

NOON BIBLE STUDY: REVELATION 3: LAODICEA

REVELATION 3:14-22 - LAODICEA

LAODICEA STOOD AT A CROSSROAD OF MAJOR TRADE ROUTES IN THE REGION. AS A RESULT THE CITY WAS PROSPEROUS AND WEALTHY BECAUSE OF THE TRADE AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITY.

LAODICEA WAS "THE BANKING CENTER OF THE WHOLE REGION, AND WE KNOW TODAY WHAT THAT MEANS (\$\$\$). BUT THERE WAS MORE. THE TOWN BOASTED A FINE MEDICAL SCHOOL; PEOPLE WOULD COME FROM FAR DISTANCES TO TRAIN AS DOCTORS. IN PARTICULAR, THE SCHOOL SPECIALIZED IN OPHTHALMOLOGY, THE HEALING OF THE EYES. LAODICEA WAS A GOOD PLACE TO GET A HOLD OF THE PARTICULARLY POPULAR PHRYGIAN EYE-POWDER. (AN POPULAR EYE OINTMENT AT THE TIME).

"STILL THERE WAS MORE. THE LOCAL FARMERS IN LAODICEA HAD DEVELOPED A PARTICULAR BREED OF BLACK SHEEP WHOSE WOOL WAS OF ESPECIALLY FINE QUALITY. THIS SEEMS TO HAVE GENERATED A FASHION, WHICH THE BREEDERS WERE ONLY TOO HAPPY TO SUPPORT. CLOTHES MADE FROM THE LAODICEAN WOOL WERE HIGHLY SOUGHT AFTER" (NT WRIGHT, "REVELATION FOR EVERYONE", PAGE 37)

LAODICEA SUFFERED A MASSIVE EARTHQUAKE IN 60-61 AD. REPORTS SAY THAT THE CITY WAS DESTROYED. REMARKABLY BECAUSE OF THE PROSPERITY OF THE CITY, THEY DID NOT REQUEST FINANCIAL HELP FROM THE EMPEROR, AS MOST OTHER CITIES DID. THEY PROUDLY REBUILT THE CITY ON THEIR OWN. AS A RESULT THE NATIONAL PRIDE WAS HIGH. THEY DID NOT NEED ANYTHING TO HELP THEM BE STRONG AND PROSPEROUS AGAIN.

THE CHURCH OF LAODICEA WAS MENTIONED IN THE LETTER TO THE COLOSSIANS (COLOSSIANS 2:1, 4:13-16). PAUL INDICATES THAT HE WANTS THE LETTER HE WROTE TO THE COLOSSIAN CHURCH TO BE READ BY THE LAODICEAN CHURCH TOO.

COLOSSIANS 4:12-16 (NLT) - EPAPHRAS, A MEMBER OF YOUR OWN FELLOWSHIP AND A SERVANT OF CHRIST JESUS, SENDS YOU HIS GREETINGS. HE ALWAYS PRAYS EARNESTLY FOR YOU, ASKING GOD TO MAKE YOU STRONG AND PERFECT, FULLY CONFIDENT THAT YOU ARE FOLLOWING THE WHOLE WILL OF GOD. 13 I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT HE PRAYS HARD FOR YOU AND ALSO FOR THE BELIEVERS IN LAODICEA AND HIERAPOLIS. 14 LUKE, THE BELOVED DOCTOR, SENDS HIS GREETINGS, AND SO DOES DEMAS. 15 PLEASE GIVE MY GREETINGS TO OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS AT LAODICEA, AND TO NYMPHA AND THE CHURCH THAT MEETS IN HER HOUSE. 16 AFTER YOU HAVE READ THIS LETTER, PASS IT ON TO THE CHURCH AT LAODICEA SO THEY CAN READ IT, TOO. AND YOU SHOULD READ THE LETTER I WROTE TO THEM.

