to establish who he is and to say, this is Jesus.

Here's who I am. I'm the Alpha and the Omega. I'm the beginning and the end. I'm the Savior of the world. And then he proceeds to tell the churches commendations and encouragements, but also some criticisms.

And tonight, in the seventh church that's addressed, the church in Laodicea, Jesus does not have anything positive to say at all.

[1:32] In fact, we find one of the sternest warnings in any of the letters. In fact, I would say one of the sternest warnings anywhere in Scripture.

Along with it, however, we find Jesus himself giving us a key to how to get right with him, how to know him, how to have a meaningful life, how to have peace, how to have energy for God.

And it's all here in our passage tonight, so let's look at it together. So this is Revelation chapter 3, verses 14 through 22.

I'm going to read heterozy. I'm going to read it. For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire So that you may be rich And white garments so that you may clothe yourself And the shame of your nakedness may not be seen And salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see Those whom I love I reprove and discipline So be zealous and repent Behold I stand at the door and knock If anyone hears my voice and opens the door I will come in to him and eat with him And he with me The one who conquers I will grant him to sit with me on my throne As I also conquered and sat down with my father on his throne He who has an ear let him hear What the spirit says to the churches Okay so tonight I'd like to break our

[4:00] The teaching into three segments tonight The condition of this particular church The condition The cause of that condition And the cure for the condition So let's begin with the condition So let's look at verse 15 and 16 together I know your works You are neither cold nor hot Would that you were either cold or hot So because you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold I will spit you out of my mouth Now I don't know if this is a big problem for northerners But if you have ever sat on a beach Down south in Georgia or Florida maybe And you are sitting there sweltering Because it is 110 degrees And there is not a breeze in the air And it is humid and horrible And you decide I am going to get up and go for a swim And cool off And it is going to be refreshing

And I just can't wait And you get up off your towel And it sticks to your back And you pull it off And you go and hit the water But the problem is The water is actually the same temperature As the air It is just wetter Not a whole lot wetter either actually And so you get in the water And you get out of the water And there is no use There was no It didn't work And when we see Jesus here Referring to Hot and cold I wish you were hot and cold Your deeds The way you live I wish it was I wish it was Hot or cold Hot things are useful Cold things are useful Hot water You can cook with it You can clean with it You can do things with it Cold water You can drink it And be refreshed Or you can jump in a pool of it But lukewarm water Is not useful

And you see what was happening Is this church was drifting Away from Jesus And into a life With no ultimate purpose Because we don't want to misunderstand These were These This is a church These were people going to church services They were probably very decent people Probably very Ordinary Church going folks But they had strayed From Christ And their lives Were no longer serving his purpose And they had lost their passion And their love And their energy for God And they become mediocre Jesus treats this very seriously If we look at the tail end At verse 16 It's just startling It's just I don't know how it hits you When you read this verse But Jesus says

I wish you were either hot or cold And because you're not I'm going to spit you out of my mouth You're on a trajectory You're on a trajectory That leads to us breaking up You're on a path That if you don't change course Then I'm going to have to Spit you out of my mouth Now You may ask Why is this such a big problem That Jesus is so Over the top With this warning What is What is the big issue And I think If we look at the cause Of this lukewarmness We're going to see that We're going to see Why Jesus warns so sternly You know All along here In all the letters Where Jesus is warning His people We have to keep in mind That he bled and died For these people He loves these people

This is not Jesus is not taking a stick And saying oh you did that wrong Whack You know It is Jesus loves this church As we're going to see In a little bit He comes right out And says it Okay Look with me in verse 17 This is the cause The underlying cause Of why this church Had become lukewarm And this is the much more Serious issue I think we're going to see For you say I am rich I have prospered And I need nothing Not realizing That you are wretched Pitiable Poor Blind And naked So what Jesus is saying Is you've drifted off Into this lukewarm Mediocre Life Because you're Not realizing You're not knowing You're not accepting You're not embracing You're not believing

[9:03] That you are spiritually Bankrupt Apart from me When you wander away From me You've got nothing You're bankrupt And you know This is a major line In the sand This is the difference Between being a Christian And not being a Christian When we When we wander Away From Jesus And begin To put our confidence In our right standing With God In something Other than Him I think I would go So far As to say That not realizing Not properly Diagnosing Ourselves That we are Wretched Pitiable Poor Blind And naked Is The root cause Of Falling away

