

What Jesus Says To A Complacent Church

Seven Letters To Seven Churches, part 7
Pastor Bob Johnson, October 20th, 2019

I. Hear the truth ... (Rev. 3:14-16)

How Jesus describes Himself:

- “the Amen” He is worthy of my T _____
 - “true witness” He is worthy of my T _____
 - “beginner of creation” He is worthy of my T _____
- (Hebrews 1:2, Isaiah 41:4)

How Jesus describes the church of Laodicea:

- “Lukewarm” refers to “Flat” vs. “Fruitful”

Three indicators of being lukewarm:

- I’ve C _____
- I’ve C _____
- I don’t C _____

Three options to avoid being lukewarm:

- A T _____ “Cap it”
- A M _____ “Zap it”
- A H _____ “Place it”

II. Go To God ... (Rev. 3:17-19)

“Self-Sufficient” “Spiritually-Sensitive”
(Matthew 11:28, John 7:37, John 6:35, Isaiah 55:2-3)

Three Questions to measure our source of sufficiency:

- How do I define my _____ “Gold”
- How do I deal with my _____ “white clothes”
- How do I discern my _____ “salve”

III. Keep your heart ... (Rev. 3:20-22)

(1 John 4:18)

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This Week’s Discussion Guide:

Welcome to our final week of our first Fall small group season at GPC. In this series we read and reflected on what Jesus had to say to seven churches back in the 1st century. What Jesus said to them back then are timeless truths (encouragements and exhortations) for us today as well. These seven letters are meant to provide insights in helping us grow closer to God and to each other and make a more positive impact with our lives in the world around us. Next week, we will start a 5 week series on the first four chapters in the book Hebrews. Our last week will be the week of 11/24.

Getting Started:

Before we get started with some questions related to last Sunday’s message, let’s catch up a bit. What is something encouraging or not so encouraging that happened in the last few days that you can share. Let’s take a little time to celebrate with one another and support one another.

In this last of the seven letters we are studying and discussing, the church of Laodicea is described as luke warm. They were more flat than fruitful and needed some prompting to get their passion for God back. Jesus said that he would rather they be hot or cold (like water is meant to be served) instead of being room temperature.

Speaking of hot and cold drinks :), what is your favorite hot drink and when do you most look forward to having it? What is your favorite cold drink and when do you most look forward to having it?

Because of Laodicea’s water sources, Jesus talked about the unpleasantness of luke warm water which they were very familiar with. We are blessed with hot and cold water so let’s discuss a different illustration. If you were a ‘stick shift’ in a car, what gear would best characterize your life for Christ in the current season you are in? Reverse, neutral, 1st, 2nd, or 3rd? some other gear?

What has helped you in the past, when you found yourself in reverse or neutral or in a lesser gear, to move into a higher gear in your walk with God?

Can you think of some Bible characters that could be characterized as luke warm (in a certain season of their life)?

How about hot (passionate) or cold (refreshing for others) in their pursuit of God?

As we start our Bible study time, read again the letter to the Church in Laodicea. (Revelation 3:14-22)

From this passage and last week's message, what was helpful or encouraging to you? Was there a question that you thought of after listening to the message we can discuss together?

Digging Deeper:

Laodicea was only 10 miles from Colossae who Paul wrote a letter to between 60-62 AD (30 years before Laodicea received their letter from the Apostle John recorded in Revelation 3).

As Paul wraps up his letter to the Colossians, he mentions the church in Laodicea. (Read Colossians 4:16) Paul references an earlier letter that was written to Laodicea that we don't have a copy of. It seems that both churches needed to hear similar truths written to both churches.

In Colossians 3, Paul shares some insights that both of these churches would have benefited from related to luke-warmness, self-sufficiency and complacency.

If their faith can grow flat, so can ours! Reflect on and discuss some insights from Colossians 3:1-17 that the church in Laodicea could have benefited from and can also help us stay vibrant in our walk with God.

In this letter to the church in Laodicea, there are some 'tough truths' that they needed to hear. After confronting their complacency, Jesus reminded them of His love for them. (Read Revelation 3:19)

Jesus said that his love at times is represented in his discipline and confrontation. Read also Hebrews 12:7-11.

Have you ever been through a time where you felt like the Lord was disciplining you?

Did it feel like love during the discipline? Eventually, how did you experience God's love through the discipline?

What are some ways God disciplines his kids today because of His love?

Does that mean that all negative circumstances in our lives are a result of God's discipline? What are some other reasons why negative circumstances come our way?

Read again Revelation 3:20.

Although it is common to hear this verse directed toward those who are not yet Christ followers, the context is clear that this promise is given to Christians.

Why is this an important promise for us as Christ followers?

Although this verse is intended for Christ followers, God does desire everyone to open their hearts to Him so that He can forgive them, adopt them and empower them with His Holy Spirit to live a transformed life.

As God reaches out to others, God desires his people (including GPC) to be salt and light in the world. (Matthew 5:13-16)

In keeping with the water illustration Jesus used in writing to the church in Laodicea (you will have to be a bit creative) in what ways should we as Christ followers be like a hot spring to the world around us?

In what ways are Christ followers to be like a cold pool of water to the world?

As we wrap up this week, what part of the message to the church at Laodicea has God used to speak to you?

Let's take some time to pray in regards to the truths that are found in this passage.

Before we wrap up, let's share some prayer requests and pray for each other. We are better together!