REVELATION 3:14 - "THE AMEN, FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS, THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION OF GOD"

JESUS BEGINS THIS LETTER WITH QUITE THE SELF-DESCRIPTION. IT IS SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHER OPENING LINES. "UP TO THIS POINT IN THE SEVEN MESSAGES, JESUS HAS INTRODUCED HIMSELF IN TERMS OF WHAT HE HAS OR DOES. UP TO THIS POINT, JESUS HAS NOT TOLD US WHO HE IS, JUST WHAT HE DOES OR HAS...BUT TO LAODICEA JESUS TELLS US WHO HE IS. - THE AMEN, THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS, THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION OF GOD (3:14)." (DARRELL JOHNSON, "DISCIPLESHIP ON THE EDGE", PAGE 115)

THESE TITLES ARE ROOTED IN THE FACT THAT JESUS IS TRUE, FAITHFUL, RULING AND EXALTED. HIS REFERENCE TO THE "BEGINNING OF THE CREATION OF GOD" HAS TWO MEANINGS THAT SEEM LIKELY FROM THE CONTEXT OF REVELATION:

1 - JESUS IS THE "BEGINNING" OF THE CREATION OF GOD, AS IN THE FIRST IN RANK OF GOD'S CREATED ORDER. THE ROMAN EMPEROR WAS CALLED THE "FIRST" WHICH MEANT HE WAS THE RULER OF EVERYTHING. IN THE ROMAN WORLD, NO ONE ELSE IS RANKED ABOVE HIM. IN THE CONTEXT OF "AMEN" AND "FAITHFUL AND TRUE", JESUS IS AFFIRMING THAT HE IS TRUSTWORTHY, RELIABLE AND POWERFUL.

2 - JESUS IS THE ONE WHO HAS LAUNCHED GOD'S "NEW CREATION" IN THE WORLD. THE GREEK WORD (*ARCHA*) MEANS THE "ORIGIN", "SOURCE" AND IS SOMETIMES USED TO REFER TO THE "RULER" (KEENER, PAGE 158) WITH THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS, GOD'S WORK OF REMAKING THE WORLD HAS BEGUN AND JESUS IS THE "ORIGINATOR" (NET, CSB) OF IT.

THE NLT OFFERS THIS: "THIS IS THE MESSAGE FROM THE ONE WHO IS THE AMEN-- THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS, THE BEGINNING OF GOD'S NEW CREATION (REVELATION 3:14):"

JESUS IS ~~THE~~ AMEN. HE IS THE ONE WHO FAITHFULLY AND TRUTHFULLY GIVES TESTIMONY (WITNESS) TO THE WAY THINGS REALLY ARE. AND OF COURSE HE DOES FOR HE'S POWERFULLY BEEN EXALTED TO LEAD THE NEW WAY.

REVELATION 3:15-16 - LUKEWARM

LAODICEA WAS WEALTHY, PROSPEROUS AND BEAUTIFUL, BUT THE CITY LACKED SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT - A GOOD WATER SOURCE. LAODICEA HAD AN ELABORATE AQUEDUCT SYSTEM TO BRING WATER IN FROM SURROUNDING REGIONS. TWO MAJOR CITIES HELPED WITH THIS.

"LAODICEA HAD TWO SOURCES OF WATER, ONE TO THE NORTH AND THE OTHER TO THE SOUTHEAST. TO THE NORTH, STANDING HIGH ON A DRAMATIC CLIFF, IS THE CITY OF HIERAPOLIS. IT BOASTS TO THIS DAY A SET OF HOT SPRINGS TO WHICH TOURISTS COME FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD: THE HOT, CHEMICALLY CHARGED WATER COMES BUBBLING OUT OF THE GROUND...AND SPILLS OVER THE CLIFF, LEAVING A WHITE MINERAL DEPOSIT VISIBLE FROM MILES AROUND. IN THE FIRST CENTURY THEY BUILT AQUEDUCTS TO BRING THIS ACROSS TO LAODICEA IN THE CENTER OF THE VALLEY, FOUR OR FIVE MILES AWAY. (THESE AQUEDUCTS) CAN STILL BE SEEN TODAY - WITH THEIR INSIDES COVERED IN HARDENED MINERAL DEPOSITS. BUT BY THE TIME THE WATER ARRIVED IN LAODICEA IT WAS NO LONGER HOT. IT WAS MERELY LUKEWARM. WHAT WAS WORSE, THE CONCENTRATED CHEMICALS MADE IT UNSUITABLE TO DRINK...

TO THE SOUTHEAST OF LAODICEA WAS THE TOWN OF COLOSSE. IT, TOO, HAD SUFFERED BADLY IN THE EARTHQUAKE OF 61 AD, BUT HAD NOT BEEN REBUILT. COLOSSE, HOWEVER, HAD A SPLENDID SUPPLY OF WATER, FLOWING DOWN FROM THE HIGH, SNOW-CAPPED MOUNT CADMUS: FAST FLOWING, CHILLY STREAMS OF ALMOST ALPINE QUALITY. BUT BY THE TIME THE WATER REACHED LAODICEA, 11 MILES AWAY, THE NORMAL (HEAT OF THE REGION) MEANT THAT IT, TOO, HAD BECOME LUKEWARM."

