

"Behold, I stand at the Door" | Revelation 3:14–22 (ESV)

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[0:00] Full disclosure, thanks to the use of technology, we are able to have a remote clicker onto this and it works every time.

So I hope you will come to appreciate this kind of more stylized, a little more animated slides going on as we're just continuing to navigate through the cultural changes as well as technological changes that go on in this world.

So it's just very pretty amazing stuff, but it can be overwhelming. I got to admit. So let's go ahead. Let's get started. And yeah, here we go.

Well, good morning, everyone. So how many of you guys remember when we were doing our sermon series through Revelation? Seemed like what happened to that is like we started in I think it was September, September and October.

And here it is. It's been almost six months. Time flies when you're having fun. And it's like, OK, what about the seventh church? You were going through the six churches in Revelation and you just kind of left us hanging here.

[1:09] Well, the thing is, is that the Advent season was going on. And certainly as the new year was approaching, the Lord has really been working here in this place. And it was very important for us to go over who we are as a congregation.

How does someone belong? And just really kind of solidifying and going more into who we are as a church body and where we are heading. And in the coming weeks, as the the Ad Council, as the board, as we meet together, we're going to be praying and reflecting on where is God going to have us move as a church, as a congregation?

And what is God specifically doing as we, you know, we've celebrated 80 years for this church body, for this congregation? And we thank God for that. And as we're entering into a new season, it's very exciting.

It can be a little overwhelming, but we trust in the living God. We want to steward all of the resources that God has given to us and to be able to say, Lord, we are ready to serve.

We're ready to serve in whatever capacity you have for us. And so when we're looking at this, I want to finish off at least the seven churches. And Lord willing, we are going to continue in Revelation one way or another, whether that is later on this year or even next year.

[2:24] We will continue in Revelation one way or another. So just something as we're going through with that. And so today we're going to go over the final church, the church in Laodicea.

And there's the famous verse that you have, behold, I stand at the door, right? Many of you guys may have seen those. How many of you guys have seen those pictures where Jesus is right by the door, right?

You know, the ones. There's that really famous one where he's standing at the door and knocking, right? And the idea is that when he's knocking, well, you want to let him in, right? You want to let him into your heart. You want to let him in and to have a meal together kind of thing.

And what's interesting is as we'll go through the text here, we'll go exactly over what exactly is the scene here in the context within Revelation, right? You have this sense of rebuking that's happening.

You have this sense of talking about lukewarm. Now, how many of you have heard before lukewarm Christian, right? And a lot of us have heard that. And we're going to go over.

[3:25] I've always struggled with this, okay? It makes sense to have a Christian that's hot or on fire for the Lord, right? And it also makes sense to think of a lukewarm Christian, one that's going kind of to and fro.

They're not fully in, right? There's that whole thing. Then why would Christ say it's good to be cold? Have you ever wondered that before? Right?

And we'll go into this. But I want you to think about that for a moment. Makes sense to be hot and on fire for the Lord. It also makes sense why it's bad to be a lukewarm Christian.

But why would Christ say, I'd rather have you be cold than lukewarm? That's a more difficult one, right? Because the implication when you read it is like, well, is cold just not a believer?

What's going on there, right? Especially if you're looking at this hot and cold thing that's going on. And so what we have here in the scene is that Jesus is talking to a church, the church in Laodicea.

[4:26] It is a self-sufficient church calling them lukewarm to recognize their need for Christ. It's important for us to read as we're going through the text.

This church needs to recognize their need for Christ. And we can automatically think just right away how us as a church body and us as individuals, as we walk with the Lord, we rely on the Lord.

We rely on him as our comfort and our strength, right? Our strong tower, our refuge. No matter what season you are at in your life, right? No matter what it is you're going through. And so we have come to the last church, right?

Seven letters, seven warnings, but also seven invitations, right? And so we are arriving at the seventh one, which is some people would say it's the most difficult.

So we're going to go ahead and turn our Bibles. You can see that 1220 number on there. That's the ESVP Bible, page 1220. And it's going to be in Revelation chapter 3, verses 14 through 22.

