

*The book of
Revelation*

3:14-22

Welcome to the weekly verse-by-verse bible study in the book of Revelation. Make sure you pray before you start this, or any bible study.

Over the last several weeks we have been studying in the book of Revelation and the letters to the seven churches. This week we read the seventh, and final letter to the church in Laodicea.

I don't know about you, but for me this is the church I fear the most, because I don't want to be lukewarm in my Christian walk. I want to be 100% for Jesus and nothing else. So let's find out if we are, and if so, what to do about it.

✠ **Rev 3:14-22** *"And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'--and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked-- I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore 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 dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.' "*

So who were the people in this church?

And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write

Laodicea was a wealthy church in Asia Minor about a hundred miles from the church in Philadelphia. It was known for its rich banking firms as well as the produce of glossy black wool, which was used for cloaks and carpets. Laodicea was the home of a medical school, and was the manufacturer of collyrium, a famous eye salve.

These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God.

The word "Amen", we all use it, but do we know what it really means? This Hebrew word, Amen means: *firm and faithful*.

Who is more firm and faithful than Jesus Christ? No one I can think of. Jesus also instructs us to build our faith upon a firm foundation.

† **Luke 6:47-49** *Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great.*

The church in Laodecia was known for its wealth, but their faith was upon what they had, rather than what Jesus can do. When their money is all gone, who will they be able to depend upon, their friends? Possibly, but a lot of times you have more friends because you have money or you are famous. Once it's gone, so are most of your so-called friends. I don't know about you, but here in the USA we have so much "stuff", that's right "stuff" and most of it sits in boxes or in a closet or our garages. We even pay to store our stuff, because you never know when you will need it, so we hang onto it. What if you lost all your stuff, where would your faith be? Would you doubt God because He allowed your stuff to be taken or destroyed, or would you be the same because your life and faith are not built upon your stuff, but rather in Jesus Christ, the firm foundation?

We know Jesus is *the Faithful*,

† **1 Cor 1:9** *God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

† **Rev 19:11** *Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.*

As well as the *True Witness*,

† **John 3:11** *Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness.*

† **John 5:36** *But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish--the very works that I do--bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.*

And last of all *the Beginning of the creation of God:*

"So was Jesus created by God, I thought He was God?"

† **Col 1:15-18** *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth,*

visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

† **John 1:1-3** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.*

Jesus was not created, and as we just read that He is the Creator. So you could almost read this as *the Beginner of the creation of God*. Meaning that He (Jesus) created all things from the beginning.

✧ *I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.*

I know your works. We have looked at these words over the last several weeks as we read of all the churches having works, and that Jesus knows what those works are. But it seems that the works that the people in the church of Laodecia were doing were neither for the church, nor against the church, in fact you could say that the works they did were for themselves. Here are some possible things that they could have been doing.

Spending more time in prayer for themselves letting God know all the good things they had done rather than praying for others, like the Pharisee did that Jesus talked about.

† **Luke 18:10-14** *"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men--extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."*

They also could have just been giving what they had left over to God instead of giving their first fruits.

† **Deut 26:10** *'and now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land which you, O LORD, have given me.' Then you shall set it before the LORD your God, and worship before the LORD your God.*

† **Mal 1:8** *And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, Is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick,*

*Is it not evil?
Offer it then to your governor!
Would he be pleased with you?
Would he accept you favorably?"
Says the LORD of hosts.*

They may have been making sure that they, and even their families had before helping those in need.

- † **1 Tim 6:18 (NLT)** *Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and should give generously to those in need, always being ready to share with others whatever God has given them.*
- † **Heb 13:16** *But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*

They may have been drawing attention to themselves by the things they did in church, rather than to Jesus.

- † **Acts 8:9** *But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great,*
- † **Luke 12:17-21** *And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry." ' But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.'*

But Jesus says to all of this: *I could wish you were cold or hot.*

Even though Laodecia was known for its riches, they had a water supply problem, therefore they had to have the water brought in via an aqueduct from the hot springs. But by the time it made it to the city, the water was neither hot, nor cool and refreshing. No, when the water was received it was lukewarm, so the church knew exactly what Jesus was talking about.

Have you ever wanted a nice cool glass of water after working hard? You come in the house all sweaty and go to the faucet and turn on the cold water and fill your glass. You take a drink and as soon as it hits your mouth, you realize that this water is lukewarm, so you spit it out and allow the faucet to run longer waiting for the water to get cold.

How about on a cold winters morning, you turn on the coffee pot to make a nice hot cup of coffee. You come back later after it's done and pour a cup of coffee to warm your cold bones. You may add a little sugar or cream to it as well, then blow on the top to cool it down and take a little sip. Once again as soon as it hits your lips you realize it is lukewarm because the burner on the coffee maker didn't go on. So you toss it out and make a new pot of coffee.

So how could we be lukewarm in our Christian walk?

We tell the Lord how much we love Him, yet we don't minister to those in need.