THIS IS A REMARKABLE FEATURE OF LAODICEA - HOT WATER THAT HAS COOLED DOWN, AND COLD WATER THAT HAS HEATED UP - WHICH FORMS THE MOST FAMOUS PART OF THIS MOST FAMOUS OF THE SEVEN LETTERS." (NT WRIGHT, "REVELATION FOR EVERYONE, PGS 37-38."

COLD WATER IS GOOD. IT REFRESHES THE THIRSTY. HOT WATER IS GOOD. IT WARMS THE SOUL, IS GOOD FOR BATHING AND COOKING. LUKEWARM IS NOT GOOD. LUKEWARM WATER IS GROSS. IF YOU'RE VERY THIRSTY AND REACH FOR WHAT YOU THINK IS AN ICED COLD CUP OF WATER, BUT IT'S LUKEWARM, YOU DON'T GET REFRESHED. IF YOU'RE COLD AND REACH FOR A HOT CUP OF TEA, BUT INSTEAD THE TEA HAS BEEN SITTING OUT FOR SOME TIME, IT TOO IS GROSS AND NOT USEFUL FOR THE PURPOSES IT IS NEEDED.

WHAT MIGHT SOMEONE BE INCLINED TO DO WHEN THE LUKEWARM WATER GETS DISCOVERED IN THEIR MOUTH? SPIT IT OUT. IT'S GROSS. AND THAT'S WHAT JESUS SAYS TOO. ACTUALLY, HE'S LESS REFINED. THE WORD "SPIT" IS THE GREEK WORD "*EMEO*" WHICH MEANS TO "VOMIT". JESUS IS SAYING THE LIVES OF THE LAODICEANS MAKES HIM WANT TO PUKE.

SOMEWHERE ALONG THE WAY, LAODICEA HAS LOST ITS USEFULNESS FOR CHRIST. THEY ARE NO LONGER SERVING THEIR INTENDED PURPOSE. THEY HAVE EXPERIENCED THE SLOW FADE THAT HAS TEMPERED THEIR FAITH. AND THE WORST PART OF THIS SITUATION IS THAT THEY THINK THEY ARE FINE.

REVELATION 3:17-18 - TRUE ASSESSMENT & DIAGNOSIS

LAODICEA IS DECEIVED - SELF DECEIVED IN FACT. IF YOU ASKED THEM HOW THEY WERE DOING, THEY WOULD SAY "I'M RICH, HEALTHY AND IN NEED OF NOTHING." YET JESUS SAYS THEY AREN'T JUST THE OPPOSITE OF THAT, THEY ARE WORSE THAN THE OPPOSITE OF THAT. "WRETCHED, AND MISERABLE, AND POOR AND BLIND AND NAKED."

THE CITY WAS MARKED BY ARROGANCE - WHEN AN EARTHQUAKE CAME, THEY DIDN'T NEED HELP TO REBUILD. THEY WERE "ALL SET". WHEN THE CHRISTIANS OF THIS CITY WERE SHAKEN AND CRUMBLING IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, THEY TOO DID NOT ASSESS THAT THEY NEEDED HELP.

Q - HOW CAN A CHRISTIAN ARRIVE AT SUCH A PLACE?

Q - HOW CAN WE SO WRONGLY ASSESS OUR TRUE SPIRITUAL CONDITION?

JESUS OFFERS THEM A REMEDY TO THEIR SPIRITUAL SICKNESS, POVERTY AND BLINDNESS. THE SOLUTION TO THESE PROBLEMS IS ULTIMATELY FOUND IN HIM. THEY ARE POOR, AND SHOULD COME TO HIM TO "BUY GOLD". THEY ARE NAKED, AND SHOULD COME TO HIM TO BUY "WHITE GARMENTS" TO COVER THEIR SHAME/NAKEDNESS AND "EYE SALVE" TO HEAL THEIR BLINDNESS.

REMEMBER, LAODICEA WAS VERY PROSPEROUS (GOLD). THEY WERE A MAJOR CENTER OF FASHION AND MEDICINE, SPECIFICALLY OPHTHALMOLOGY. HAVING MONEY, LOOKING AND FEELING GOOD DON'T TRANSLATE TO SPIRITUAL HEALTH. THEY HAVE WASTED THEIR RESOURCES (IN THIS CASE THEIR VERY LIVES). THEY HAVE BOUGHT COUNTERFEITS. WHAT WILL IT COST THEM TO PURCHASE THE GENUINE ITEMS? REPENTANCE AND FAITH.