[5:30] And by the grace of God, we're going to open the word. Amen? We're going to open it and we're going to read it together. And what we do here at Ontario Community Church is we open the word.

We observe the text, right? We read it together. Then we go into the interpretation. What are the underlying lessons that we can learn here? And then finally, there is the application is, well, what do we do about this, right?

It's important for us to read the text first and foremost. It's also important for us to learn the underlying lessons. But it's also important for us to apply it to our very lives, no matter where you are at in life's journey.

And so, as we're turning to here, are we all there, church? And Revelation chapter 3, verse 14 through 22. So the church in Laodicea, church, can we read this together? Let's read it together. Pause there for a second, right?

[6:43] You can see it right there. It'd be better that you'd be hot. It'd be better that you'd be cold. But lukewarm is a no-no here. That's very interesting, right? Especially for some of us who have heard, you want to be on fire for the Lord.

You want to be a hot Christian, right? Lukewarm, not so good. Cold? What's up with that, right? So we're going to continue then. Verse 16, I will spit you out of my mouth.

Let's read together. Verse 17. For you say, I am rich. I have prospered. And I need nothing. Not realizing that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked.

Oh my goodness. We got five words here that are describing the things that they are lacking in. But yet this church is saying, I'm rich. I have prospered. I don't need anything, right?

We can take that away right there. Verse 18. Let's read together. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments, so that you may clothe yourself, and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and to salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see.

[7:53] Verse 19. To whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and what? And repent. So verse 20. Behold, I stand at the door and knock.

If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, what? I will come into him and eat with him and he with me. What a beautiful scene, right? This kind of imagery where you're going to dine together with Jesus, right?

I don't know about you, but I'd love to dine with Jesus. That would be a really, I'd just be in a sense of awe and wonder for that, right? Verse 21 together. The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my father on his throne. What beautiful language, right? Verse 22. He who has an ear, let him hear what the scripture says to the churches. It's always important in that last verse, right? He who has an ear, let him hear, right?

It's so that they can understand, right? For many of us, how many of you have had your mother or your spouse say something like, are you listening to me and you're not?

[8:58] Do you understand me, right? This is something that's entirely different, right? And so when we're reading this kind of text, it's important for us to understand, he who has an ear, let him hear. Hearing to understand what is going on within the text.

And so with this, right, we need to kind of, I think it's important for us to go to the six churches at a glance to see how it's leading up to this seventh church, right?

Because it's been months, we need to refresh our memory on what's going on to recap what we've been looking at with the final church. So I'm going to go through this real quick. It's not a pop quiz here, so you don't need to worry about that, right?

So the first church was the church in Ephesus, right? It was a church that lost its first love, right? It was pursuing rigid standards, right? It did not tolerate evil whatsoever, right?

And in the process, they became so rigid that they lost their first love. That's something that's very specific, right? In the pursuit of being right and having such a high standard that you lose love in the process, that's something that we have to be mindful of, not only in the case of Ephesus, but in our own lives as well, right?

[10:05] To not get so rigid and we can think, well, what do you mean by rigidity, right? Making sure that our standards, how we conduct our lives, even how we view the scriptures, even. We cannot get so caught up to the point where it divides us or to the point where we lose the very love that we have for Jesus Christ.

Can I get an amen on that? All right. So we go to the next one, Smyrna, right? So they were faithful through poverty and tribulation. They were not rebuked, but they were warned that they would be tested even unto death, right?

So this is a specific church that they were under fire, right? They were faithful despite being poor, right? And despite facing tribulation.

We can think of churches even nowadays that are poor and they face trial, right? They're having some sort of attacks or schemes of the devil, whether it's another religion or it's the government or whatever it is.

They are still faithful. And what Christ is saying to this church is, hey, look, you'll be tested even unto death. Remain faithful in me. It's something that's very important for us to understand that when a church is under fire, we remain true to the living God.

[11:11] Amen. Let's go to the next one, Pergamum, right? Now this one's a lot more controversial where this church was at the devil's throne, right? What does that mean?

They were partaking in eating food that is sacrificed to idols. So the way to look at this is that they were partaking in a ritual, as it were. You know how we take communion?