From Jesus In many different ways Now I want to take One second Because you may be saying Are we really That bad off Are we really Wretched Pitiable Poor Blind And naked That is strong Language And I just want to take One One Side note here And I just want to say That The Bible's answer Is yes And Here's why The magnitude Of the crime Is determined By the stature Of the offended party Okay Just hang with me Just for one second On this The magnitude Of the crime Is determined By the stature Of the offended party In other words My children will all be Smiling at this Because I say this Once a month In my house If you slap Your brother In the face There's going to be A consequence

From that If you At least If you have Parents Who are paying Attention If you slap Your teacher In the face There's a whole Different level Of consequence For that Same action If you slap The president Of the United States In the face If you happen To break through And get up to him Guess what You're gone We're never going to See you again You're going to go To wherever people go Where you know You don't know They're just gone They're in You did it to the President jail And can you see That The stature Of the offended Party Determines The The Value Of the crime And Mankind Has slapped The infinite God of the universe In the face By our sinning And This means That there's a debt That we cannot pay There is a debt

That only Jesus Can pay Ever And by ever I mean Not that you Accept that One time And then Once you Once you Accept it On those grounds Then you go out And become a good Person And start Working it out For yourself Jesus Is Always The grounds For our Right standing With God And not Realizing That's why This verse Is a little Tricky Because it Says Oh These Laodiceans They're not Realizing That they Are wretched Pitiable Poor Blind And naked No What I Want to Tell you Is All of Us Apart From Christ Are That That Is Not Just For Laodiceans Now When we Get Confronted With This Truth I Think There's A firestorm Of reactions That go Off In our Hearts Okay There's

Disbelief Well Guess What God I'm Just Going To Unfriend You Then Because That's That's A horrible Thing To say About A person Okay That I'm That bad Off There's Denial Well That's Other People But Not Me There's Distraction La la la la I'm Just That's I can't Deal With That I'm Just Going To Play Video Games And Watch TV And Binge Watch And Not Worry About It Till Later There's Deflection Where we Blame It's Not My Fault Someone Else Is Responsible There's Dilution And There's Delusion Where We Tell Ourselves That Reality Is This Way When Jesus Is Saying It's That Way And That Brings Us Back Around To The La Deceit That Laodiceans Because We See That They Were Telling Themselves A False Reality About Their Security

[14:09] You See How They Say I Am Rich I Have Prospered I Need Nothing You Know Success Is A Threat To Our Rightly And Rightly Understanding That Where We Stand With God We're Completely Dependent On Jesus Because When We Experience Success Things Are Good And We Feel Like Oh Things Are Okay Maybe I Don't Need Jesus So Much And It Can Come In All Sorts Of Forms Right Vocationally Or Academically Or This Or Even Morally So When People Become Believers Right God Starts Working On Their Heart And Then They Start Getting A Better Life And God Starts Working On Them And As Soon As Their Life Starts To Get Better All Of A Sudden They're Like Well Maybe

I'm Not So Pitiable And Poor And Wretched Anymore Right Or If You Become A Ph.D. Or If Things Are Just Good In Your Life Then You Say I'm Not Pitiable And Poor And Naked And Wretched I'm Awesome And That Is A Threat To Us Not Realizing That Apart From Christ We're Wretched And Pitiable And Poor And Blind And Naked You Know Jesus Said Those Who Are Forgiven Much Love Much And That's Why This Concept Is Critically Important It Is A Bedrock It Is A Key To The Christian Life To To To Understand Our Position Before A Holy God Apart From Christ Jesus Said Those Who Are Forgiven Much Love Much Those Who Are Forgiven Little Love Little

And What He Means By That Is If You Perceive That You're In Pretty Good Shape And You're A Decent Person Especially Compared To This Guy And Yeah You Need Help You Need Some Forgiveness But You're Not Wretched And Poor And Naked And Blind Then When Jesus Comes With His Grace Grace It's Grace With A Lower Case G And It Cannot Become The Engine And Fuel That You Need To Live A Life Of Love And Energy For God Because Grace Is Small Grace Because You Only Need Small Grace So So You Know This Sounds It's A Hard Thing To Hear For Someone To Stand Up Here And Say You Know What I'm Sorry But All Of You Are Wretched And Poor And Pitiable Okay But The Flip Side