REVELATION 3:19 - THIS IS LOVE, TOO.

JESUS LOVES LAODICEA, AS WELL AS THE OTHER CHURCHES OF REVELATION 2-3. LOVE DOES NOT MEAN ABSENCE OF TRUTH, DIRECTNESS OR EVEN REBUKE - ESPECIALLY WHEN THE ONE YOU LOVE IS IN DANGER. THE CHURCH, CHALLENGED WITH PRIDE AND ARROGANCE, MAY HAVE BEEN TEMPTED TO INTERPRET JESUS' REBUKE AS LOVE-LESS, YET IT WAS LOVE THAT MOTIVATED THE MESSAGE FROM CHRIST.

REVELATION 3:20 - SOMEONE'S AT THE DOOR...

THIS VERSE HAS INSPIRED FAMOUS IMAGES AND COMMONLY HEARD SENTIMENT WITHIN CHRISTIANITY. YET, "I STAND AT THE DOOR AND KNOCK" ISN'T A PICTURE OF THE GENTLE SAVIOR LIGHTLY KNOCKING ON THE DOOR OF YOUR HEART, THINKING "I HOPE THEY HEAR ME KNOCKING OVER THE SOUNDS OF THE TV ON IN THE LIVING ROOM. I WAS GOING TO RING THE DOORBELL BUT I DON'T WANT TO WAKE ANYONE IN CASE THE BABY IS SLEEPING. WILL I NEED TO SLEEP ON THE STREET TONIGHT IF THEY DON'T LET ME IN?" HE'S NOT KNOCKING AS A VAGABOND, HE'S KNOCKIN AS THE LORD OF THE HOUSE EXPECTING HIS SERVANTS TO RESPOND.

MATTHEW 24:32-33 - "NOW LEARN THE PARABLE FROM THE FIG TREE: WHEN ITS BRANCH HAS ALREADY BECOME TENDER AND PUTS FORTH ITS LEAVES, YOU KNOW THAT SUMMER IS NEAR; 33 SO, YOU TOO, WHEN YOU SEE ALL THESE THINGS, RECOGNIZE THAT HE IS NEAR, RIGHT AT THE DOOR.

MATTHEW 24:36-39 - "BUT OF THAT DAY AND HOUR NO ONE KNOWS, NOT EVEN THE ANGELS OF HEAVEN, NOR THE SON, BUT THE FATHER ALONE. 37 "FOR THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN WILL BE JUST LIKE THE DAYS OF NOAH. 38 "FOR AS IN THOSE DAYS BEFORE THE FLOOD THEY WERE EATING AND DRINKING, MARRYING AND GIVING IN MARRIAGE, UNTIL THE DAY THAT NOAH ENTERED THE ARK, 39 AND THEY DID NOT UNDERSTAND UNTIL THE FLOOD CAME AND TOOK THEM ALL AWAY; SO WILL THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN BE.

MATTHEW 24:42-44 - "THEREFORE BE ON THE ALERT, FOR YOU DO NOT KNOW WHICH DAY YOUR LORD IS COMING. 43 "BUT BE SURE OF THIS, THAT IF THE HEAD OF THE HOUSE HAD KNOWN AT WHAT TIME OF THE NIGHT THE THIEF WAS COMING, HE WOULD HAVE BEEN ON THE ALERT AND WOULD NOT HAVE ALLOWED HIS HOUSE TO BE BROKEN INTO. 44 "FOR THIS REASON YOU ALSO MUST BE READY; FOR THE SON OF MAN IS COMING AT AN HOUR WHEN YOU DO NOT THINK HE WILL.

LUKE 12:36-38 - "BE LIKE MEN WHO ARE WAITING FOR THEIR MASTER WHEN HE RETURNS FROM THE WEDDING FEAST, SO THAT THEY MAY IMMEDIATELY OPEN THE DOOR TO HIM WHEN HE COMES AND KNOCKS. 37 "BLESSED ARE THOSE SLAVES WHOM THE MASTER WILL FIND ON THE ALERT WHEN HE COMES; TRULY I SAY TO YOU, THAT HE WILL GIRD HIMSELF TO SERVE, AND HAVE THEM RECLINE AT THE TABLE, AND WILL COME UP AND WAIT ON THEM. 38 "WHETHER HE COMES IN THE SECOND WATCH, OR EVEN IN THE THIRD, AND FINDS THEM SO, BLESSED ARE THOSE SLAVES.

