

14 "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: 15 "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. 16 So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. 17 Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'— and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— 18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. 19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. 21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. 22 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'" (Revelation 3:14-22, NKJV).

"Every Christian is either a missionary or an imposter." – Charles Spurgeon



V. 14 This is the last of the letters to the churches. In ancient times Laodicea was destroyed by an earthquake and it was rebuilt. It was a rich and wealthy city. The message is from the Lord Jesus Christ to the messenger (likely a reference to the church's pastor).

Jesus identifies Himself as "The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation." These titles speak of the Lord's faithfulness, sovereignty, and power to bring all things to their proper completion (the "Amen"). This is the dot at the end of the paragraph. Amen can mean "it is done" or "so be it," and even in Hebrew it carries the connotation of an oath or a promise. In short, Jesus says, "I am the last word." I am the Promise.



Jesus describes Himself as being "faithful and true." A faithful friend is always there for you come what may. He is also an honest friend. A faithful friend never gives up on you and an honest friend helps you see yourself as you really are. There is a great proverb in the Irish language: "Is maith an scathán súil charad" meaning "A friend's eye is a good mirror." Jesus is a friend who never gives up on you and He reveals who you truly are. He gives good, solid, trustworthy, corrective criticism.

Jesus then says that He is the beginning of God's creation. This does not mean that He is a created being. Some have used these phrases to mean such things. He is in the TOP PLACE in creation as the Creator OF all of creation. To say that Jesus is created conflicts with everything else in the Bible. We are all very familiar with John chapter one which explains that *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made."* (John 1:1-3, NKJV). Jesus was there at creation, and He was/is the divine instrument of creation.

It is important to really understand Who Jesus is, lest anyone ever claim that Jesus was somehow a lesser-created being. In Colossians 1:15-18, Paul explains in detail the relationship between Jesus and God the Father.



¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸ And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. (Colossians 1:15-18, NKJV).

On Wednesday night we discussed that Jesus was there before all things and the universe is being held together by Him, at this very instant! It all begins with Him and it all ends with Him. That's what it means when He is called the Alpha and the Omega. The passage further tells us *"¹⁹ For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, ²⁰ and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross."* (Colossians 1:19-20, NKJV).

During our recent revival meetings, Pastor Kevin Broyhill explained the relationship between the Father and the Son to be much like the sun and the rays that come off of it. The sun is manifested by the rays and the rays manifest the sun. That is a picture of the relationship between the two persons of the Godhead.



Vv.15-17 In contrast to the messages to the other churches, Jesus doesn't commend the Church in Laodicea in any way. He tells them what their problem is, and He tells them how to repent and get back on the right track. He says, "I know your

works and they are neither hot nor cold." This is a strange thing to say. He says because you are luke warm, I will spit you out of my mouth. It is an indictment of being a "lackadaisical, do-nothing church." I told the group on Wednesday night, that years ago I worked for a wonderful guy named Sal Frusco. I was selling new homes for him in a subdivision, and whenever he would pull away in his big red cadillac, he would say in his strong New Jersey accent, "Heh...do sumpim, even if it's wrong." Sometimes we become so paralyzed that we do nothing. I used to tell my kids, "A boat that is not moving cannot be steered." There is a lot of truth in that statement. If you're sort of stuck in any area of your life, pray about which direction to go and start moving. God will steer a moving boat.

Curiously, lukewarm water is not very satisfying. Isn't it strange that we like it cold and we like it hot, but we don't like it in the middle. What we're really talking about, is a picture of a person with no passion.

Jesus points out the problem clearly. The Laodiceans were hung up on their stuff. They felt so self-sufficient, yet they were distracted from how spiritually impoverished they truly were. "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.'" Because of their apathy, Jesus has nothing to do with them. He says, I just want to spit you out. They were rich in material things, yet they were wretched and pitiful.

This self-sufficient attitude is the exact opposite of what it means to be "poor in Spirit." Remember the passage in Matthew chapter 5 that we now call the "Beatitudes?"
"³ Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven."(Matthew 5:3, NKJV). When we think we've got all that it takes, we're really close to being impoverished without knowing what we lack. Pastor Larry shared with me that for years his ministry to men in an affluent area was frustrating. Why was it frustrating? It was frustrating because he was trying to minister to men who felt they had no need. They were rich and had become wealthy, and they felt in need of nothing. Yet they didn't know that they were wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. It is so hard for us to see our own faults. But if we listen, the Holy Spirit is constantly at work pushing us and directing us to becoming more Christ-like.

