

I. Introduction

A. He/she who has an ear, let him/her hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

1. There will be those within the churches who choose not to hear what the Spirit says.
2. There will also be some within the churches who choose to hear what the Spirit says.
3. *Today, just as back then, there will always be a mixture of those in churches who will hear what the Spirit says and those who don't. Who will you be today? Who will I be today? That's up to us.

B. Sherri and Laodicea

II. Jesus Outside

A. Historical snapshot

1. Location

- a. Three imperial roads traversing Asia Minor led through Laodicea
- b. Heiropolis (hot springs) and Colossae (cold springs). The river that flowed through Laodicea would dry up during the hot summer months and they had viaducts for water. When the water arrived, it would be tepid, often impure, and foul smelling, sometimes even making people sick.

2. Economics

- a. Banking center of Asia Minor
- b. Manufacturer of clothing and carpets - glossy black wool from local sheep
- c. Medical school and production of medication, eye ointment in particular

3. Of note

- a. Gospel brought by Epaphras (Colossians 1:7) and letters were read to the church from Paul and others (Colossians 2:1 & 4:16)
- b. Plagued by earthquakes
 - 1) 27BC, 17AD, 47AD, 60AD, and finally 610AD
 - 2) Wealth permitted them to rebuild each time without assistance from Rome.
- c. *Laodicea was strategic, powerful, affluent, intelligent, self-reliant, and resilient. This characteristic also defined the Laodicean church.

B. Message to the church

1. (v14) Amen. Faithful and True. Beginning of God's creation (Colossians 1:15-18)

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, in Heaven and on Earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. And He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything He might be preeminent.

2. (v15-16) Hot/Cold - Lukewarm

a. "Reject or accept, get off the fence"

- 1) Preaches well but not the character or heart of God

- 2) Does God really want anyone to reject Him? Is it really better to be an atheist rather than an agnostic?
 - 3) *Letter written to church people - not people who haven't heard about Jesus.
- b. Be fruitful/effective for the mission of Jesus and Kingdom of God
 - 1) Wheat vs Chaff; Harvest vs Weeds
 - 2) Are you and I fruitful/effective in God's Kingdom and Jesus' mission? Are you and I taking seriously the mission Jesus left His followers with by making disciples?
- 3. (v17-18) Self-deception
 - a. The church was little different in their hearts than the culture they lived in.
 - b. Self-perception vs reality
 - 1) Rich, prosperous, and need nothing
 - 2) Wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked (banks, medicine, clothing)
 - c. They cannot provide for themselves but must recognize their poverty and dependence and release everything they have to make room for what they can only receive from God (Matthew 5:3; poor in heart...) - gold, white garments, and salve to anoint their eyes.
 - d. *They think they are "crushing it" but in reality they are deceiving themselves and are filled with idolatry. They are a stench in the nostrils of God rather than a sweet incense rising up to the foot of His throne.
- 4. (v19) But God
 - a. God's love burns hotter than His wrath.
 - b. Repentance: turning away from sin/idolatry and preparing for what God wants to do. Apology and preparation.
- 5. (v20) Invitation
 - a. Addressed to people inside the church, an invitation to intimacy and holiness. It is a personal invitation to each individual.
 - b. The church at Laodicea believed they were good to go, that they had it all together. They had God's favor in their affluence, they had knowledge enough to cure sickness, and they could adorn themselves with beautiful clothing...
 - c. And then they leave Jesus out of His own house. This is not Jesus knocking on the door of your life, He is knocking on the door of a repossessed life, His temple (1 Cor 3:16-17). We are not our own, we've been bought with a price to glorify God with our body (1 Cor 6:19-20). Jesus has a key with which He could enter in but He wants surrender and intimacy so He will patiently knock and wait for an answer.
 - d. *Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple. (1 Corinthians 3:16-17)*
Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, Whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

- e. Craig Keener, in his commentary on Revelation says, "Lest anyone misunderstand the tone and motivation of Jesus' rebuke, He makes clear that its purpose is love. Indeed, not only does Jesus not reject them, but He wants to have dinner with them, a familiar image for intimacy in antiquity."

6. (v21-22) Familiar promise and exhortation - invitation into His shared glory

III. Those who have ears

A. What might it look like to be lukewarm?

1. Lukewarm is just a bit off from true intimacy, faithfulness, and holiness. It can signal that we are good with God, but He sees our hearts and that lack of fire for His glory. It leaves us vulnerable because we are not actually fully founded and rooted in Jesus.
2. Lukewarm might be generosity without ever experiencing a cost. It's when we choose the comfortable and convenient over what is right when conflict arises. When we want salvation from sin's consequences rather than from sin itself. It is when I am moved by stories of people who have gone all out for God, yet I do not act. It's when we hear God's heart for the lost, but we rarely share our faith. When we say we love Jesus but refuse to recognize the idols firmly entrenched in our hearts. It is when we love others but not quite as much as we love ourselves. Lukewarm is when we structure our lives in such a way that we don't need to "live by faith."
3. *If this describes you at all, take heart because there is good news from a good God.

B. God disciplines those He loves, who belong to Him, and if we repent, He will restore us beyond what we can imagine.

1. *And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by Him. For the Lord disciplines the one He loves, and chastises every son whom He receives." It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? (Hebrews 12:5-7)*
2. KO's house. The picture of answering Jesus at the door brought up images of hospitality to the original audience. If that was the extent of this verse, nobody would leave Jesus outside. But this message goes much deeper than just sharing a meal. Answering the door means that you are giving Jesus permission to transform you to become holy as He is holy.
3. For many in the church in Laodicea and here in our own, we don't want to enter fully into this process - more like partially or holding some things back. We like our familiar, measured, and reasonable ways. Jesus changing things is painful and it takes away our relevance and control. We'd have to admit that we're not as smart and self-sufficient as we want to believe.
4. Answering the door is giving Jesus permission to dig around and find dead parts, bad parts, ugly parts, nostalgic parts, sacred parts, and redeem them. And so we avoid it and just don't answer the door because we are comfortable with how things are.
5. I think many of us have bought into the same lie as did those in Laodicea. We think we have everything we need and when faced with the fact that we don't, we decide that if we just get more money, a better president, that law passed, or whatever (you

fill in the blank), then we will be alright. We fool ourselves. We need Jesus to live and rule His temple - which is your life. Desperately.

6. *Opening the door means that we shift from planning to prayer, from popularity to obedience, from control to dependence, and from leading to being led. But it is worth it. Worth more than I can express. There is something divine and beautiful when we live a life with intimate understanding that God loves us not because of what we've done or accomplished, but because He has created and redeemed us in love and has chosen to proclaim that love as the true source of human life and flourishing. He can do this, but He won't unless you answer the door.

IV. COMMUNION

- A. Answering the door is accepting Jesus into His already house and not only eating with Him but letting Him make you holy as He is holy.
- B. Take the elements in your hand, hold them, and let the Spirit illuminate the state of your house.
- C. Take, eat, and drink when you are ready.