Of That Coin Is When We Embrace That And Then Jesus Comes With His Message That He's About To Come The Cure It Is So Beautiful It Is So Wonderful It Remains With A Capital G Okay So That's The Cause So Now I'd Like To Talk About The Cure Look With Me At Verse 18 Jesus Says I Counsel You To Buy From Me Gold Refined By Fire So That You May Be Rich And White Garments So That You May Clothe Yourself And The Shame Of Your Nakedness May Not Be Seen And Salve To Anoint Your Eyes So That You May See Those Whom I Love I Reprove And Discipline So

Be Zealous And Repent So The First Step In The Cure Is That We Confess To God That We Are Spiritually Bankrupt You Know If You If You Hear This Passage And You're Like Me And You Say Wow I'm I'm Lukewarm Oftentimes I'm Lukewarm I'm I'm Mediocre Am I Living A Zealous Energy Filled Life For God Where I'm Willing To Lay It Down Because Of What He's Done For Me In Jesus Well You Know I Fail That Test And Right Here We Have Jesus Saying An Interesting Thing The First Part Of The Cure Is Not To Go Out There And Do Better And Try Harder

[19:10] The First Part Of The Cure Is Okay So You're Not Zealous Like You Ought To Be Well How About Be Zealous About This Be Zealous To Tell Me That You're Not Zealous Be Zealous To Own That Be Zealous To Come To Me And Confess That To Me Be Be Be Have Energy So You Don't Have Energy For All These Things That You Should Well How About Have You Need My Resources My Riches You Need My My White Perfect Clothing You Need My Medicine You're Sick You Know There Was A Great Preacher That Said All You Need Is Nothing But So Few People Have It I Don't Know If You Ever Heard That Before All You Need Is Nothing To Come To God Nothing But So Few People Have It Because

We Have In Our Hands The Things That We Are Saying No I'm Not Poor And Pitiable I'm At Least This You Want To Talk Poor And Pitiable I'll Show You Some One Okay The First Part Of The Cure Is That We Confess To God That We Are Spiritually Bankrupt You Know It's It's Important To Note Here That Jesus Is Literally Telling Us Love Us Do You See That Don't Miss That Verse 19 Those Whom I Love I Bring This Message To I Love You I'm On Your Side I'm Trying To Help You Wake Up Trust Trusting Trusting In Yourself Is Totally Insane Trusting In Yourself To Save Yourself In Any Percentage Is Totally Insane

Before A Holy God That Created The Entire Universe And Then Told Us Just How Bad The Problem Is By Sending His Own Son Who Had To Hang On A Cross And Be Mocked And Bleed To Death Can We Feel The Offense When We Come And Add Something To That And Detract From The Poor And Pitiable We Mustn't Let's Move On To Verse 20 Behold I Stand At The Door And Knock If Anyone Hears My Voice And Opens The Door I Will Come Into Him And Eat With Him And He With Me You Know I Just Love This You Know What I Love About This The Second Confession Is Done The Second We Just Move Past The Verse That Said Confess Repent As Soon As We Turn And

Say You Know What You You Are I Do Need You I I'm Hopeless Sinner I Need You What Does Jesus Say I'm Right At The Door Ready To Come In If You Hear My Voice If You Turn And Repent I Will Come In And I Will Eat With You And You Will Eat With Me And We Will Have Intimacy Real Intimacy Experiential Relationship Not Oh I Know I Don't Want To To Hell And I Okay I'll Accept This And Okay I've Done That And Now I Have That What Jesus Is After And What Jesus Is Offering Is So Much More And In fact We Have To Have It We Have To Have All Of Him Or None Of Him And I Think That's Part Of The Gist Of This Passage It's It's Either All In With Him Or I'm Sorry But I'm Going To Spew You Out Of My Mouth Because I

