

NASB 1977 Philadelphia, The Faithful Church With an Open Door
Revelation 3:14 - 22

14 *“And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write:*

The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this: 15 ‘I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot. 16 ‘So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. 17 ‘Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,” and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, 18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see. 19 ‘Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent. 20 ‘Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me. 21 ‘He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. 22 ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’”

I can't even tell you what a blessing and a privilege it is for me that you folks have called me to be your shepherd. Two weeks away was a lovely rest but I missed you all, and I missed my study times. I did however consume one really good book while I was shipboard.

Last time we met three weeks ago we made it through verse 16. So a quick review; Jesus writes 7 letters to 7 churches that are both real churches in 96 AD and also typical. Types. Each church pictures types of individual christians, and types of individual churches. So there are Laodicean type believers who are not really even christians, though they claim they are and consider themselves to be.

And there are lukewarm churches. Galore. Ready to be vomited out of Jesus mouth when He calls His true church out of this world at the rapture.

And of course there is a Laodicean era of the church in the prophetic timeline when that type of church predominates the whole church. We are living in that era of the church. Churches galore in Tonopah and America that will hold ordinary services on the Sunday after the rapture.

Both the previous study leading up to this one and the one we did in 2012 are available for you on line at our web pages. The current series is called Revelation 2026 and the 2012 studies are simply called Revelation. The 2012 study covered this ground on a single Sunday evening and is excellent. I commend those to you if you find yourself sort of lost by all of this.

So then with minimal review let's dive into our text and see what the Lord has for those of us who dwell in the Laodicean era surrounded by churches full of tares that look confusingly just like wheat.

Tares post on You Tube. Tares write books. Tares sing convincingly. Tares use all of the same lingo as the true church. It's all pretty confusing . . . unless you have a solid foundation in this book.

You may find me tedious and repetitive at times but my hope is that I'm adding ballast weight to your sail boats so that when the gale force winds hit you broadside and you think you're going over, that ballast will be down there tipping you back upright after the storms.

14 “And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this: 15 ‘I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot. 16 ‘So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. 17 ‘Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,” and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,

All religious works, so called, efforts expended that are generated by human achievement, human flesh, apart from the Holy Spirit helping and causing what we do to glorify Jesus and edify the church is lukewarm. Let me say that again because you're going to question my premise.

All religious works, so called, efforts expended that are generated by human achievement, human flesh, apart from the Holy Spirit helping and causing what we do to glorify Jesus and edify the church is lukewarm.

We can accomplish church, without Jesus. I've seen it too often. The entire church is run like a business machine with no Jesus, no Holy Spirit, no miracles.

No miracles??? Did I just say that?? I did. Because every time we preach or teach or witness to unbelievers or work to comfort the hurting people who are lost, if the Holy Spirit is causing the progress beyond what we are humanly capable of causing and doing, it's a miracle.

When we as a church make advances into Satan's territory that glorify Jesus, because He is behind our efforts, doing it, for His glory, all of it is a miracle. Jesus, working in us, to advance His kingdom business, in this world, is spiritual work that we simply have no control over. He does it. He uses us, and He accomplishes it through us, but all of it is a miracle.

Those are the miracles I'm after. Not the nonsense stuff. Speaking in tongues is common in the darkest of godless places. I believe it's spiritual. But it isn't the Holy Spirit.

I'm after the miracle of changed lives. Something in the scriptures taught will knock you flat and ultimately change your life. That wasn't me, beyond being marginally faithful to exegete the meaning. God does that, and when He does, it's a miracle. I'm all about miracles folks. The miracle of God changing us as we gaze into the mirror of this book at Jesus.

The lukewarm church is full of miracles that Jesus didn't do. Beware. True

church. Full of miracles of sanctified changed lives as we grow together closer and closer to His image. The Bible is the mirror. I want miracles folks! I'm after the miracles.

I can't say it any better than the Isaiah 55 passage that I return to so often!

*10 "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,
And do not return there without watering the earth,
And making it bear and sprout,
And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater;*

*11 So shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth;
It shall not return to Me empty,
Without accomplishing what I desire,
And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.*

The Word of God accomplishes all that He desires for it to accomplish, and when our lives are changed because of Him doing that; ***that's*** a miracle. God doing stuff in our lives, right smack in the middle of Satan's lost world. That's a miracle worth working for.