We are remembering the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the sacrifice that he made. Well, it's important for us to know. I don't want us to be naive in this. You can partake in a meal offered to another God.

And it's important for us to recognize that not only in Revelation, but also for us today. Don't partake in a meal that is offered to an idol. That's something that is actually very explicit within the text and something that's very interesting for us to understand.

And certainly, I hope that none of us are partaking in that. Don't do it whatsoever, right? And so in this, meals with false gods, and there's also the sexual immorality that was happening in there.

[12:13] It's important for us to learn that this idea of infiltration, right? Who you are worshiping. Our loyalty is to Jesus Christ. And we remain firm in our faith, right?

And then, of course, in sexual immorality, we're not practicing sexual promiscuity in these kind of things. Thyatira, then. They were doing much good, right? Service and endurance, right? They were doing a lot of good things. And they tolerated a leader who practiced sexual immorality and those communion-like meals to false gods.

When you see something like that that is being repeated, it's something that you need to pay attention to, right? So not only is it sexual immorality, but kind of on equal terms is this idea of partaking in meals offered to other gods.

So in Scripture, it's saying, don't do that. So it's just something that we should be mindful of. Now, I don't know if any of us, don't raise your hand. I don't know if any of us have been invited to partake in a meal offered to another god.

[13:16] But should that happen, you better know the answer on that one, right? And so that's what you had with Thyatira. Now, Sardis, right? Now, this one's a very interesting one. This is one where Christ is saying that the church appeared alive.

It appeared everything was going good, but they were dead inside. That's very sad. That's a tragedy that's happening, right? And it was the call to wake up, to repent before losing what remained.

Now, that's something that's very important for us even today when we think about this, that we have to... It's not just about the appearance, right? It's not just about the outside looks.

It's about what's on in the inside. How is God working in your life? How is God working in the life of the church? We certainly need to be aware that we need to have the Holy Spirit work in this place. We need to have transformation that comes from the Word of God, right? And we need to be sold out for Jesus Christ, not just about the appearance. Can I get an amen on that one, right?

[14:16] What matters is the heart. And throughout so much throughout Scripture, what matters is the posture of the heart. And so in there, it is to wake up before it is too late, right?

Repent. And let us remember, the idea, the notion of repentance is the changing of mind.

Throughout Scripture, we have this idea, right? We need to repent and believe. It's changing our mind and our posture to who the Lord is and to come to believe in Him.

But repentance doesn't just end there. We continue to have our minds, our hearts, our bodies, and our spirits transformed by God. And so whenever you hear repentance is only just turning from your sin, it's much more than that.

Metanoia, right, is very important for us to recognize. And so finally, we have Philadelphia, right?

There was no rebuke. Christ was setting an open door that no one can shut, right?

And it's very important for that. But this was the one church that had nothing but praise. That's something that's really remarkable. In fact, even when you go in the text, right, in chapter 3, verse 8, you don't have to turn there, but it says, I know your works.

[15:25] Behold, I have set before you an open door which no one is able to shut. I know you have little power, and yet you have kept my word and not denied my name. How remarkable. A church that is facing persecution as it were, and yet they're remaining, having little power.

I mean, we can think of many churches throughout history, not just in Revelation, that have had little or no power. And certainly to remain faithful in Christ.

That's the importance of this. And the fact that Christ recognizes these different situations and scenarios is very important for us as the church even today. Okay. And so now this leads us to Laodicea, right?

The church where Christ stands at the door knocking. Isn't it interesting and peculiar that in the last church in Philadelphia, it was talking about the door being wide open, and no one could shut this door.

But here you're having a church where the door is essentially shut, and Christ is knocking. Isn't that interesting? Because you have two completely situations that are going on in here, right?

[16:26] And so let's go into what does the text say, right? We've been going about this. And so there are three titles for Christ, right? If you want to look at the word and on the screen here, you'll see in here, in, let's see here.

In verse 14, the words of the Amen, right? The faithful and true witness and the beginning of God's creation, right? And we see that throughout Scripture.

There are references in this, right? I love that description of Christ, right? The Amen, right? The I believe. The faithful and true witness, right? So when we think of the Amen, the final certain word of God, that when we think of Christ as the Logos, right, being the living word, the living and active word, having the final say.

