

Neither Cold nor Hot (*Part 2*)

Revelation 3:14-17

Thought for the Day: The measure of our spiritual health is not our material prosperity but the reality of our relationship with Jesus Christ manifested in the way we live for Him.

What is our true spiritual condition before the Lord? Are we Christians in reality, or are we Christians in name only? Do we consider our material prosperity to be proof positive that we are blessed by God? Is that a reliable measure?

I. The Greeting (3:14)

14 And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation.

Though outwardly the church in Laodicea appeared to be strong and prosperous, the Lord found nothing to commend, and so He moved immediately to...

II. The Condemnation (3:15-17)

A. Spiritual Apathy / Indifference (3:15-16)

15 I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot!

- The reality of what we profess we believe is found, not in what we say, but in what we do. "Only 17% of Christians who consider their faith important and attend church regularly actually have a biblical worldview." (*Barna Research Group*)
- "Jesus' reference to different temperatures for liquids is derived from local imagery related to the water supply in the area. There were three key cities in the Lycus Valley—Colosse, Hierapolis, and Laodicea. Colosse, which was about ten miles east of Laodicea, was known for its cool, refreshing, life-giving waters. Hierapolis, which was six miles north of Laodicea, was famous for its hot springs that were sought out for their medicinal healing powers. . .But unlike Colosse and Hierapolis, Laodicea had no water supply of its own; the water had to be piped in from [outside the city.] The water did not have enough time to cool in the aqueduct, so when it arrived in Laodicea, it was [lukewarm]." (*Hitchcock, 101 Answers, pp. 95-96*)

Two Views on the Spiritual Conditions of Those Who Are Hot, Cold, and Lukewarm:

- **View #1:**
 - Hot – a true believer in Jesus Christ who has spiritual zeal and commitment.
 - Cold – person who is not a believer in Jesus Christ, therefore, unsaved.
 - Lukewarm – an in-between hypocrite; a person who is trying to straddle the fence; professes faith in Jesus Christ but is actually indifferent toward Him in their heart. They do not possess the reality of what they profess.
 - "There is more hope for the openly antagonistic than the coolly indifferent. The state of coldness is more conducive to a person's coming to Christ than a state of lukewarmness, as illustrated by the conversion of Saul of Tarsus." (*Hitchcock, 101 Answers, p. 97*)

➤ **View #2:**

- Hot & Cold – “Hot and cold both depict believers who are useful to the Lord, just as the hot water from Hierapolis and the cold water from Colosse were both useful and beneficial.” (*ibid*)
- Lukewarm – a picture of a believer who is useless and unproductive. The lukewarm person is a Christian who needs to repent of sin and hypocrisy.
- “Liquids that are hot or cold are good for something. We savor hot coffee and hot tea. We enjoy cold milk and other cold, refreshing drinks. . . Hot and cold liquids are good, whereas lukewarm liquids are good for nothing. Laodicea ‘was providing neither refreshment for the spiritually weary, nor healing for the spiritually sick. It was a totally ineffective [church].’” (*ibid*)

16 So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.

- Laodicea is an illustration of a church that becomes nauseating to the Lord because of spiritual apathy and indifference. (Romans 12:11)
- If the lukewarm believers did not repent, they were going to experience severe disciplinary judgment from the Lord. (Cp. vs. 19)

B. Spiritual Poverty (3:17a)

17 For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing...

- The church had acquired material wealth, they had done this by their own efforts, and they equated their material wealth with the spiritual blessing of God. They were proud, self-sufficient and self-deceived!
- “...self-confidence and material prosperity can blind our eyes. We don’t see our true condition before God. Material prosperity seems like a blessing, but it often becomes a curse and blinds our minds to our real spiritual needs.” (*Hocking, World Leader, p. 98*)
- Matthew 6:19-21; 1 Timothy 6:17-19.

C. Spiritual Sickness (3:17b)

...not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

- Material prosperity does not necessarily signify spiritual blessing.
- “It is sad indeed to see so many so-called Christians who never demonstrate the lifestyle of an ‘overcomer.’ Their attitudes, habits, and convictions all speak of unbelieving hearts. It is not enough to profess that we are Christians. . . Are we really committed to Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior? Have we placed our lives and futures into His hands? Are we depending completely upon His death on the cross for our sins and His resurrection from the dead to guarantee that we will live forever?” (*Hocking, World Leader, p. 98*)

CONCLUSION

“The Laodicean church was blind to its own needs and unwilling to face the truth. Yet honesty is the beginning of true blessing, as we admit what we are, confess our sins, and receive from God all that we need. If we want God’s best for our lives and churches, we must be honest with God and let God be honest with us.” (*Wiersbe, Be Victorious, p. 56*)