

Write Seven Letters and Send Them to The Seven Churches

These letters are the last words the risen, victorious Jesus spoke to the churches of Asia Minor.

1. THE LETTER TO EPHESUS: THE LOVELESS CHURCH (Revelation 2:1–7)
2. THE LETTER TO SMYRNA: THE PERSECUTED CHURCH (Revelation 2:8–11)
3. THE LETTER TO PERGAMUM: THE COMPROMISING CHURCH (Revelation 2:12–17)
4. THE LETTER TO THYATIRA: TOLERANT CHURCH (Revelation 2:18–29)
5. THE LETTER TO SARDIS: THE SLEEPING CHURCH (Revelation 3:1-6)
6. Last week we looked at the letter to **Philadelphia – The Faithful Church (Revelation 3:7-13)**
They were a small church with little strength that kept Jesus' word and didn't deny his name under great persecution. You can Endure **anything** when Jesus is your **everything**. Because they endured, Jesus opened doors for them that no man could shut, spared them from the Great Tribulation, and would make pillars in the temple of God with his name written on them declaring them his own.

The Letter to Laodicea: The Lukewarm Church

Revelation 3:14 "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

- Laodicea was a fortified city named after Antiochus II's wife, Queen Laodice, it was known as "Laodicea on the Lycus" to distinguish it from six other cities of the same name.
- The major god worshipped in Laodicea was Zeus, the "Father of gods and men."
In April 2011, the head of a statue of Zeus was unearthed in excavations at this city.

There are four things about Laodicea to consider as we read this letter. The four "W's."

- **Wealth.** This is a very wealthy city, but their wealth and financial independence resulted in self pride. "We are rich! We don't need anything."
- **Wellness.** A chief medical center for the region with a Medicine School. One graduate wrote a textbook on medically treating the eye and the city was also known for its eye salve.
- **Wool.** Known for textiles, especially its soft, raven-black wool, supposedly produced by sheep that drank certain water. This wool was used to make garments for the upper class of society.
- **Water.** One of the problems Laodicea dealt with was that their water was contaminated.

Revelation 3:14 "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation.

The Amen. The last and final word. The True Witness. The Ruler of Creation. These are all major themes in John's Gospel. The ruler of God's creation of which Jesus created, not just a part of.

Revelation 3:15-16 I know your deeds,

As we come to this last and final letter, may we be reminded that Jesus walks among the churches and he knows our deeds both good and bad. He sees. He knows.

Now for the second time, the first in the letter to the church of Sardis, there is no commendation.

Revelation 3:15-16 I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot.

I wish you were either one or the other!

16 So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

Laodicea's major weakness was its water supply. Unlike the other two cities in the Lycus River valley, Hierapolis and Colossae, their water was undrinkable. Colossae had good cold water and Hierapolis was known for its hot springs water used for thermal baths. Therefore, the Romans built some very advance aqueduct systems for that time, to move water from these two cities to Laodicea.

Cold water arrived from Colossae and hot water came from the hot springs in Hierapolis. But what do you think happened to the water as it traveled from each location? The water didn't arrive hot or cold, it arrived lukewarm. This lukewarm water made you want to spit it out.

Jesus, said this isn't just a water problem, this was a spiritual relationship problem.

Revelation 3:15-16 I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! 16 So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. The actual Greek word for spit means to vomit.

Three Categories of Our Relationship with Jesus - Hot, Cold, or Lukewarm

Hot - Hot means you're growing in your relationship with God.

2 Thessalonians 1:3 We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing.

As we're growing closer to God, it doesn't just mean we have more knowledge. But it means **our heart is expanding for the things of God** and for **God's people**.

- Here at Believers Church, we see evidence of growing hearts and relationships with Jesus.

Cold - Cold are those who don't know God yet. No personal relationship with God yet.

John 7:28-29 Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, "Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own authority, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, 29 but I know him because I am from him and he sent me."

Some of you just don't know Him yet. If you are cold, you have yet to taste the goodness of God. But today you will have an opportunity to enter into a Hot relationship with Jesus.

Lukewarm - Lukewarm are those of us who are drifting. Drifting from our relationship with God.

Hebrews 2:1 We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.

That's where many people are in their relationship with Jesus today.

- Sure, they may still go to church or at least watch it online occasionally. They may look spiritual on the outside, but they are drifting on the inside.
- If you look at where you once were versus where you are today, is the fire of the love of Jesus burning brighter in your heart or has it cooled to the place of being lukewarm?

Bold Next Step: This week I will determine if I am Hot, Cold, or Lukewarm in my relationship with Jesus? What will I do to make my passion for Jesus hot again?

Self-Deception!

Revelation 3:17 You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.'

The richness of the city led to pride and self-sufficiency. After the great earthquake in A.D. 60, the city of Laodicea declared, "I don't need any help from the Roman government to rebuild—I'm rich."

Americans are rich in comparison to most of the other countries in the world. The average global median

individual income is about \$2,100 per year. Most U.S. residents rank comfortably in the top 10 percent of the world's wealthiest. We are rich! But we can't trust in wealth.

The church of Laodicea became complacent and lukewarm and failed to recognize their need for Jesus. Paul reminded the Corinthian church, and us, that everything we have is a blessing from the Lord. (1 Cor. 4:7). All of our blessings come from God. We must look to Him and trust Him in all things. Did Laodicea forget that? Now they seem spiritually blind to their true condition.

Revelations 3:17b But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.

Self-deception is truly one of the worst deceptions. You don't recognize you have a problem, so you don't get help. You even refuse the help of others because you don't see that you have a problem.

Buy Three Things

Revelation 3:18 I counsel you to buy from me 1) gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and 2) white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and 3) salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

Buy true gold so that you can be rich spiritually. Buy white robes of righteousness that only come from Jesus. And buy eye salve to treat your spiritual blindness.

The medical school in Laodicea produced an "eye salve" which was a Phrygian powder used by oculists at the temple of Asclepius. The church didn't need to go to oculists; they only needed to go to Jesus.

True Love

Revelations 3:19 Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent.

Even in the church's sinful condition, Jesus still loved them. He loved them enough to rebuke them and tell them what they were doing wrong. Rebuke and discipline are signs of love.

Hebrews 12:7-11 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? 8 If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. 9 Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! 10 ...God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. 11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

Jesus is Knocking At Your Door

Revelation 3:20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

How much did Jesus love them? He loved them enough to want to have a relationship with them. So, there he stands on the outside knocking, wanting to come in.

We often use this picture of Jesus standing at the door and knocking as a call to salvation, which it can be. But remember Jesus is standing at the door of a church, at the door of the hearts of believers, and finds himself shut out. *Jesus doesn't just want to save you... He wants to know you.*

Are all the areas of your heart open to Jesus or do you have some private rooms with locked doors?

Revelation 3:19b ... So be earnest, and repent.

Like the umbrella of sin blocks the full blessing of God, Jesus is saying sin and non-repentance also block or shut the door to our hearts, shutting Jesus outside of our hearts and lives.

To The Victorious

Revelation 3:21 To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne.

Ephesians 2:6-7 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

Revelation 3:22 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

Bold Next Step: This week I will consider if the door to my heart is closed or open to Jesus. And if open, how open is it to every area of my heart?

A – Admit Your Sins
B – Believe in Jesus
C – Commit Your Life

ABC Pic Salvation Call