

thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

Jesus was displeased with these people because they were satisfied with themselves and didn't realize their truly pitiful condition. Notice, Jesus said that because they were lukewarm He would spue (spit) them out of His mouth if they didn't repent. By this we can know that to be lukewarm is more offensive to Him than being completely cold spiritually.

Why was this church in this lukewarm condition? While it is true that they were a church, they didn't follow Jesus' teachings. Instead of living a life of true Christian victory, they were satisfied with a mere beginning in Christian experience. Jesus said, speaking to another group of people, "Bring forth therefore fruits meet [suitable] for repentance" (Matthew 3:8). This shows us that after we have repented of our sins and become a new creation in Jesus, we must grow to be more like Him. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17). Repentance means being sorry for sin and turning from it and forsaking it. We must then live a life of obedience to God's Word and grow as the Holy Spirit leads us. "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13).

Another reason the church at Laodicea was lukewarm is shown in the way they were pleased with themselves. They said, [we] "are rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing" (Revelation 3:17).

Still another reason for their lukewarmness was their emptiness. Look how Jesus saw them: "wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked." Did you notice how they saw themselves in the opposite way from what Jesus did? Let's examine the words Jesus used to describe them.

They were *miserable*—deserving pity; *poor*—no spiritual wealth; *blind*—to their own condition; *naked*—no covering of God's love and grace. What a wretched condition they were in. No wonder it made Jesus sick to see them.

Picture in your mind the figure of Jesus standing, knocking and calling outside the church door. The meaning of the wording here is that He is standing and had been standing; is knocking and is continuing to knock, and is calling, seeking an invitation to come in.

Do you wonder why Jesus was outside this church? He is outside any church whose form of worship is more important than the attitude of the heart. Another hindrance is when church leaders elevate talent, wealth or position more than the Holy Spirit's power working in the individual members. The grace of God must be allowed to work in freedom. Jesus is outside when visible fellowship is emphasized more than individual spiritual needs.

This church, Laodicea, thought they were under God's approval. But they were badly mistaken. The Bible implies that they were proud and willfully ignorant. Jesus cannot abide in this type of church. Remember, He said, "Behold, I stand [outside] at the door, and knock."

This same condition is common in many churches today. We can see many that are similar to the church in our lesson. Is your church one that is lukewarm, or is it growing in its spiritual expression with vibrant Holy Spirit power?

Many churches are satisfied simply with the way things are. They may feel that their position is pleasant and safe. Few are willing to make an "all or nothing" stand for the truths the Bible plainly teaches. They congratulate themselves on being moderate and sober-minded. Like the Laodiceans, they think and speak well of themselves and may be greatly disturbed when someone tends to differ with them by showing them the danger of their position. Such a church

finds it easy to criticize other Christian groups and to have no association with them.

A lukewarm church is made up of immature, weak leaders and members who emphasize material values over the spiritual. The writer of Hebrews speaks of this in Hebrews 5:12-14. The writer here tells his readers that they had been Christians long enough that they should be strong teachers, but instead they needed someone to teach them! He added that if they had grown as they should, they would be strong and able to make clear, firm decisions between good and evil. He adds encouragement in verse 1 of Hebrews 6, "Therefore leaving the principles [basics] of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection [be mature and holy]."

Is Jesus knocking and calling at the door of your church?

How does He knock today? He knocks as the only Saviour of the world with a hand that was wounded on the cross of Calvary. He alone knows the true condition of those inside. He knocks with a full heart of love. "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 the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:16, 17, 36).

Jesus knocks in our day by His Holy Word, the Bible, and other helpful Christian books and papers. Many people throughout the world are reading at random, but with a sincere heart, and are being seized with the fact that they need to let Jesus into their lives. The same is also accomplished by hearing teaching and preaching from the Bible.

Jesus also knocks and calls through daily events. This may be through sickness, death or loss of wealth. Jesus wants to come in and bring salvation and fill every need of the aching heart.