Something that's remarkable, right? The faithful and true witness, right? And it's very, very good to know that it is Christ that recognizes what goes on in the church. Much like how Christ recognizes what's going on in our own lives, right?

Right? It's actually, it should give us a lot of comfort, especially when we're thinking of people that are wicked or people that are evil. That they, the wicked and the evil, they may think they may get away with doing the wrong thing.

[17:44] But it is God who sees what's going on, right? And we even think of that famous quote of character, right? It's doing the right thing even when the doors are closed and no one's watching. Well, let us remember God is still watching in that.

And so it's just a great reminder for us, right? So with this, we also have the, where Christ is saying, I know your works, right? Christ sees what they are doing, right?

That's pretty cut and dry. That's pretty, that makes sense. And their works are lukewarm. Now, for those of you who are more of biblical scholars here, right? I know a few of you are in the room here. It's important to know that that word lukewarm, that's the only time in scripture where it shows up. Which is something that is very unique to the text. But it's also important for us to know if we don't see it throughout scripture, it's a little harder to identify what exactly is going on.

And so when we're talking about lukewarm here, it's just important for us to note that, that it only appears the one time. The only time that it's very similar in language is actually in Leviticus 18.28.

[18:48] You don't have to turn there. Where it's saying that the land that is vomiting out its inhabitants for sin using judgment language. That's the only thing that's similar, but not the same, if that makes sense, church.

So that's something that's also important in this. And so I want to go over this, right? The two diagnosis, right? And this is actually very, very interesting. You have the perception of the church, right?

How many of you have heard the saying, right, perception versus reality? Perception is reality or perception is not. I mean, there's all kinds of quotes like that. Well, what we have here is the church and how they see themselves as opposed to what the reality is, right?

And so the church is saying, well, I am rich. I have prospered. I don't need anything. I've got everything that I possibly could need. Do you see the problem with that kind of statement right there, right?

Maybe not that I'm rich and I've prospered, but it's actually that last one, right? But it's also important that this entire sentence, right, that I've gotten all the things that I need.

[19:52] Why do I need Christ, right? We can see that within Christianity. We can even see that within the world. That there are people that when they have it together and they're not relying on the Lord. It's important for us to recognize even in moments of triumph, in moments of victory, in moments where we prosper, we thank the living God for the blessings that he's giving to us, right?

When we are poor and we are wretched, we also have to recognize that we trust in the living God. In every season, in every circumstance in our life, we trust in him, right? So the perception is, right, I need nothing.

I don't want any of you to say that, right? I need Jesus. We all need Jesus, every single one of us. And then Christ's reality. We have five words here, right?

Let's read it together. Wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. Oh my goodness, right? What exactly is going on here, right? And so it's the reality.

They didn't recognize, this church did not recognize their need for God. In other words, it was like self-deception, right? And for many of us, we can fall into that kind of trap where it's like, well, it's all about me and my accomplishments and what I can do, right?

[21:01] It's the I, I, I, right? But it's important for us to recognize. We are nothing without the Lord. And in fact, when Christ is saying, you're wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked, that's not a very good description, but it's reality.

It is the hard truth recognizing what we are without Christ in our life. And it goes to show the importance that we need Christ in our life. Very important for us.

And so in this, we have the hot and cold, right? And lukewarm. So it's, it's important for us to recognize. There have been some scholars that talk about the difference of water, right? Where you had lukewarm that was kind of like this mixture of water that made it really nasty tasting, right? You have that in the cultural and geographic view. But I'm taking this in kind of a different approach here, right?

Where we have hot being someone that is on fire for the Lord, someone that is fully committed. We can all understand that. That makes sense, right? The lukewarm then is somebody, in the context of it, it's the church that realizes they don't need Christ.

[22:11] That's wild to me, right? But it also can extend to someone who is a non-believer. It's people who specifically believe that they are fine, that they don't need the Lord, right?

And it's a very dangerous place to be in because when you see those that are cold, these are the ones that are far from God and they know it. Do you understand the difference?

