

## REVELATION (CH. 3)

The goal of the messages of Jesus to the seven first-century churches was to challenge, encourage, warn and build up believers and churches throughout church history including our day of 2020.

The value of these messages for churches today includes: 1). A revelation of what Jesus Himself **loves** and **values** in His churches as well as what He **hates** and **condemns**. 2). Identifies the consequences of **disobedience** and **spiritual neglect** as well as the **rewards** of spiritual alertness, diligence and **faithfulness to Christ**. 3). **A standard** by which any church or individual may judge their “**true**” spiritual condition in relation to God. 4). An example of Satan’s methods for attacking and working against the Church and individual Christians (Judges 3:7).

How can the Church and “you” avoid spiritual decline and the resulting judgment by Christ? (a) First and most importantly churches (you) must be **willing** to “*hear what His Spirit says*” (2:5-7, 16-17, 21), which means they (you) must **listen** and **respond with obedience** to God’s “direct” message. The Word of Jesus Christ must always be the Church’s **guide** (1:1-5). (b) Churches (you) must continually **examine** their (your) spiritual condition in relation to God and **His standards**. When necessary, they (you) must **correct** their (your) actions and their (your) degree of toleration of worldly and immoral beliefs and behavior among their members (2:4, 14-15, 20; 20:1-3, 14-17). Spiritual decline can be **stopped** and **corrected** in any church or individual if there is **sincere repentance** and a sincere return to the **original love**, truth, purity and power of Jesus Christ and his biblical revelation (2:5-7, 16-17; 3:1-3, 15-22).

### DO NOT CONFUSE THE CHURCH WITH A BUILDING, IT’S YOU!

When you think about a church, you’ve got to get your mind away from a physical structure, the building, and into the reality of what a church is. A church is a gathering of people made up of the same spiritual DNA and what makes up that DNA determines the **individual’s survivability**, which makes/determines a **churches survivability**.

*“For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body— whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. 14 **For in fact the body is not one member but many.**”* 1 Corinthians 12:12-14

*“**For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. 5 Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, 6 that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**”* Romans 15:4-6 (NIV)

### The Church of Laodicea: The lukewarm Church (Revelation 3:14-22)

The city of Laodicea was located near Colossae and Hierapolis, about 40 miles southeast of Philadelphia. Antiochus II named the city after His wife Laodice. Its name / her name means “the people rule.” - suggesting that there is a system of religion where there is a “man-made, man-run and man-controlled church. Implying that Jesus is not actually or welcomed to lead His church as the Head. It was a wealthy trade-route city with an abundance of bankers and merchants. The church in Laodicea had characteristics that foreshadowed those of many churches in the modern and post-modern eras.

The Laodicean church was lukewarm, arrogant, and self-satisfied. It boasted about its wealth and need of nothing, they were in a backslidden condition. **This is the only church of the seven churches Jesus had nothing good to say of.**

## 1. [Jesus] Church You Better Start Listening to Me and Stop Deceiving Yourselfs (vs.14)

[Jesus is] **The Amen** (*Let it be So*). This declaration by Jesus is an undeniable claim of deity. It is similar to saying; *"Thus Says The LORD."*

[Jesus is] **The Faithful** (*faithful to speak and do the truth*). The church believers at Laodicea were not faithful.

[Jesus is] **The True Witness** (*true to testify and true to be the truth*), which they were not true witnesses.

Jesus told him, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."* John 14:6

[Jesus is] **The Beginning of Creation** (John 1:1-3) One of the saddest verses in all of the Bible *"He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him."* John 1:10

### **Jesus Christ Announces His Authority. (Revelation 1:8; 1 John 5:20)**

## 2. Nothing Escapes Jesus' Attention, He Knows Your Real Spiritual Condition. (vss. 15-16)

This church was neither cold nor hot but "lukewarm."

Anything that is hot requires constant fuel. When a believer is following Jesus closely and being used by God that Christian discovers that there must be a constant source of power to keep their heart hot and in the right place.

At the same time, something to be ice cold, the environment around it must maintain an atmosphere that is near freezing or below. Cold also must be fueled by something colder.

But nothing is required to maintain lukewarmness. That which is lukewarm is left alone and in time becomes stagnant which is followed by decay. They were simply content to maintain a status quo position. This also speaks of the era of our generation over the last two hundred years. Those who are "lukewarm" have just enough knowledge of Christ that they're not resistant, but lack enough real faith to be fully engaged. That condition, in truth, is harder to change than to convert a cold non-believer!

## 3. Identify Your Real Spiritual Condition, Don't Deceive Yourself! (vs. 17)

They had lost their sense of spiritual poverty, **trusting in their own effort, and self-power**. They had drifted from being disciples of Jesus to a more socially acceptable, easy-believer condition. (A common trait in our generation)

*"The cause of Christ has been hurt more by Sunday-morning bench-warmers who pretend to love Christ, who call Him Lord but do not do His commands, than by all sinners."* (Havner) Jesus tells them; *"you are blind to your condition."*

**"The essence of lukewarmness is saying, 'I don't need it. I need nothing. I have enough of Jesus.'"**

## 4. Get All of What Jesus Has For You (vs. 18)

Just like in your life, the change in the Laodiceans has to begin with understanding your spiritual poverty. As long as you believe you have met all your spiritual needs in your life, you can never receive them from Jesus.

If you are self-sufficient – then you are a very poor person. Your wealth is based upon how dependent you are upon God.

## 5. Stop Keeping Jesus Out on the Porch, Let Him in the Entire House of Your Life. (19-22)

These verses apply to unbelievers, but this verse addresses lukewarm Christians who think they have Christ sufficiently. Jesus is knocking on the door of lukewarm Christians who think they don't need any more of Christ