

Text— Revelation 3:14-22

Fellow redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

Our sermon text is the last of the letters written to the angels of the seven churches of Asia Minor, as the apostle John was instructed by the Lord Jesus Christ, who had said unto John, as reported in Revelation 1:17-20, “Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.”

Now, the term “angels”, as used in Christ’s words to the seven churches of Asia Minor, refers NOT to spirit-beings, but rather to the messengers, the pastors, of the seven churches. The original Greek root word, “angelos”, is used in the New Testament Holy Scriptures for either spirit-being angels or human messengers, the context of the passage indicating which use is meant.

For example, in Luke 7:27-28, Jesus Himself used the word in reference to John the Baptist, for we read, “This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger [Greek– angelos] before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.” Hence, in the book of Revelation, the letters to the seven churches were addressed to the pastors of those churches to share with their congregations, for holy angels which are spirit-beings need not receive written letters, since they are always in direct communication with the Lord.

The letter to the church at Laodicea, which

comprises our sermon text, is a message of warning that all Christians should take to heart, for our Scripture selection in effect says to each of us:

“BEWARE OF BECOMING A LUKEWARM CHRISTIAN”

With that as our theme, may we, in view of our text and with the help of the Holy Ghost, see—

- 1) What lukewarm Christians are
- 2) What Christ will do to lukewarm Christians, and why
- 3) What lukewarm Christians need to promptly do
- 4) How Christ lovingly approaches lukewarm Christians and all other people

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Verses 14 & 15, ----- (Revelation 3:14-15)

The city of Laodicea was located along an ancient highway in what is known today as south-western Turkey. Historians relate that Laodicea was known for its beauty and wealth.

Although the apostle John penned the letter to the pastor of the congregation at Laodicea, the words were actually Jesus Christ’s words, for He identifies Himself by saying: *These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.* Yes, JESUS CHRIST IS the great AMEN, “For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen,” relates 2 Corinthians 1:20. JESUS CHRIST IS the FAITHFUL and TRUE WITNESS, for He is TRUTH personified— Jesus IS “the way, the truth, and the life,” as we learn in John 14:6. JESUS CHRIST IS the BEGINNING of the CREATION OF GOD, for we read in John 1:1-3, 14, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” Jesus Christ IS true God and true man, the

one true Savior! Thus, Jesus Christ needs to be listened to when He speaks.

Consider how the Lord Jesus Christ describes lukewarm Christians, for He said to those at Laodicea: *I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.*

Think about Jesus' words. Jesus is omniscient, He knows all things, He reads the hearts of all human beings. The Laodiceans were not cold, for they were not outspoken enemies of Jesus Christ and His Holy Word. However, the Laodiceans also were not hot, for they did not burn in fervent faith and love of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word. Thus, the congregation at Laodicea was lukewarm; they were Christians in name only, or at the very most some were still weak Christians, barely hanging on to the Lord Jesus Christ with a little faith.

My friends, lukewarm Christians today are the same as those of days gone by: they are not outspoken enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Holy Word; but, neither do their hearts burn in fervent faith and love of the Lord Jesus Christ and His pure, preserved, Holy Word. They are usually outwardly attached to a church which calls itself "Christian"; but, if faith in Jesus remains in them, it is extremely weak and ready to die.

Fellow Christians, let us beware of becoming lukewarm toward the Lord Jesus and His Holy Word, because we ALL dwell in sinful flesh, which urges us to grow weak in the faith of Jesus Christ by putting worldly things ahead of the more important spiritual things. Indeed, the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh tempt us to leave our first love— the Lord Jesus Christ and His pure, preserved, Holy Word.

Let us never forget what our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ said to the church at Laodicea: *I would thou wert cold or hot.* Let us remember that James 1:8 informs us, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." And, Jesus states in Matthew 12:30, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." So, let

us each beware of becoming a lukewarm Christian.

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As we continue to ponder our sermon text, let us see what Christ will do to lukewarm Christians, and why.

Verse 16, ----- (Revelation 3:16)

The Lord Jesus Christ takes matters of faith in Him very seriously, for He said to the congregation at Laodicea: *So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.* Jesus would spit them out: they would no longer have any real dwelling in the body of Christ, the Holy Christian Church.

Realize that the Lord Jesus Christ is NO push-over; Jesus cannot be fooled by pretense; Jesus will not continually endure those who are Christians in name only, or becoming such.

And why is it that Jesus spues lukewarm Christians out of His mouth? The next verse of our sermon text answers that question.

Verse 17, ----- (Revelation 3:17)

Oh, the congregation at Laodicea had all sorts of outward worldly things which they had set their hearts upon, while still calling themselves Christians; and, they had a very high opinion of themselves, for they bragged: *I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.*

Nevertheless, Jesus set the record straight by telling the Laodicean congregation: *thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.* Yeah, the people had worldly things in abundance; but, they were spiritually *wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*

The case is the same with many nominal Christians today: they have large, fancy church buildings, with expensive architecture and beautiful artwork; they

have plenty of money rolling in, as they host all sorts of dinners, dancing, gambling and other entertainment events; they may boast about all their works they've done to help their communities and so forth; but, they are spiritually *wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*

Yes, those who DON'T have heart-deep, God-given faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord; those who do NOT have the pure, preserved Holy Word of God – or push it aside – and consequently do NOT feed on that Word, are blind to the Truth and naked, being they are NOT clothed in the perfect righteousness of Christ.