Both the hot and the cold recognize that they need the Lord, okay? The lukewarm does not. And I want you to think for a moment, I don't know if you can read that bottom kind of yellow golden rod color, right?

I want you to think about the parable of the two sons and the prodigal son. This was a very good parallel to help us understand hot and cold, right?

Where someone walked away and they sinned, they squandered their money, all the things, right? They're on this really bad and dark path and they realized they needed to turn.

[23:13] They needed that sense of repentance, right? That would be a cold person. Then you have someone on the other side who's just remained in the vineyard. Someone who's remained loyal to the Father.

Well, that would be more of a description of someone that is hot. Well, in those parables, there is no third way in that. It's only talking about two specific scenarios, one that rejected and recognized their need and one that was loyal in the entire time.

But here we have a third path, which is, yeah, it's beyond the scope of the parable, but it's within the scope of revelation that both recognize on the polar sides in this that they need God.

Now, how they recognize that, now that may be a different question, right? For some unbelievers, it could be that there's the feeling that there's something missing in their life and they can't put a finger on it, but they know they need it, right?

And leading them to, Lord willing, the Lord. Having a conversation, building a relationship with another believer. These kind of things are very important.

[24:23] So I just thought it was very interesting. As a teenager, I would always struggle with this, with the cold. Why would God want anyone to be cold?

But when we understand it from the framework as someone that's away from God but still realizes they need God, that makes a lot more sense than just, let's just blatantly ignore that.

We can't ignore what's going on within the text. So that's something that's important for us. So, in this, you know, let me go back real quick. Yeah, both need the Father.

And so here we have Christ's three counsels here. Now, you have the gold that is refined by fire, right? And many of you may know that, the refiner's fire.

You may even recognize that song, right? Refiner's fire, my heart's one desire is to be holy, set apart, right? And so this is referencing what's going on from Isaiah.

[25:25] Now, it's important to note when you're looking at the text here, in verse 18, if you still have your Bibles open, it says in verse 18, I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so you may be rich, and the white garments, so you may clothe yourself, and the shame of your nakedness.

What do you mean by that? It's important to note that God is going to supply us all that we need, right? That God gives salvation freely, and he gives in abundance, right? So when we're talking about the gold that's refined by fire, it's important to know that true wealth comes from Christ. Now, what's very interesting is when I read this Laodicean church, it almost sounds, it hits home when you hear about churches that are talking about health and wealth, right?

The name it and claim it type of framework, right? If I snap my fingers, I will get a Lamborghini, right? Those that want to make God a genie in the bottle, right?

And it's not so, right? And so in this, we can see that we are sinners that are in need of a Savior, that we are nothing without the Lord, and that wealth is not defined necessarily as financial.

[26:42] There's spiritual wealth. There's wisdom. I mean, there's inner transformation. You can't put a dollar amount on someone being transformed, becoming more like the Lord. You absolutely cannot, and you certainly should not.

But to see people who have been transformed by the Lord, that there's the sense of the peace that surpasses all understanding, the insurmountable, unspeakable joy that comes from Him, and I mean, go into the spiritual gifts and the spiritual blessings that come from the Lord.

That is true wealth if we're talking about wealth here. And so when we're seeing this kind of description here, right? Gold refined by fire. Now, white garments is a very interesting one.

Towards the end of Revelation, I mention this a lot. Some translations say, blessed is the man who washes his robes, which is such a wild, it's like towards the end of Revelation, you're like, what in the world is that?

Do I need to do a load of laundry, put some bleach in, right? I'm going to wash my robes, and then I'll be blessed for that. It's the idea that when we put on the new self, right? When we become a believer, we are born again, right?

[27:50] We are a new creation, and it's this imagery of putting on white clothes, right? How many of you know the filthy rags, right? How we go from filthy rags to what, church? There you go, right?

So it's clean clothes, right? White garments. So it's this beautiful imagery of what's happening. And so in Revelation, then, it's speaking more to the white garments, which is restoration, renewal.

I know about you, but I don't want to have filthy rags for clothing. And I mean, the fact that God gives that to us is just remarkable. And in parabolic and apocalyptic language, when you're putting on the white robe, it's showing that you are ready to go to the wedding feast, that you're ready to be a part of the wedding banquet, and you're ready to dine and to feast, to be with the Lord.