We spend more time looking out for number one (ourselves), instead of caring for those in need.

We even do the same thing with our family. We can spend so much time working and providing the nicer things in life for our family, that we overlook those who have nothing.

Sure, we are to supply for our families, but is that the only reason God put you on this earth is to work to give your family things?

When you're on your deathbed, will you say, *"I worked hard and gave my family everything they wanted."* Maybe so, but what about those in need, does not God want us to also to help those in need as well?

You see, to be lukewarm is to think of yourself and/or your family only, not caring about others, then turn around and tell God how much you love Him.

Remember Jesus said:

† **Matt 25:31-46** *"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you*

did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Also in I Cor it says:

† ***1 Cor 13:1-3 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.***

It's not a matter of doing because you think you have to, but rather because you want to. Most of us don't have a lot of money or things to give. God doesn't need your money but I think He may want your time. Maybe teaching Sunday school, or cleaning up the church, or driving somebody somewhere who has no transportation. Maybe you could volunteer somewhere helping those in need. Because it doesn't say to serve in the church only, and if you are helping out at a women's shelter, or a place that gives to the needy, just because it's not in the church building does not mean you are not doing God's will. Read the verses in Matthew 25:31-46 again. Notice Jesus never said that the things that were done were in the church building.

So if you don't have much money or many things, maybe it's your time you need to sacrifice. But if your time is too precious to you, then Jesus is not that precious to you. ***'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'***

What about supporting those who are in the ministry. It could be a Sunday school teacher, your pastor, or even your spouse. Sure your time with your spouse is important to you, but don't you think your spouse's time with God and doing His work is important to God as well? So support your spouse if he or she has a ministry, even if it's not your ministry or something you would want to do, it's something God wants him or her to do. If you hinder them because you want all the attention to yourself, you are hindering what God has called your spouse to do. And if you are the spouse with the ministry, do not let it consume you to the point that you totally ignore your family, your family is a ministry as well and they need you.

Now suppose if a guy told his wife and children that he loves them, but he just stayed home, didn't work, never took them to church, and watched them crying out because they were hungry and had no clothes, how would that look to you? Then why do we tell God we love Him, yet we watch those around us in need crying out to God and do nothing about it.

"Well I pray for them."

That's great, you should, but the bible also says:

† **James 2:15-16** *If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?*

† **1 John 3:16-18** *By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.*

The church in Laodicea was rich; as we learned the people there had all kinds of money. But it seems they spent more time making sure that they had nice homes, nice cars (or chariots), that they and their families looked good walking up to church because they had the latest fashion of clothing to wear. They made sure they had the latest gadgets like cell phones, iPads, a wireless laptop so they could e-mail others while they were in church, a camcorder, big screen 3D TV, Blu-ray DVD player, and on and on. Then they would walk into church on Sunday, heads lifted high because of all the stuff they had and sing:

*"I love you Lord,
And I lift my voice,
To worship you,
Oh my soul, rejoice."*

While those in need are sitting outside the church begging for a piece of bread.
How pleasing is this to the Lord?
Would the Lord accept their songs or even their tithe?
All of these things are examples of being lukewarm.
And Jesus said:

✠ ***"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth."***

The word vomit here means just that: to vomit.
We have all been sick at one time or another, so sick that we vomited. Was it fun? No way. Even the taste is sickening to think about. Sometimes we vomit so much or so hard this it comes through our nose.

"Now that's sick, you didn't have to say that."

Yes, it is sick, but this is exactly what Jesus is talking about. Do you think Jesus wants to vomit us out? Do you think He gets joy in it? I don't think so. To tell the Lord that you love Him and never minister to those in need or even have hatred towards someone is like what John said:

† **1 John 4:20-21** *If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.*

These things are an abomination to the Lord, and He **will**, not might, but ***will vomit you out of My mouth.***

The church in Laodicea thought they had it made; yet Jesus said that even though they had so much, they had nothing.

☞ ***Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'-- and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked--***

So is it wrong or a sin to be rich or even have money? Jesus said:

† **Matt 19:23-26** *Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." When His disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?" But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."*

If your money or just money period is controlling you, then yes, it is a sin. But if you, through the power of the Holy Spirit use your money wisely and to minister to others and don't allow it to control you, then it's ok to have money.

But then it's the same with anything. It's not a sin to have nice things, the question is, what are you doing with it, or what is it doing to you?

Maybe you don't have a lot of money, but are other things controlling you. Sure we think of drugs and alcohol controlling people, but even a job can control you or your car or home. What about a friend or even a loved one? Do they affect your walk with the Lord, drawing you away from Him instead of towards Him? Do they hinder your ministry that the Lord has called you to? Maybe it's clothes, or computers, or TV's or any type of physical thing. What about social media like Facebook and twitter? Who or what is controlling you?

It's ok to have all these things, but remember that whatever is controlling you, is who or what your god is.

