

**Letters from God**  
**Hear My Voice and Open the Door**  
***Revelation 3:14-22***

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**Introduction to the Text:** We are concluding a series we have called, “Letters from God.” Revelation 2-3 contains 7 letters written to 7 historical churches of the first century world. More than just ancient letters, these letters are absolutely filled with practical themes for us to consider today. I trust that God will continue to speak to us and that we will continue to be a people who will “Hear what the Spirit of the Church says to His Churches.” To the first six we add this letter today.

**Text:** <sup>14</sup> "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

"The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Originator of God's creation says: <sup>15</sup> I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were cold or hot. <sup>16</sup> So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I am going to vomit you out of My mouth. <sup>17</sup> Because you say, 'I'm rich; I have become wealthy, and need nothing,' and you don't know that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked, <sup>18</sup> I advise you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire so that you may be rich, and white clothes so that you may be dressed and your shameful nakedness not be exposed, and ointment to spread on your eyes so that you may see. <sup>19</sup> As many as I love, I rebuke and discipline. So be committed and repent. <sup>20</sup> Listen! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and have dinner with him, and he with Me. <sup>21</sup> The victor: I will give him the right to sit with Me on My throne, just as I also won the victory and sat down with My Father on His throne.

<sup>22</sup> "Anyone who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches."

**Introduction:** In the 2009 Spelling Bee something amazing happened. I knew how to spell the final word. The word was Laodicean. The definition given was “indifferent or lukewarm especially in matters of religion.” Certainly this letter to Laodicea has spawned that kind of definition, but I want you to know there are some other features to the ancient city of Laodicea that have a great bearing on the interpretation of this letter. Laodicea had lukewarm water because the city had no water source of its own. By the time it was pumped into the city, it was not cold or hot, it was lukewarm. It was a wealthy city. It's wealth was tied to the production of a black wool. In fact it was so wealthy that after an earthquake, the ancient historian Tacitus noted how the city “without any relief from us, recovered itself by its own resources.” Finally, the city was known for having an ancient medical school and development of an eye salve. Notice how each of these factors are developed into a spiritual application.

We ought to also notice how this final message to the churches in Revelation is somewhat different from all the rest. In this message, Jesus has no word of commendation. In fact, His word of warning seems to be much more harsh and urgent. In addition, His warning and invitation seems to be more individual than directed to the entire church.

### The Truth of the Laodiceans Spiritual Condition

The first question that we must answer is whether the people of the church in Laodicea even were believers. The context seems to indicate that they might not even be Christians!

We do have to keep in mind that this is written to a church, which might assume that they are believers, but there are some notable things in the text.

#### 4 Textual Reasons:

1. The Action that Christ will take against them (3:16)  
This is severe judgment.
2. The Analysis that Christ gives of them (3:17)  
They are self reliant. The heart of the Gospel is that we cannot rely on ourselves.
3. The Advice that Christ gives them (3:18)
4. The Appeal that Christ gives them (3:19-20)

At the very least, even if Christians, they are so weak spiritually that they are in grave danger and of little use to the kingdom.

### The Truth of Our Spiritual Condition

#### 2 Barriers that Can Deceive Us about our Own Spiritual Condition:

1. Pride
2. Blindness

Lukewarmness does not speak to the fact that they were indifferent about their relationship with Christ or that they were sitting on the fence. Instead, this analogy is meant to give evidence that their relationship with Christ was not good. Cold water has a benefit. Hot water has a benefit. Lukewarm water does not have a benefit.

### The Truth about God's Invitation to Us

1. God is always knocking.
2. We hear God's voice only at certain times in our lives.
3. We must open the door to Jesus.

4. We must fully commit our lives to Jesus.

*The Test of Our Standing with God*

1. What am I trusting in for my salvation?
2. Is there a definite moment in my life when I opened my heart to Jesus?
3. What is the evidence in my life that I have committed my life to Jesus?

It does not matter whether you can spell “Laodicean” or not. It does matter whether you can point to an authentic relationship with Jesus Christ.

In the 1850’s William Holman Hunt painted a piece called *The Light of the World*—his interpretation of Revelation 3:20. The painting depicts Jesus knocking on a door that is quite overgrown with brush. On close examination, you will discover that this door has no outside doorknob. The point—Jesus is not going to force His way into your life.