It's actually very beautiful imagery when we're talking about that, right? And Christ covers our stained garments and gives us new and pure ones. That's something that's really interesting when we're finding that.

There is a verse in chapter 3 in Revelation. It's in, when it's talking to Sardis, verse 4. You still have a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy.

[29:16] Right? So that's kind of contextually talking about the sense of having white garments. It's very, very fascinating when we talk about this, right? And then we have the eye salve, right?

Our eyes being opened to the things of God by the guidance and the revelation of the Holy Spirit. Now, this is something that's very interesting. I found it fascinating as a Christian. Maybe you have experienced this before. Maybe, maybe not.

God hides things in His Word. And there's certain things that are revealed to us upon being a Christian, which is a remarkable thing when you are a Christian.

But it can be a very frustrating thing when you want to share it with someone who's not a believer and they don't understand. But it's important for us to share what we learn by the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

To help them, to help the unbeliever become a believer. To help the distant come close once again. And to strengthen and empower those other believers. I always find it just so remarkable that God is protecting His Word.

[30:17] And it's at the right and proper time. Many times, I mean, in the book of Acts, I think there's one in Isaiah, where you find this scene where someone's reading Scripture.

And you say, I don't understand this. Can you explain this to me? And someone goes and explains it to them. Well, praise God for having more of that insight, right? That's actually why, if any of you have ever looked close at my glasses, there's a verse on here.

And it's Proverbs 25, 2. Look it up sometime. It is the glory of God to conceal a thing. And the glory of kings is to discover that thing. And it's talking about, right, the things that are hidden within the Word of God.

And how wonderful it is for us to discover those kind of things. Whether it's connections, or how the Word of God speaks to us and helps transform us in our lives. And even to the degree on how God has hidden discoveries that have helped humanity.

So it's just kind of a wonderful thing. I know it's jam-packed in a proverb, like they all are. But also, when we talk about, in Scripture, when we're talking about eyes, I was blind and now I see, right? [31:27] A lot of us, we think of the physical blindness, right? And the healing that happened with the blind man. But not only can physical eyes be opened, but spiritual eyes can be opened as well. To have that kind of insight and to be able to see and to understand things that you weren't able to before.

How many of you have read a verse? I mean, it could be like when Sam was going over the Gospel of John, right? You might find a brand new insight. You're like, I've read this so many times, and yet it just didn't click.

And then the Spirit revealed it to me to understand this. Praise God for that. It's just wonderful as we are growing into who God wants us to be.

So that's what the three councils, right? So in Revelation, excuse me, behold, I stand at the door and knock, right? Now, contextually, this is towards the church, right?

To the lukewarm Christians, right? Hey, here's the difference, if you're wondering the difference between Philadelphia and Laodicea. Philadelphia, they were remaining true to the Lord, and the door is wide open, right?

[32:38] For that Philadelphia church. But to Laodicea, when you say, I've got everything that I need, it's as though you shut the door, right? Does that make sense, church?

It's as though you shut the door to Christ. Here, you have a church that I am devoted to you. I don't have a lot of power, and yet I'm going to be fully, I'm going to remain true to you.

I'm going to hold fast as the text says, right? Here, this ain't the case. God, I don't need you. I've got all the money in the world.

I've got all the success and notoriety. Why would I need you? Now, we better not be saying that in this church. But in the case of Laodicea, that's what was happening.

I've got everything I need. So they shut the door. Could we call that a rejection? Absolutely. But what's powerful about that, despite the rejection, is the fact that Christ is there, knocking at the door.

[33:41] And so, when we're talking about Christ knocks at the door, will the church respond? And I think it's important, if there is a church that is blatantly rejecting Christ, that the Lord will be knocking.

And we can also think of how this verse is used, how this is applicable to all of us, right? Before we know the Lord, that Christ is there, waiting for us, to open the door and to let Him into our lives, to receive salvation.

And I've got to tell you, open that door. Right? Open that door and know who's on the other side. Because that is the greatest decision that you can make that will not only affect your life here on the earth, but will affect your eternal life as well.

