Be Earnest and Repent

Rev 3:14-22

Key verse 19

“Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent.”

**Introduction**

Chapters 2 and 3 show seven churches. Seven is a number of completion and fulfillment, so Jesus must have meant to speak to any church anytime. Speaking to seven churches means speaking to the church in perfection, "The churches of all time are comprehended in seven." This is the seventh and the last letter of Jesus. It was sent to the church in Laodicea. This is the only church about which Jesus had nothing good to say. The believers there were rich and prosperous, but they had a lukewarm attitude toward Christ. They had money and they didn’t think they needed anything or anyone including Jesus. Jesus told them to open the door of their hearts so that he could come in and have fellowship with them. Their problems are relevant to us today. May God help us to have ears to hear Jesus!

1. Read verse 14-16. How did Jesus call himself to the church in Laodicea? (14) What was their spiritual condition? (15) What was Jesus’ imminent warning? (16) What can we learn here?

1-1, Read verse 14-16.

“To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation. **15** I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! **16** So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

1-2, How did Jesus call himself to the church in Laodicea? (14)

*These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation.*

* Jesus introduced himself as the Amen. We usually say “Amen” at the end of our prayers. We don’t usually consider it as a name of Jesus.
* But he says he is the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation.
* The Hebrew word “amen” means “to be faithful, support, confirm, so be it, or truly.”
* The God of truth is the God of Amen

Isaiah 65:16 reads,

Whoever invokes a blessing in the land will do so by the one true God; whoever takes an oath in the land will swear by the one true God. For the past troubles will be forgotten and hidden from my eyes.

* Jesus is the truth. Jesus is the ultimate ruler of the universe. Jesus is the ultimate faithful and true witness.
* The Word was in the beginning. Jesus is also the Amen, the final word. He is the Alpha and the Omega. We can put our trust in him.
* Apostle John had seen who Jesus truly is.

Revelation 19:13-17 reads:

I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. **12** His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. **13** He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. **14** The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. **15** Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. “He will rule them with an iron scepter.”He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. **16** On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: **king of kings and lord of lords**

1-3, What was their spiritual condition? (15)

*I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other!*

* As a background for this, the city of Laodicea was located in the valley of Lycus, about 40 miles east of Ephesus and just south of Philadelphia.
* It was named after Laodice, the wife of Antiochus II (261-246 B.C.), a Seleucid king.
* Steeped in Greek culture and scholarship, the city was a major commercial, industrial and financial center of Asia Minor.
* It was famous for its banking and wool products. It had a prominent medical school. The first pharmacy in history was established here.
* Various ointments to treat skin disease and ENT problems were developed in Laodicea. Their eye salve was famous.
* Laodicea was the wealthiest of the seven cities to which the letters of Jesus were sent.
* With their money, they built impressive public buildings including a stadium, theaters, luxury bathhouses, and shopping centers.
* However, the city had one serious problem—it did not have its own water supply.
* They had to bring water in through a system of aqueducts from the hot springs in Hierapolis which was six miles away.
* By the time the water reached the city, it was lukewarm. It was yucky to drink. It was neither hot nor refreshingly cold.
* The lukewarm water tasted like a nauseating, repulsive drink.
* So what does it mean spiritually that the church in Laodicea was lukewarm?
* Jesus said, “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other!”
* From this, we learn that the problem of the believers in Laodicea was that they were indifferent to Jesus.
* They compromised the truth by mixing together hot and cold. They had no passion for the work of God.
* The original Greek words for zealous and hot stem from the same root word in origin.
* They were complacent. They were half-hearted. They were self-sufficient. They did not take a stand on anything.
* Their habitual, nominal Christian life was as disgusting as the tepid water they had to put up with on a daily basis.

1-4, What was Jesus’ imminent warning? (16)

* Jesus said, “So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.”

1-5, What can we learn here?

* Let us examine our personal life of faith and also our ministry(community).
* How can we change this? Is our passion for mission on fire? Are we feeling the broken heart of Jesus to reach out to students with the gospel of Jesus?
* Have we become habitual and complacent? As we prepare for the new semester, let us ask these questions so that we may repent of our lukewarm attitude toward Jesus.

1. Read verses 17 - 18. What did they say about themselves? (17a) What was their true condition according to Jesus? (17b) What did Jesus counsel them to do? (18) What would happen to them if they took Jesus’ advice?

2-1, Read verses 17 - 18.

**17** You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. **18** I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

2-2, What did they say about themselves? (17a)

*‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’*

* Material blessings can lead a person to be self-reliant, complacent, and self-sufficient.
* The church at Laodicea was blind to their spiritual condition. They looked at their spiritual condition and said "rich."
* They are the opposite of Jesus’ teaching.

Matthew 5:3 reads,

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

* The Laodiceans put their trust in material prosperity, in outward luxury, and in physical health. They felt like they didn't need anything.