Pastor Michael calls these details of life the "attractions and distractions" that get us off track. These details of life stunt our paths to holy, godly living. We "come to the end of ourselves" when we realize that those things are in our way. Pastor Larry calls that realization "going down on two knees." He calls half committed people "one-knee-ers." They are down on one knee only, with the other leg up and ready to dart off in another direction.



V.18 *"I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see."* Jesus tells the Laodiceans that the antidote to being lukewarm is accomplished by gaining true riches and white

garments. That is a picture of holiness in our living. That is a picture of feasting on the riches of God's Word and living it out in our lives. And lastly, He offers an "eye operation" so that the Laodiceans would be able to see themselves as they really are. Most of us need this kind of "eye surgery" at one time or the other.

It is the Holy Spirit that can open our eyes to our true spiritual condition as we get into the Word of God. Quoting Pastor Michael again, he says, 'Yes, we should be concerned about reading our Bibles, but we should be even more concerned about whether we're letting our Bibles read us!' God's Word reveals to us what we are really like. God's Word exposes our heart condition. Are we letting it truly shape who we are becoming? This is why I so often quote Hebrews 4:12 *"¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."* (Hebrews 4:12-13, NKJV).



Reading God's Word is like getting a software update. It is downloaded into our souls and reaps its reward each time we read and meditate on His Word. When a person studies and applies the Bible to the details of their lives, it is like a Norton-Antivirus coursing through the veins of our operating system. The Holy Spirit detects what is not of Him and eliminates it if we allow Him to do so.

V.19 God disciplines those that He corrects. This is a truth for each and every believer. God isn't the "big bear in the air," but the Word clearly tells us that whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth". I once heard it said that "God loves us how we are, but He loves us enough to not let us stay that way." Chastening is how a father directs a child to be all that they are meant to be. It is loving. It is corrective. It is directional. He loves us enough to chasten us and direct us to be that person whom He desires us to be.



V.20 Jesus then says those very well-known words.

20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. This is an open invitation to believers and unbelievers alike. He doesn't say that we need to find Him and knock on the door hoping for an audience. Instead, He is RIGHT THERE AT THE DOOR OF OUR HEARTS knocking away and desiring sweet fellowship with us. Are you listening? Do you hear His voice? Do

you hear what He is saying? Open the door to Him, and He promises to come in to wherever you are and to dine with you. This is a verse written to believers who have grown cold. He is telling us how to get back into sweet fellowship with Him.

V.21 *21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne*". Years ago, I knew a godly woman here in Navasota. She was a member of the local Seventh Day Adventist church. She would show up at the Emporium for our lunches there and we'd ask her to pray because it was so powerful. She would always end her prayer with, "And Lord, may we rest, rule, and reign with you someday." It's an odd sort of a thing to say, but that seems to be what Jesus is saying here to those who remedy their lukewarmness. Sometimes scripture calls us a "royal priesthood."

Peter is addressing Jewish believers specifically in 1 Peter 2:9 when he says, "You are a royal priesthood." But the truth of the matter is that one day all believers will participate in God's kingdom when it comes to earth. And we'll serve as priests in proclaiming God's excellencies.¹ Perhaps Jesus is alluding to this in this verse.

V.22 Jesus ends this letter to the Church of Laodicea saying, "He that has an ear to hear, let him hear". He is telling us to sit up and listen.

Where is the passion in your life? Have you become lackadaisical? Are you more excited about your wealth, your accumulations, your politics, sports, or world-wide events more than you are about the soon-coming of Jesus? Are you passionate about growing into a deeper sweeter relationship with Him? We really don't have long on this earth. I'm realizing more and more each day just how limited my time is. How will I live out the rest of my life? I just want to live it out in a way that is pleasing to Him. How will you live out the rest of your life? This is not a message of guilt, but rather a call to repentance. Do you need to make some moves in your life? Let God do the work. Get out of the way and let Him have His way. That will never disappoint.

¹ <https://www.gotquestions.org/royal-priesthood.html>

The Laodicean church and the modern church in America and the West have many similarities. We have grown fat and lazy. The Laodiceans enjoyed material prosperity that led them to a false sense of security, independence, and self-sufficiency. We too have bought into the lie of self-sufficiency. Maybe you should pray with me, "Lord Jesus, open my eyes that I might see that at the end of it all, you are all that matters." As the old hymn says, "I need you oh I need You. Every hour I need You. Oh, bless me now my Savior, I come to Thee."

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. Jesus is enough!

Let us pray.

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868. Tel: 936-825-1227 (Edited and proofed by Amanda Neese- Webster, Texas.) All financial gifts to this ministry are tax-deductible as a 501 (c) (3) Corporation.