Therefore, we all need to be on guard against the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh. We need to remember and keep in mind the following words from Isaiah 64:6, “we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” Yes, let each and every one of us remember to beware of becoming a lukewarm Christian.

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As we continue to ponder our sermon text, let us see what lukewarm Christians need to promptly do.

Verse 18, ----- (Revelation 3:18)

Observe the beautiful, caring words of the Lord Jesus Christ, for He did not turn His back on the Laodicean congregation; rather, Jesus told the people: *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.*

The lukewarm Christians needed to buy of Christ the true gold of sincere, heart-deep faith in Him, that they might again personally have the riches of the forgiveness of sins and salvation which Christ

Jesus supplies— “the unsearchable riches of Christ,” as the apostle Paul says in Ephesians 3:8. Indeed, true faith in Jesus Christ as one's personal Savior and Lord is REAL GOLD, more valuable than mere earthly gold, for Ephesians 2:8-9 informs us, “by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” And, in reference to God-given faith in Jesus Christ, the only begotten of the Father, John 3:36 states in no uncertain terms, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” Lukewarm Christians need to be again fired-up and made hot with sincere, heart-deep, God-given faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord.

Indeed, Jesus Christ provides His believers with the white robe of righteousness, without which no one can stand before God and enter heaven. It's as the believing prophet Isaiah confessed, “I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.” (Isaiah 61:10) Take it to heart that without the white robe of Christ's perfect righteousness, one is left in the nakedness of one's own sin, which leaves one headed for hell. So, lukewarm Christians need sincere, heart-deep, God-given, faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord.

Lukewarm Christians need the eyesalve of the Holy Ghost who supplies true spiritual vision to the spiritually blind, for no one can spiritually see Jesus Christ as one's personal Savior and Lord without the gracious sanctifying work of God the Holy Ghost. It's as we read in 1 Corinthians 12:3, “Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” And, the apostle Paul in addressing Christians in 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 states, “Now he which stablisheth us with you in

Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." Thus, lukewarm Christians need help from the Comforter, God the Holy Ghost.

Verse 19, ----- (Revelation 3:19)

Jesus was not being overly harsh when He told the lukewarm Laodicean Christian congregation, "because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." No, Jesus earnestly cared about those folks, for we just read that Jesus says: *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*

NOTE WELL THAT JESUS DESIRES REPENTANCE from ALL lukewarm Christians! The Lord Jesus, the only begotten Son of the Father, does NOT want anyone to go to hell, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:16-18) The Lord Jesus still says, as Mark 1:15 relates He did during His public ministry, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." Accordingly, what lukewarm Christians need to do is sincerely repent of their sins and believe on Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord!

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As we ponder our sermon text to its conclusion, let us see how Christ lovingly approaches lukewarm Christians and all other people.

Verse 20, ----- (Revelation 3:20)

The Lord Jesus Christ, although He is all-powerful, does NOT force Himself into anyone's heart, for He says: *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come*

in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Yes, Jesus stands at the door of people's hearts gently knocking, drawing them with the VOICE of His Holy Word, thereby urging and empowering them to open their hearts and embrace Him in faith.

Jesus comes to folks with the voice of His Holy Word, Law and Gospel. Romans 3:20 informs us, that, "by the law is the knowledge of sin." Then, we read in Romans 1:16-17 and 10:17, "the gospel of Christ... is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Accordingly, Christ lovingly approaches lukewarm Christians and all other people through His Holy Word when preached and read, for He says to His faithful preachers and teachers in Luke 10:16, "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me." Let us be forever grateful to Jesus Christ for His lovingly coming to us in His Holy Word.

Verse 21, ----- (Revelation 3:21)

Those who by God's grace, mercy and power overcome the devil, the world, and their own sinful flesh, will Jesus *grant to sit with Him in His throne, even as Jesus also overcame, and is set down with His heavenly Father in his throne.*

Fellow Christians, just imagine it: those who depart this life in the faith of Jesus Christ will share in His heavenly glory in yonder life. That's how much Jesus loves us! Jesus Christ our Lord truly desires that we be with Him in glory! Let us never forget the words of 2 Timothy 2:12, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us." God grant that we gladly suffer in this world, rather than losing our faith in Jesus Christ.

Verse 22, ----- (Revelation 3:22)

God grant that we have spiritual ears, that we take to heart the words of our sermon text which the Holy Spirit caused to be written for our learning. Fellow Christians, let each and every one of us beware of becoming a lukewarm Christian.

Let us daily and sincerely repent of our sins. Let us continue to cling to Christ Jesus in heart-deep faith as our personal Savior and Lord. Let us go forward persevering in the pure, preserved, Holy Word of God, through which the Holy Ghost – the Spirit of Christ – works to keep us and grow us in the faith of Jesus Christ. Amen.

m.e.l.