OK, I laid out the polar opposite of what Jesus tells this church so that when we read it again, it's going to be blatantly obvious what it means;

17 'Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,"

There has never been a time like we are experiencing as we speak, where the church is wildly rich and yet, devoid of the Holy Spirit, it is wildly destitute at the same time.

The evangelical church in America in 2026 is drowning in money and spiritually bankrupt. The church is like a Carnival cruise boat with wealth hanging everywhere. Great ballrooms and theatres and restaurants and state rooms, floating at sea, and Jesus isn't on the boat.

Evangelicalism in America is big business. Huge. Last year somewhere around 75 billion dollars changed hands in American evangelical churches. And about 75% of that money funds infrastructure and staff wages. That's big business.

The shocking truth is you can have all the money in the world, and if you don't have Jesus, you're bankrupt. Elon may have a trillion dollars but he also has the same problem we all have. He's going to be dead in 5 minutes. Money in this life means almost nothing. Elon is bankrupt before His God who he will be seeing very soon.

17 'Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,

Laodicea famously suffered a devastating earthquake that completely laid them waste. I don't have a date, but 60's BC ? Anyways, Roman era, and the Roman ceasar offered to send aid and help. Rome offered to rebuild them. They told Rome, no help needed. We've got this.

Jesus plays on that historic event when He says to them; *17 'Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,"*

That's what they proudly told Rome. No help needed. We've got this. And that's this church's attitude to Jesus. We're good. We've got it all. Church can happen without you Jesus. We've got this. Like the old 78 RPM record in my cabinet that Tennessee Erny Ford sang; *No help needed.* His answer;

and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,

We could look up all of those greek words and perhaps add some vivid color.

- *wretched* talaipóros *The word describes the deep inward misery of a soul that has come face-to-face with its own spiritual poverty. It is not merely emotional discouragement; it is a moral and spiritual wretchedness that cries out for deliverance. Scripture employs the term to expose self-reliance and to drive the heart toward the grace of God in Jesus Christ.* *Strong's greek concordance. It is the polar opposite of what Jesus meant when He said; Blessed are the poor in spirit. These folks are impervious to their own spiritual bankruptcy. They think they're splendid.
- *miserable* eleos pitiful. useless. Nothing worse than some idiot that thinks he's a champion but actually he's laughably pitiful.
- *poor* ptóchos A cringing cowering helpless beggar. **to crouch or cower like a beggar*") Strong's – *properly, bent over; (figuratively) deeply destitute, completely lacking resources.* You think you're rich but you're a bent over crouching cowering beggar.
- *blind* tuphlos Blind. Both physically and spiritually and mentally
- *naked* gymnos goom nahs Naked. Unclad. It's one thing to be pitifully naked and quite another to be the emperor parading down the street that way convinced you are splendidly clothed. These folks are the latter.

Utterly blind and naked and destitute and pitiful and bankrupt. Spiritually. Worthless folks who think they're rich.

To us who understand these concepts that would seem to be an utterly hopeless situation. How do you help someone who is wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked but they think they are rich, wealthy, and in need of nothing. That's the very definition of hopeless. And usually, that's right.

The disciples had this exact conundrum. There was a certain rich young captain who comes to Jesus and wants to be in the Kingdom. "I've got a spot for you in my wealth portfolio Jesus. I'd like to have you aboard the ship of my life accomplishments." And Jesus says, no problem, leave all your worldly accomplishment behind and start over with nothing but me.

And the fellow went away. Grieved.

I've got everything Jesus, I just wanted to find a niche for you and have you too. And Jesus says, the only way you can have me is if you sell the old treasure to make me your treasure in it's place. Jesus isn't a value added addition to your life. That guy left and it says he was sad. It also says that Jesus really loved that guy. Jesus loved that guy. That incident made Jesus sad too. But the price couldn't be negotiated and he left.

Well the disciples are beside themselves. Best candidate. EVER. Rich young handsome guy with everything going for him and you send him packing!!

Luke 19:25 When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?" 26 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

From our perspective, someone who thinks they're saved and spiritually rich but who are actually spiritually bankrupt, that situation seems hopeless. You can't reach those folks. They're trying to reach you! They're knocking on my door trying to help me find the way. How do you fix **that**??

The answer is in 2 Timothy 2. You knew that already, didn't you. 2 Tim 2: 24 *And a servant of the Lord must not be quarrelsome, but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, and forbearing. 25 He must gently reprove those who oppose him, **in the hope that God may grant them repentance** leading to a knowledge of the truth. 26 Then they will come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, who has taken them captive to his will....*

Where does repentance come from? God grants repentance. These hopeless folks are beyond our helping, but Paul says you just keep kindly presenting the truth and perhaps, hope against hope, God will grant to them repentance. God removes spiritual blindness. God delivers from Satan, at His pleasure and for His glorious purposes. We are helpless, yet instructed to be faithfully obedient in keeping the pursuit.