IF THE CHURCH WILL RESPOND TO THE WARNING OF CHRIST, TO HIS KNOCKING, TO HIS CALL TO "WAKE UP!", HE WILL COME IN. AND WHEN HE COMES BACK INTO THE CHURCH, THERE IS LOVE AND PEACE AND JOY AND FAITH AND PURPOSE. THERE IS FELLOWSHIP AND DEPTH RATHER THAN ISOLATION AND SURFACE LEVEL COMMITMENT. JESUS' INVITATION TO BE WELCOMED BACK INSIDE THROUGH REPENTANCE LEADS TO FRIENDSHIP AND RELATIONSHIP.

HE WANTS TO RETURN TO HIS RIGHTFUL PLACE NOT TO BE HARSH OR CRUEL, BUT TO HAVE DINNER. WHY WOULD WE NOT RESPOND TO HIS KNOCKING?

REVELATION 3:21-22 - TO HIM WHO OVERCOMES...

THE DINNER CHRIST IS INVITING US TO ISN'T A PICNIC, NOR IS IT THE LAST SUPPER - IT'S ULTIMATELY THE MESSIANIC BANQUET. TO THE ONE WHO OVERCOMES, WHO IN THIS CASE IS THE ONE WHO RESPONDS TO HIS MESSAGE, THEY WILL "SIT DOWN WITH ME ON MY THRONE." JESUS REFERENCES HIS OWN OVERCOMING AND HOW HE SAT DOWN WITH HIS FATHER ON HIS THRONE.

THE FATHER MADE A SPECIAL PLACE OF HONOR AND AUTHORITY FOR JESUS. HE SITS NOW AS THE ONE WITH AUTHORITY IN HEAVEN AND EARTH, THE RULER OF THE KINGDOMS OF THE EARTH. HE IS SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD. AND FROM THAT PLACE OF HONOR JESUS NOW SPEAKS. HE SAYS TO THOSE HE LOVES, TO THOSE WHO LOVE HIM - WHEN THIS IS OVER, WHEN THE FINAL VICTORY HAS BEEN WON, I INVITE YOU TO SIT NEXT TO *ME* IN THAT PLACE.

IF YOU REMEMBER WHEN WE FIRST STARTED REVELATION 1, WE SAW HOW JESUS HAD BEEN SYMBOLICALLY GIVEN THE AUTHORITY AND APPEARANCE OF THE ANCIENT OF DAYS FROM DANIEL 7 (REVELATION 1:12-15). AT THE TIME WE READ FROM DANIEL HOW JESUS HAS BEEN GIVEN THE RULERSHIP OF GOD'S KINGDOM:

DANIEL 7:13-14 - "I KEPT LOOKING IN THE NIGHT VISIONS, AND BEHOLD, WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN ONE LIKE A SON OF MAN WAS COMING, AND HE CAME UP TO THE ANCIENT OF DAYS AND WAS PRESENTED BEFORE HIM. 14 "AND TO HIM WAS GIVEN DOMINION, GLORY AND A

KINGDOM, THAT ALL THE PEOPLES, NATIONS AND MEN OF EVERY LANGUAGE MIGHT SERVE HIM. HIS DOMINION IS AN EVERLASTING DOMINION WHICH WILL NOT PASS AWAY; AND HIS KINGDOM IS ONE WHICH WILL NOT BE DESTROYED.

THAT'S THE DESTINY OF JESUS. BUT THERE'S MORE. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THIS VISION, DANIEL WRITES THIS:

DANIEL 7:18 (NLT) - "...IN THE END, **THE HOLY PEOPLE OF THE MOST HIGH** WILL BE GIVEN THE KINGDOM, AND THEY WILL RULE FOREVER AND EVER."

DANIEL 7:27 (NLT) - THEN THE SOVEREIGNTY, POWER, AND GREATNESS OF ALL THE KINGDOMS UNDER HEAVEN WILL BE GIVEN TO THE **HOLY PEOPLE OF THE MOST HIGH**. HIS KINGDOM WILL LAST FOREVER, AND ALL RULERS WILL SERVE AND OBEY HIM."