And so, to join at the table is to be in fellowship with Christ. I put that in there because how beautiful that kind of language of sitting and dining with Christ. I mean, you want to talk about communion language when we gather together and we eat of the bread and we drink of the cup.

That is one powerful parallel that we get to experience as a form of worshiping God. So that's something really remarkable. So the interpretation, what does it mean, right?

[35:05] Lukewarm then means not recognizing your need for Christ. Okay? We've established the difference between hot and cold. They both recognize they need the Lord. Lukewarm does not.

Very important for us to understand that. Lukewarm can mean, in the context of revelation, can mean a believer, but we can extend that to even the unbeliever, that they don't recognize their need for Christ.

That's why it's so important for us to share in the gospel, for us to build relationships with others. And we also think of, as I mentioned, the prodigal son who came to himself from desperation, right? When he hit rock bottom, he recognized what was going on. And so I know for a lot of us, we may even identify with that. And the older brother was there.

He was present. Now, of course, in the parable, it talks about how he needed to be transformed in the heart, of course. But he was still there in close proximity with the father. And so the second thing then is that true wealth is spiritual, not physical.

[36:15] Now, granted, you can be blessed with physical things, you know, having a nice job, having a nice car, absolutely. But don't let that become your idol. Right? We worship the creator, not the created.

Understand the difference, right? The one that made all of the things. You know, I think of how when you look at the Old Testament, we see that kind of imagery of people worshiping the golden calf.

And we think, oh, that's so identifiable. I know not to worship that. Then we think, well, what are the golden calves of today? something to think about, something to reflect upon.

And in the case of Laodicea, they were focusing more on their wealth and their prosperity and not having a need for the Lord. May that never be the case for this church or for any of you that are watching online.

You can be material rich, but may you not be spiritually wretched. Right? May you thank the Lord for the blessings.

[37:18] In other words, keep the main thing the main thing. Keep Christ at the center of your life. Regardless of your socioeconomic status, your educational status, may you worship the living God.

And then third, well, God's, back to the second one, God's abundance is something that is more, as I mentioned, than health and wealth.

I don't know about you, but salvation is a much bigger thing. Discernment is a much bigger thing.

And transformation, becoming more like Christ, is a much greater thing.

Money can come and go, but transformation from the Lord, that's a remarkable thing. Excuse me.

The third thing, then, is that Christ is knocking.

Receive Him before it is too late. We see this not only in parabolic language, right, but also in apocalyptic language. That Christ gives us time, but not forever.

[38:22] And we don't know what tomorrow will hold, which is why it's so important for us to make a decision for Christ to receive that salvation. Let that be your foundation.

Let that be that decision. It's a life-changing one. Two lives will it affect. Earth and heaven. Think about that. And so this, there's a sense of urgency, right?

May you open the door. And in this sense, it kind of makes you wish that you can imagine this imagery of Christ knocking at the door. The staff, the elder, the boards, the congregation better be running to that door, letting Jesus in.

Let's come celebrate a meal together. That's something that we could all hope for for the church in Laodicea. And when we think of that kind of imagery, let that be an image for this church that we're not shutting God out.

We're not shutting Jesus Christ out. We're letting him on in. And certainly, for your own heart, your own spiritual journey, may you not shut him out. Let him in. And so, the door unanswered can become neglect.

[39:39] Don't neglect God. Don't neglect him knocking because, as we find in Scripture, he'll be there, but not forever. And so, in this, we also see in the text that the promise of the throne for those who overcome.

This leads us then to our application, how shall we live? What do we do about this, right? Well, the first thing is that recognize your need for Christ. Now, it's very interesting when most of us, when we read this, we can automatically think, well, that's for the unbeliever.

Well, no. If you just read Laodicea, this was a church. And they went into this scenario, this mindset of not needing the Lord.

And so, no matter where you are at, whether you're an unbeliever, whether you're distant from God, or whether you're very close with the Lord, may you never forget how you rely on the Lord as your refuge and as your strength, as your comfort.

That's just, it's for all of us to recognize that, right? As I've mentioned before and I'll mention it again, hot and cold recognize their need. The lukewarm do not.