Want To Come In And Have A Real Vital Living Relationship With You I'm At The Door All You Have To Do Is Acknowledge That You Need Me And We Can Get This Ball Rolling We Can Get This Relationship Going And Then When He Comes In And You're On Your Knees And Your Tears Are Dripping And You're Saying You I Do Need You I Am Wretched And Poor Because Of My Sin Then He Floods You With Affirmation Forgiveness Love Grace Some Of Us Here Have Tasted That For Real There's Nothing Like It It's Pull The Car Over On The Side Of The Road And For Ten Minutes Just Sob That's What It Is It Is When You Have That That Is The Energy To Combat A Lukewarm Mediocre

[24:13] Live For Ultimately Nothing Life Because Now Jesus Is Giving You What You Don't Deserve In Measures That Are Almost Unthinkable And You're Just So Thankful It's Almost Too Good To Believe And Then He Says Here's What Here's Here's My Job For You I Want You To Come Along Side And I Want You To Pour This Grace Back Out On Other People I Want You To Live A Life Where You're Going Out And And Loving People In My Name And I'll Tell You That Is A Life Of Meaning And That's A Useful Life Lastly Because It Doesn't Stop There If We Look At Verse 21 Jesus Says The

One Who Conquers Or The One Who Overcomes I Will Grant Him To Sit With Me On My Throne As I Also Conquered And Sat Down With My Father On His Throne And We Don't Have Time To Dig Into That Other Than I Just Want To Say That A Component Of What Jesus Would Bring Into Your Life Is A Hope For A Future That Is Beyond Well Let me Read you This This Is First Corinthians Chapter 2 Verse 9 No No No Eye No Mind Has Imagined What God Has Prepared For Those Who Love Him For Those Who Receive Jesus And They Love Jesus And God Has Prepared An Unimaginable Future of contentment and joy and happiness for those that will turn to him and love him.

Well, I'd like to close by saying that this, what's described here and what Jesus is prescribing here is not a one-time, it's not a one-off.

It's an every day off, if I can say it horribly. It is a pattern of life. It is because when Jesus, when God comes into your life, the first time God comes into your life, he says, I'm God.

And you are poor and wretched and need me. And you need a savior. And you say yes. And you do turn and invite him in. Well, after that, what happens is God's light continues to shine in your heart.

[27:15] He continues to show you your need. You don't, we don't ever in this life grow beyond our need. In fact, the need, the estimation of what it's going to take to save us in the life of a healthy Christian, in the heart of a healthy Christian, it grows.

It grows. It's the opposite of getting arrogant or it's the opposite of getting puffed up. I'm a Christian now and I've been at this five years and I'm a much better person than I was before. And so actually I'm doing okay.

It's not that at all. It's God in your heart saying, okay, yes, you know, good job. You know, we got over this, but look at this, bam. And it's like, oh, I'm a horrible, judging, selfish person.

He's like, yes, that's why I had to die. You know, and then that gets a little better and the next thing you know, God's going to open another door in your house. And, but you know what?

That engine of grace, it keeps chugging then because then you go to God and say, oh, I need you more than I ever thought I did. Thank God for Jesus. Thank you, Lord.

[28:24] And grace grows. That's how grace grows. This is, this is not, I stand at the door and knock. You let me in on January 21st, you know, 1994, and we're done.

This is every day. And there's a, there's an engine component to it. Okay. One last thought and I'll close here. Wherever you are tonight, if not realizing and admitting your spiritual poverty has been a barrier to a vibrant relationship with God, I, I just hope that you will consider going to Jesus and confessing that to him.

you know, you know, maybe, you know, maybe even tonight, when you get home, um, you know, he stands at the door, ready to come in and forgive and love and restore and flood your heart with grace.

And he can give you a hope worth living for. And he can give you a hope worth dying for. So let me pray for us.

Our father in heaven, we, we pray that you would be at work in each one of our hearts, whether we're, um, an unbeliever here tonight or wrestling or a backslidden believer, or a faithful believer.

[30:03] Father, I pray for all of us that you would help us to see reality clearly and help us to not drift away from acknowledging our need for you every day.

And father, I pray that you would give us the courage to confess and come to you and repent. And I pray that when we do father, that you would pour out your blessings on us and make us know that we're your children and give us peace and joy and comfort and make us useful.

Father, we're so thankful for Jesus and we're thankful for the time that you gave us tonight in Jesus name. Amen.