18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see.

Jesus states the problem and the solution to everything He categorically listed. True wealth, white garments, restored vision . . . all available from a sole source. No other place to get the spiritual goods. Jesus is the exclusive source. You can buy everything you're bankrupt of, from Him.

How am I going to do that if I'm bankrupt??? Isaiah 55. ***Again.*** I love this verse so much!

*1 “Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters;
And you who have no money come, buy and eat.
Come, buy wine and milk
Without money and without cost.*

*2 “Why do you spend money for what is not bread,
And your wages for what does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good,
And delight yourself in abundance.*

You guys who know me best know I love a good deal. Soul satisfaction. Delight. Inner peace. Everlasting joy. No limits. Things which this world cannot supply. Available for purchase. And the price is free.

18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see.

in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. Psa. 16:11

Fulness of joy and pleasures forevermore. Available. Free for the purchasing.

I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire

Over and over in this book, God tells us His word is far more precious than the finest Gold. When Jesus says these bankrupt folks should buy gold from Him, it's a direct reference to the words of this book.

Psalm 119:72

The law from Your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of gold and silver.

Psalm 19

*7 The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul;
The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.*

*8 The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.*

*9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;
The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether.*

*10 They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.*

This book is where we buy Gold from Jesus, without cost. Free for the taking, but you've got to take it. How many Bibles in our nation are laying on shelves with literally years of dust collected on them from non use?

white garments are the garments of a righteousness, not our own, that Jesus gives us when we receive Him. He clothes us in HIS righteousness. He removes our filthy garments and leaves them at the cross.

eye salve Jesus quickens true christians from death to life, spiritually. We

can see spiritual truth through eyes that were previously blind and useless.

All of these things are the products of regeneration. Spiritually. Jesus quickens our dead spirits to life. In Him. Suddenly those Bibles that were worthless are precious to us. Suddenly our eyes are opened. Immediately, upon our salvation, we are clothed in His righteousness.

19 'Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent.

This verse seems out of place. I struggled with it for a while. Then it dawned on me; Vomiting people out of His mouth is NOT reproof. Not discipline.

These benefits to joy are available for those who will accept Jesus and have an intimate friendship relationship more valuable than anything this world can offer when they become real Christians.

Jesus doesn't reprove and discipline lukewarm people who are outside of His kingdom, His authority to reign. He will judge those folks. But reproof and discipline is part of a family love relationship.

This is a call. Come into my family. Accept the reproof and discipline of intimacy. Part of Jesus loving His own is reproof. Discipline. Children do not thrive without reproof and discipline. This is a call to leave the lukewarm church of the tares and be an intimate part of Jesus family. Become His child.

When our kids were small we were strict. Any rebellion and disobedience of a direct understood command of mom or dad got a whack on the behind. But immediate after the sore bum were the hugs.

Reproof doesn't mean I ceased to love you, it means I do. We're reproofing and disciplining for your ultimate good. 3 out of 3 survivors folks. And all of them are contributing citizens standing on their own two feet. And not

only that, they all gave us grandkids. A rarity these days. OK, now I'm boasting a little bit.

For lukewarm false christians, tares, there is only judgement. But for those whom God will open their ears and grant repentance and salvation, there is family intimacy. You *want* the reproof. You *want* the discipline. Because you *want* that love. This is a call to lukewarm pretenders to repent and accept the real Jesus. The one who insists on obedience, but rewards you with His love.

A gazillion dollar prime real estate property went up for sale this week in Manhattan. #215 2nd street. New York. It is an office building that belongs to the Episcopal church. It was a flagship of their wealth. It's for sale. The wealth is gone. The people left.

Episcopals can do whatever they want. Lady bishops and rainbow flags prevail. No reproof. No discipline from Jesus. Is the bankruptcy that forces the sale of their previous wealth a by-product? Is there a connection to no reproof, no discipline, and ultimately, no people left. Empty stone quarry buildings.

20 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.

This is one of the most clear and all encompassing calls to come away from this world and belong to Jesus in all of the Bible.

Please note the relationship of Jesus to this church that has no need of Him. He's outside knocking. They've got their own wealth. They need nothing from Him. He is outside this church that will ultimately be vomited out of His mouth.