[40:57] If you're cold, may you come to the Lord. If you're lukewarm, may you have clarity in recognizing that you need God. And then if you're on fire for the Lord, we'll just remain that way.

Let the fire, right, that's within you, let it burn, let it continue to grow within you. And the second thing then is to open the door to Him. Now it's kind of interesting when we see this kind of language about shutting God out from a church standpoint.

Certainly, we should never shut the Lord out. No matter where we are at in our spiritual walk with the Lord. Invite the Lord in. Dine with Him. When we think of that imagery of Christ as the great shepherd as He travels with the sheep, may you walk the path with Christ because He's going to be with you in every stage and in every season of your life.

It's very important for us. And for the unbeliever, this is your invitation. And for the believer, if you've drifted, well, it's a call to repentance. And then finally, receive and share in God's abundance, right? We think of how salvation is available to all who believe, right? I always mention it. 1 Corinthians 15, verses 1 through 4, the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

[42:20] That is the simple gospel. That is what the core of our faith, right? Now, it's important for us to recognize salvation being available for everyone is something that is, kind of goes against how us as human beings think.

But it's remarkable. It's powerful. Knowing that Jesus lived, performed miracles, taught in parables, did all these things so that we can have everlasting life and not perish.

It doesn't say, you know, only those that live in Oregon can receive salvation, right? Nor does it say only those that live in Idaho can receive salvation.

Nor does it say those that belong to a certain political party. Nor does it say those of a certain socioeconomic or educational status. We are all called to salvation.

Every single one of us. And so, and not only that, receive the gold, right? Receive the white garments and the sights, the eyes to see.

[43:36] In this sense, those are three things that we receive, but we certainly know that God gives us a lot more than that. It's just important for us to recognize. So share it. Share in your story, your testimony, how God has worked in your life.

Share the gospel message that we all need Christ and that Christ provides a better way. Share in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. And this is how we become outward focus.

This is how we partake in the Great Commission, right? To make disciples. Because obviously they need to believe, but they also need to be disciplined.

They need to grow in their faith. That's also important, right? We are called to live and love like Jesus Christ, just like how the Great Commandment calls us to love God and to love people.

It's a very nice catchphrase, but it can be a challenge for all of us. And so, I challenge for you, who will hear the hope of Christ from you this week?

[44:43] Find someone, a family member, a friend, a student, and find the right time. Let it flow naturally. Find that opportunity and maybe ask God for that opportunity to speak truth in love with others.

And so, in closing, let us think of that imagery as we began, of Christ knocking at the door, that God is giving all of us an opportunity for us to respond to His salvation and to His call for our lives.

The invitation is here, but it's not forever. May we all respond to salvation, to transformation, to newness of life. May we respond to God's call for our life.

Let us pray together. And Father God, we thank You for this time and this opportunity for us to gather today. As we are finishing these seven churches in Revelation, what a remarkable blessing it is for us to be able to gather and to go through Revelation.

It's not a scary book. It is a book of hope. It is a book that shows prophecies and promise that You, God, are consistent, everlasting to everlasting.

[45:59] You remain the same. May we learn not just the lesson from the church in Laodicea, but also from the other churches.

May we remain firm in our faith even when persecution or trials come our way. May we be able to properly discern good from evil, right from wrong, truth from lies.

and may we be trained accordingly. And may we be able to live in love like Your Son, Jesus Christ.

May we respond to the opportunity to share in the gospel message.

We're grateful for this church, this congregation, and for the 80 years of blessings that You have given to us. We're so grateful. You are one amazing God for You sending Your Son as we're getting ready in a few weeks here for Easter.

May we celebrate that time. You know, there's Palm Sunday. There is the Easter celebration, the passion story. May we recognize our need for You all the days of our life, no matter what situation.

[47:10] The good, the bad, and the ugly. May we come to You and worship You. May we never shut You out of our lives. May we let You in and dine with You. And to know that imagery, to be able to sit with Your Son on the throne, is beautiful.

We thank You so much. It is in the name of Jesus Christ that we pray and we all say together, Amen, church? Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.