

“God’s Challenge to The Church”

Sermon Seven: “Open The Door”

Revelation 3: 14 - 22 (NIV)

Tuesday, August 24, 2010

I. Introduction

- For the past seven weeks, we have studied Christ’s letters to the seven, first century churches in Asia minor.

Church	Christ’s Definition
Ephesus	The Loveless Church
Smyrna	The Persecuted Church
Pergamos	The Compromising Church
Thyatira	The Corrupt Church
Sardis	The Dead Church
Philadelphia	The Faithful Church
Laodicea	The Lukewarm Church

- The last church addressed by Christ in this series of messages is the church in Laodicea.
- It was considered by many to have been the worst church of all the seven churches we have discussed.
- You may ask, “What was it that made this church so bad?”
- Christ refers to this church as “lukewarm”.
- Lukewarm means the church was indifferent, complacent, lethargic, self-satisfied, half-hearted, and neutral.
- The church and its believers were only half-committed to Christ, half-hearted in their worship and service for Him.
- They were not so bad or so good. They were lukewarm; the worst kind of people.

II. The Commendation

- The Lord Jesus Christ did not commend this church for anything.
- He had nothing good to say about this church.
- From the Lord's perspective, as harsh as it may sound, this church was useless and somewhat worthless.

III. The Complaint (v. 15)

- Being lukewarm was the complaint.
- The church and its member were "neither cold nor hot".
- Lukewarm is very serious even critical, for the judgment that Christ pronounces upon the lukewarm church and the believer is terrible.
- A lukewarm church is only half-committed in several areas:
 - A lukewarm church is only half-committed to Christ.
 - A lukewarm church is only half-committed to proclaiming that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
 - A lukewarm church is only half-committed to teaching the Word of God.
 - A lukewarm church is only half-committed to evangelism and missions.
 - A lukewarm church is only half-committed to stressing holy and pure living for Christ.
 - A lukewarm church is only half-committed to self-denial and sacrificial living, to stressing that its people must deny themselves and die to self.
 - A lukewarm church is only half-committed to the church.
 - A lukewarm church is only half-committed to attending and staying awake and learning in the services of the church.
 - A lukewarm church is only half-committed to supporting the church.
 - A lukewarm church is only half-committed to witnessing.
 - A lukewarm church is only half-committed to Bible study and prayer.
 - A lukewarm church is only half-committed to daily devotions.

IV. The Warning (vs. 16 - 17)

- Jesus Christ warns the lukewarm and half-committed person: "I will spue you out of my mouth."
- Although graphic, this language has significant purpose.
- A person claiming to be a believer of Christ claims to be a part of His body, as nourishment and a part of the growth of His body.
- But when the person is lukewarm, he is none of this.
- This person is like lukewarm food: unappetizing; and Christ does not want the nourishment such food provides.

V. The Challenge (vs. 18 – 20)

- Although Christ was not pleased with the condition of this church, He loved them and wanted them to correct their behavior.
- Christ challenged the church to do three things:
 1. To buy spiritual gold, spiritual clothing and spiritual eye salve.
 - Spiritual gold is a necessity and is the only thing that can satisfy our souls.
We must seek the riches of the Spirit and not earthly possessions.
 - Spiritual clothing refers to the righteousness of Christ, which makes a person acceptable to God.
We must be clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.
 - Spiritual eye salve is to help them see the need for Christ and the need for His presence.
We must see spiritual truth.
 2. To be zealous and to repent.
 - The matter is so critical. Christ exhorts them to repent immediately.
 - A person cannot afford to wait one minute more before repenting.
 3. To open the door of their hearts and let Him in.
 - Christ standing at the door represents His readiness to enter the life of a person.
 - The knocking of Christ symbolizes the seeking Christ: **Actively** seeking to enter man's heart.

- The pleading of Christ represents His compassion. He not only knocks, but begs for man to open his heart.
- The penetrating Christ symbolizes the life-changing presence and power of the living Christ. When He enters and penetrates a person's life, He causes radical change beyond imagination.
- The companion Christ represents fellowship. When Christ enters a person's heart, He lives within the life of the person, always present.

VI. The Promise (vs. 21 - 22)

- There is a glorious promise to the overcomers.
- Those who "open the door" and catch fire for Christ will sit upon the throne of Christ and of God.
- In other words, the person who overcomes lukewarmness and a half-hearted commitment to Christ by repenting and submitting his life to Christ will rule with Him for all eternity.
- Details of the promise:
 1. Overcomers will reign with Christ forever and ever.
 2. Overcomers will be assigned duties in the new heavens and earth, managing the universe for Christ.
 3. Overcomers will oversee the work and duties of angels.