THAT'S THE DESTINY OF JESUS' FOLLOWERS TOO. THOSE WHO OVERCOME IN THIS EVIL, DARK, DEMONIC AND CONFUSING WORLD - THOSE WHO KEEP THE FAITH, THOSE WHO DON'T COMPROMISE, THOSE WHO STAY HOT AND COLD FOR CHRIST, WHO LOVE GOD AND OTHERS, WHO LOVE TRUTH AND HATE FALSEHOOD, THOSE WHO ENDURE ALL THE CRAZINESS AND DON'T QUIT - THOSE PEOPLE ARE GOING TO RULE THE WORLD WITH JESUS CHRIST. THOSE KINDS OF PEOPLE ARE *EXACTLY* WHO THE KING OF KINGS IS LOOKING FOR, TO HELP HIM PUT THIS WORLD BACK TOGETHER WHEN HE COMES. PEOPLE HE CAN TRUST, PEOPLE HE KNOWS WILL DO RIGHT, PEOPLE HE KNOWS WILL REFLECT HIS HEART AND WAYS - HE INVITES *THEM* TO COME SIT DOWN AT HIS THRONE.

WHO ME?? YES, YOU.

LAODICEA WAS LOVINGLY GIVEN THE CHANCE TO REPENT FROM THEIR PRIDE AND ARROGANCE AND LIVE FOR THE TRUE PURPOSE OF THEIR LIVES. SIMILARLY, PRIDE AND ARROGANCE IS KILLING US TODAY. THE ATTITUDE OF "I'M GOOD" IS DESTRUCTIVE. WE MAY FOOL OTHERS (AND EVEN OURSELVES) BUT WE ARE NOT FOOLING JESUS. WE NEED TO HEAR HIS CALL AND BE ZEALOUS AND REPENT.

LAODICEAN LUKEWARM WATER OCCURRED AS IT SLOWLY FLOWED DOWNHILL FROM THE SOURCE. THE HOT SPRINGS GREW COLD AS THEY TRAVELED FROM HIERAPOLIS AND THE COLD WATER GOT TEPID AS IT STREAMED FROM COLOSSE. THE FAITH OF THE CHURCH IN LAODICEA HAD GROWN LUKEWARM, SLOWLY, OVER TIME. IT WASN'T THE THREAT OF PERSECUTION THAT SILENCED THEM OR HARD QUESTIONS FROM THE PAGANS AROUND THEM. IT WAS TIME. IT WAS GRADUAL. THE POINT THAT WATER TRANSITIONS FROM BOILING TO ALMOST BOILING OR FROM COLD TO COOL ISN'T EASILY OBSERVED. IT JUST HAPPENS OVER TIME.

THAT'S THE THREAT OF LUKEWARM FAITH. IT DOESN'T HAPPEN OVERNIGHT, IT HAPPENS OVER TIME. MANY WRITERS AND TEACHERS HAVE OBSERVED THAT LAODICEA IS MOST REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CHURCH IN AMERICA. IS IT TRUE OF YOU? THE QUESTION ISN'T "ARE YOU HOT" OR "ARE YOU COLD" FOR CHRIST. THE QUESTION IS, ARE YOU LIVING A LIFE THAT IS USEFUL FOR GOD'S PURPOSES IN THIS WORLD - IS YOUR LIFE AND FAITH HOT WATER, COLD WATER OR LUKEWARM WATER? IS YOUR LIFE FLOWING FOR GOD INTO THE WORLD AROUND YOU AND BRINGING HEALING AND REFRESHMENT TO OTHERS OR IS YOUR LIFE A SPIGOT THAT HAS BEEN TURNED OFF AND ON, OFF AND ON?

LAODICEA WAS MATERIALLY RICH, BUT SPIRITUALLY POOR. THEY WERE PHYSICALLY HEALTHY, BUT SPIRITUALLY SICK. THEY WERE INTELLECTUALLY ADVANCED, BUT SPIRITUALLY IN DECLINE. IT'S A SLIPPERY SLOPE FROM ONE SIDE OF THOSE REALITIES TO THE OTHER.

SO TODAY IS A GREAT DAY TO ASSESS THE TEMPERATURE OF YOUR HEART AND THE TEMPERATURE OF YOUR CHURCH. JESUS HAS THE THERMOMETER, THE MEASURING STANDARD OF WHAT MATTERS. HE IS HAPPY AND EAGER TO GIVE US WHAT WE NEED, IF WE HEAR HIM KNOCKING AND BUY WHAT HE HAS IN STOCK. THIS MAY NOT BE EASY TO HEAR, BUT THE WORD OF JESUS TO US TODAY ARE WORDS OF LOVE AND WORDS OF LIFE.

THE VERY FACT THAT HE IS REPROVING US AND DISCIPLINING US IS EVIDENCE THAT WE ARE LOVED BY HIM.

HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES.