



## Part 8: Laodicea-A Warning To The Church Who Could Care Less

### Revelation 3:14-22

#### #1 - Jesus' Description, Revelation 3:14

Jesus describes Himself to these believers in three ways:

- He is the Amen
- He is the faithful and true witness
- He is the beginning of the creation of God

#### #2 - Jesus' Rebuke, Revelation 3:15-17

Jesus gives five rebukes:

- **They are wretched.** The term translated “wretched,” is used only one other time in the New Testament. In Romans 7:24 Paul speaks of the wretchedness of his own sin. Definitions ranging from “distress” or “trouble” and including “to pronounce unhappy.” The stark contrast between the self-sufficiency of Laodicea and the judgment of the risen Lord that they are floundering in unhappiness and distress seems painfully applicable to most of Western Christianity today.
- **They are miserable.** Laodicea thinks of its merits but what is needed is mercy. They are “miserable” (pitiable), an expression Paul also uses in 1 Corinthians 15:19 of one who does not believe in resurrection.
- **They are poor.** In describing the Laodiceans as “poor” Christ indicates that they are extremely poor, that is, reduced to begging. Jesus’ perception of them is in stark contrast to how they saw themselves.
- **They are blind.** Unable to perceive spiritual things.
- **They are naked.** Stripped of clothes, or without proper clothes.

### #3 - Jesus' Recommendation, Revelation 3:18-20

What they really need is:

- **“Gold refined by fire so that you may become rich.”** They were urged to buy, not ordinary gold, but refined gold, referring to that which would glorify God and make them truly rich. Through its banking industry the city had material wealth. But the church lacked spiritual richness. The reference is to the process of subjecting gold to intense heat until it liquifies the impurities, which rise to the top and are scraped away by the goldsmith.
- **“White garments so that you may clothe yourself and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed.”** Like the emperor in Hans Christian Andersen’s story, these Christians thought they were clothed in splendor when they were really naked! To be naked meant to be defeated and humiliated (2 Sam. 10:4; Isa. 20:1–4). The Laodiceans could go to the market and purchase fine woolen garments, but that would not meet their real need. They needed the white garments of God’s righteousness and grace.
- **“Eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.”** The city of Laodicea was noted for its eye salve, called The Phrygian [fri-gee-an] Powder. It was exported in tablet form; and the tablets were ground down and applied to the eye. This Phrygian [fri-gee-an] powder was held to be a remedy for weak and ailing eyes. But the kind of medication the saints needed was not available in the optometry shop.

Jesus, in the midst of this strongest rebuke, reminds them that He still loves and cares for them, even though He is about to discipline them. How many of you have the memory as children of your parents saying to you before being disciplined, “This will hurt me more than it will hurt you.” God reprovesscolds and disciplines His errant children.

Jesus calls these believers to be zealous and repent.

The church at Laodicea had to repent of their pride and humble themselves before the Lord. They had to “stir up that inner fire” and cultivate a burning heart.

In verse 20, what is often taken out of context as a salvation passage, I find one of the most haunting illustrations of the sad situation that sometimes exists in the relationship between a church and the Savior. Here, Jesus is pictured as being outside the church, patiently knocking to gain entrance and the church—oblivious to His absence from within. Yet, Jesus says to those churches, if they will hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and find fellowship with them.

### #4 - Jesus' Promise, Revelation 3:21