† **Matt 6:21** ***For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.***

If you have all these things and think that you are cool because you do, ***you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'***

But the truth is that you: ***do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.***

You may have all this stuff, but aren't you still **wretched, miserable?**

You may work hard to get everything for yourself and your family, but the truth is you are still **poor, and naked.**

You may even think you have all this stuff because you are blessed by God, yet you keep it all to yourself. So even though you think you see these things as spiritual, you are really **blind.**

So how do we fix all these things if we are lukewarm? Jesus tells us how:

✠ ***I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.***

"So God does want my money, isn't that what it's saying?"

God does not want your money and you can't buy God off. The people in Laodicea may have tried to buy God off with their riches, but Jesus said: ***I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich.***

Jesus is not talking about giving your money away to pay for your sins, but rather to use what you have, not to invest in things of this world, but rather in the things in heaven.

✠ ***Matt 6:19-20 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal."***

Also by how you use your time will also store treasures in heaven as well.

✠ ***Zech 13:9 I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; And each one will say, 'The LORD is my God.' "***

✠ ***1 Cor 3:12-15 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.***

Jesus also says: ***and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed.***

The white garments are the wedding garments:

† **Matt 22:11-12** *But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless.*

And we will receive them not as guest, but rather as the bride of Jesus Christ.

† **Rev 19:7-9** *"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' " And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."*

Finally, Jesus says: ***and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.***

The church in Laodicea knew of the eye salve, which was made in their city, so they could relate to this as well.

† **Isaiah 42:6-8** *I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness,
And will hold Your hand;
I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people,
As a light to the Gentiles,
To open blind eyes,
To bring out prisoners from the prison,
Those who sit in darkness from the prison house.
I am the LORD, that is My name;
And My glory I will not give to another,
Nor My praise to carved images.*

Before we accepted Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we all walked in darkness. But Jesus brought everything to the light of His word. When you are lukewarm, you no longer see things clearly, and even twist God's word to justify what you do. Ask the Lord to open your eyes to the truth so that you can see clearly what He wants, and so that you can change your ways.

✠ ***As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.***

If you have had little children, then you know what it means to rebuke and chasten your children. You don't do it out of anger or because you're mean (But at that age they may not think so). No, you do it because you love them and don't want them to get hurt. If you see your little girl climbing on the kitchen counters and jumping off, are you a bad mom or dad for stopping her when she starts to climb up there? Or are you a good mom

or dad because you know that she can get hurt jumping from that height and you stop her?

If your little 1 ½ year old son grabs the car keys and goes out to the car and figures out how to start it and even make to move, are a bad parent for stopping him before he even makes it out the door, or are you a good parent because you stop him from hurting himself and possibly others?

When they are old enough to talk and start asking why, you then will tell them why. They may not understand at a young age, but as they grow, they will understand and teach their children the same things.

Sometimes God rebukes and even chastens us, not out of anger or because He's mean, but because He loves us. We even ask why sometimes, and at times we don't understand. But as we grow in our walk with the Lord, we soon come to understand, and teach others the same.

✎ ***Therefore be zealous and repent.***

The word zealous means: *in a good sense, to be zealous in the pursuit of good*

We need to stop thinking about ourselves as number one and start pursuing good (***zealous***) and ask the Lord for forgiveness and turn (***repent***) from our sinful ways.

✎ ***Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.***

We often use this verse toward non-believers and tell them that the Lord is knocking on the door of their hearts. But the church in Laodicea was not a church of unbelievers, but rather a church of believers.

Jesus missed the fellowship that He used to have with these people, and He was knocking on the door of their hearts wanting to fellowship with them again.

Is the Lord knocking on your heart as a believer?

Have you been so caught up in yourself and even your family that you have pushed Jesus and others aside?

Open the door of your heart, and embrace Jesus once again with open arms, asking for His forgiveness and fellowship with Him once again.

✎ ***To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.***

Just think if the president of the USA invited you to the Whitehouse to have dinner with him. Now imagined that not only did he want you to have dinner with him, but sit right next to him the entire time.

Would you be excited or what?

Would you go and tell everyone ahead of time?

Would you ask if you could bring a friend?

What if he said yes, but not a relative, because they are all coming anyway?

Right now as a believer, Jesus is calling you to sit with Him on His throne. Are you as excited as you would be with an invitation from the president, or are you more excited? If you are then shouldn't you go tell everyone about it? Now, think of someone that is not a Christian, and invite him or her to come along with you.

One saying the Lord gave me a long time ago that I like to use anytime I can is:

**There is one thing better than going to heaven, and that's taking someone with you.
There's one things worse than going to hell, and that's taking someone with you.
Where are you going, and who are you taking with you?**

✎ "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

Well that's it for this week. We made it through another chapter. Next week we will start on chapter four. What happened to the churches? We will see. Also we will get a glimpse into heaven and the throne of God.

May the Lord richly bless you in His love, grace and mercy, and may you open the door of your heart once again and enjoy time with the Lord!