2-3, What was their true condition according to Jesus? (17b)

* Jesus calls the wealthy Laodiceans *wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked.*
* The city of Laodicea was famous for its wealth, but the Christians of the city were spiritually wretched, miserable, and poor.
* Laodicea was famous for its healing eye salve, but the Christians of the city were spiritually blind.
* Laodicea was famous for its fine clothing, but the Christians of the city were spiritually naked.
* The disparity between what the Laodicean church thought and what Jesus said was extreme: What they thought they were and what they really were, What they saw and what Jesus saw, and the differencebetween the wealth and affluence of their city and their own spiritual bankruptcy.
* What Jesus sees in them is more important than how they see themselves.
* The church in Smyrna thought they were poor when they were in fact rich.

Revelation 2:8-9 reads:

“To the angel of the church in Smyrna write:

These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again. **9** I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich!

* But the church of the Laodiceans believed they were rich when they were actually poor.

2-4, What did Jesus counsel them to do? (18)

2-5, What would happen to them if they took Jesus’ advice?

*I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.*

* But the gold we can buy from our Lord Jesus is much more precious.
* The sale items we buy from department stores don’t last long. They perish, spoil or fade.
* But the gold we get from Jesus has an enteral value.

Matthew 13:44-45 read,

**44** “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

**45** “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. **46** When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

* The eternal life in the kingdom of heaven is the best bargain we will ever find on sale. It has the greatest value and it is free.
* Where can you find a better deal than that?
* Jesus also counsels us to buy the white clothes from him so that we may be clothed in his righteousness.
* The Laodiceans were also proud of their famous eye ointment, but Jesus told them to buy spiritual salve from him so that they could see the truth.

1. Read verses 19 - 20. What does Jesus do to those who he loves? (19a) How should we respond to his rebuke and discipline? (19b) What does Jesus promise to those who hears his voice and opens their hearts? (20)

3-1, Read verses 19 - 20.

**19** Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. **20** Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

3-2, What does Jesus do to those who he loves? (19a)

*Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline.*

3-3, How should we respond to his rebuke and discipline? (19b)

So be earnest and repent.

* God’s purpose in discipline is not to punish, but to bring people back to him.
* Jesus rebuked the believers in Laodicea, not because he didn’t love them, but because he love them dearly.
* Life is not a joke. We should not take the word of Christ lightly.
* Then we must repent. We must repent our self-sufficient attitude.
* We must repent our complacency. We must repent our materialistic ways of thinking and living.
* Most of all, we should come to Jesus to have a deep personal relationship with him.

3-4, What does Jesus promise to those who hears his voice and opens their hearts? (20)

*Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.*

* They did not have Christ’s presence among them. They didn’t think they needed him. They did not maintain personal relationship with Christ.
* Jesus stood at the door of their hearts and knocked. But they were so busy with the worldly affairs that they did not even notice that Jesus wanted to have fellowship with them.
* Once again material blessings and human achievements can become barriers between Christ and us, mainly because we become preoccupied with them and be indifferent to Christ.
* Jesus wants us to open our hearts and minds to him. He wants us to welcome him into our hearts and our lives so that we can have fellowship with him.
* Through our personal relationship with him, he wants us to have an exciting, totally committed life of faith.

Song of songs 5:2 reads,

I slept but my heart was awake. Listen! My beloved is knocking: “Open to me, my sister, my darling, my dove, my flawless one. My head is drenched with dew, my hair with the dampness of the night.”

* The key to opening the door is to first hear His voice.
* When we give attention to what Jesus says, then we can be rescued from our own lukewarmness and enter into a "zealous" relationship with Him.
* *I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.*
* When Jesus says dine with him, He speaks of a specific meal known as the deipnon. This speaks of fellowship. This speaks of a depth to the relationship.
* Although this passage was given to the church, still it is a matter of individual in securing such an intimate fellowship with Jesus.

4. Read verses 21 - 22. What promise is given to the one who is victorious? (21a) How did Jesus first sit down with his Father on his throne? (21b) How is it important for us to hear what the Spirit says to the Churches? (22)

4-1, Read verses 21 - 22.

**21** To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne. **22** Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

4-2, What promise is given to the one who is victorious? (21a)

*To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne*

4-3, How did Jesus first sit down with his Father on his throne? (21b)

*just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne.*

* Jesus is sitting down with the Father in heaven on his throne. He finished his redemptive work on earth by giving his life on the cross.
* Jesus is inviting us to be with him on his throne and reign with him.

*Jesus says in Matthew 19:28 reads,*

Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

4-4, How is it important for us to hear what the Spirit says to the Churches? (22)

*Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”*

Matthew 13:13b-17 read,

“Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. **14** In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: “‘You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. **15** For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.’ **16** But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. **17** For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

* It is of paramount importance to hear what the Spirit says to the churches for This passage concludes with Jesus says, “Let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”
* We must hear what the Holy Spirit says here, because He speaks to the churches - including us.
* May God deliver us from the self-reliant, compromising lukewarmness that marked the church of the Laodiceans!
* Help each of us to be zealous for the glory of God by overcoming indifference and self complacency.

**Conclusion**

For a man’s ways are in full view of the Lord, and he examines all his path. (Proverbs 5:21) Nothing is hidden before God’s eyes. May the Lord help us to overcome self complacency. May God help us to hear his voice of invitation, when he says to us, “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.”

**One word: Be earnest, and repent!**