But for a limited time, we don't know how much time is left, this is the age of grace, and right now, this offer is wide open.

if anyone hears My voice

A couple of things to note. The Bible makes no apology for both teaching the predestination and election of God in salvation. Our names are written in a document that He owns before anything that is, was. We had nothing to do with that. He chose us by His gracious will.

And at the same time the Bible teaches the universality of the offer of grace. If _____ who hears my voice? If the elect hear my voice? If those whom I've predestined to grant repentance to hear my voice?

No. It says; *if **anyone** hears My voice* This is a universal call for anyone who will hear the message and believe. Anyone. Who-so-ever will . . . _____ what? May come. *HO. Everyone who thirsts, and Come to the waters.* *Is. 55:1 The offer is to everyone.*

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost. Revelation 22:17

You say that's a direct contradiction. Both of those things can't be true at the same time! Not for your brain, and definitely not for mine, but for God, all things are possible. Don't try to understand election vss free choice. Don't let that challenge become a pride issue which can be sinful.

We meet these guys all the time. You may not be bright enough to understand it, but I really think I can get this figured out. Yes, I think I've solved the election / free will dilemma.

if anyone hears My voice Another interesting note. They are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked, but apparently; not deaf.

I can really mess with you. *MY sheep hear MY voice.* *Jn. 10:27* If anyone of these lost folks do hear, it's because they are one of His sheep.

48 *When the Gentiles heard this, they rejoiced and glorified the word of the Lord, and all **who were appointed** for eternal life believed.* Acts 13:48

I lean into election because it glorifies God and humbles men. Your first response is to hate those teachings. But little by little the glory and the immenseness of God in these things begins to excite your soul. I'm in love with a God who is infinitely bigger and smarter than me. That's the God I want.

But in this verse; Anyone. This offer to open the door and let Jesus come into your heart is wide open to everyone. Hear Him knocking. Invite Him into your heart. There is intimacy here. Jesus is an intimate companion.

He is depicted as friend, treasure, saviour, Lord, God, husband, shepherd at different places in the Bible. There is one on one intimacy in every one of those metaphoric concepts.

The book that I enjoyed on my time away deals with the question of affection being a necessary component in saving faith. Value. Treasure. Intimate friendship. Affection.

Jesus is knocking at this door but in all of the old pictures that used to hang on the Sunday school room walls, there's a window. You can see that it's Jesus. Is He valuable to you? If you invite Him in, He takes over everything. Everything. Maybe you calculate the cost of that kind of a friendship relationship and say, like the Laodiceans, I've got this Jesus. I just don't really want you in control.

There is great complexity in inviting Jesus to be your husband. He *will* take over the navigation. You can count on it. If He isn't beautiful to you, isn't immeasurably valuable to you, perhaps you don't answer that knock on the door. It's OK Jesus, I've got this. No help needed.

20 *'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and*

opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.

This is the most intimate kind of friendship. We love to relax with our friends over a meal. Good conversation. Affection. Intimacy of souls. The folks you enjoy the most sharing a meal with are your soulmates. The talk is easy and enjoyable. We agree on things. I'm interested to know what you're experiencing, what you're learning. Soulmate conversations.

That's what Jesus is offering here. And people don't want Him.

If you don't open that door and invite Him to come in and dine with you, the next verse is not for you.

21 'He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. 1 Jn. 5:5

22 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'"

He who has an ear . . . Uh Oh. That sounds like elective predestination again.

So much to think about in this passage. Does the American evangelical movement stop short of salvation? Only believe. Only believe. All things are possible, only believe.

But then James comes along and taunts us. Thou believest that God is one? thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

There is a faith that stops short of salvation. Dead faith. You believe stuff about Jesus. Listen the demons have theology that would put yours to shame. They believe more than the dead faith folks even begin to

understand, and they tremble.

Believing things to be true doesn't save people. Opening the door and asking Jesus to come in and own you because you love Him and think Him beautiful and desirous, no matter what it costs or where He might take you. That intimate friendship is salvation.

I believe there are millions across our land who believe stuff about Jesus, but they don't have Him inside. He isn't their husband. There is no affectionate friendship. No ownership. No authority for Him to reign in their lives.

That's the lukewarm church folks. They can tell you all *about* Jesus, but they don't know . . . Him.

I urge you this morning; If He's at the door knocking, open that door and let the intimate fun and infinite value of having Jesus living in your heart begin.