

Revelation 3:14-21 & Matthew 25

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.*

15 *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.*

17 You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.

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

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

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.

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.

Introduction:

The Historical Background

King Antiochus II founded the city in the 3rd century B.C. and named it after his wife, Laodice.

The city grew rich through a major trade route junction, banking, and glossy black wool products.

After a massive earthquake destroyed the area in 60 A.D. Laodicea refused financial help from Rome and rebuilt itself using its own money.

It hosted a well-known medical school that made a famous eye powder.

The water metaphor:

Laodicea had no local water source.

Water was piped in through aqueducts from far away.

By the time the water arrived in the city it was lukewarm and full of minerals that made people feel sick and want to vomit.

Nearby cities had famous springs: Hot springs used for healing, and cold springs used for refreshing drinking water.

Jesus uses hot, cold, and lukewarm to describe a person's spiritual temperature.

Hot = having an active, passionate, and deep committed faith in God.

Cold = completely honest about rejecting God and the Gospel, rather than pretending.

Lukewarm = claiming to believe in God, but living a lazy, indifferent life that shows no real fruit, love, or sacrifice.

THE
LUKEWARM

1. The Reasons for Being Lukewarm

2. The Results of Being Lukewarm

3. The Restoration for The Lukewarm

I. THE REASONS FOR BEING LUKEWARM

One of the easiest sins to creep into the heart of the Christian is the sin of becoming lukewarm.

It is **severe**. It is **serious**. It particularly receives the strongest of warnings and rebukes.

"I will spit you out of my mouth."

The language of our Lord to His lukewarm people is vivid and should cause us serious reflection. - ***The ease of self-deception.***

"For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked."

When people are lukewarm, they are not aware of their deep spiritual need.

They are self-righteous, complacent, and satisfied.

They are fully unaware of their true spiritual condition.

Why People Become Lukewarm?

I. Self-sufficiency: People feel safe, rich, or comfortable with their lives, so they think they do not need God's daily help.

II. Unaddressed Sin: Tolerating small or recurring habits of wrong behavior, which hardens the heart over time.

III. Neglected Disciplines: Stopping regular prayer, worship, and reading the Bible, turning spiritual life into an afterthought.

IV. Worldliness: Letting cultural trends, material wealth, and comfort take priority over eternal values.

V. Partial Surrender: Wanting God as a savior from trouble, but refusing to let Him be the Lord who guides daily choices.

II. THE RESULTS OF BEING LUKEWARM

Lukewarm Christians are those people who sit in churches and believe the message of the gospel, but are not really sold out to Jesus and not meaningfully engaged in his mission.

“Christians” Jesus is describing in the three parables in Matthew 25.

1. The maidens

Matthew 25:1-13

1 *"At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish and five were wise. 3 The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. 4 The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. 5 The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.*

6 *"At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!'"*

7 *"Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps."*

8 *The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.'*

9 *"'No,' they replied, 'there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.'"*

10 *"But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.*

11 *"Later the others also came. 'Lord, Lord,' they said, 'open the door for us!'*

12 *"But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I don't know you.'*

13 *"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.*

The **maidens** consider themselves friends of the bridegroom, but they don't live in a way that anticipates his return.

They are thinking only about how to make things comfortable in the present moment, not how to be faithful in their assignment to God.

2. The wicked servant

Matthew 25:14-30

14 *"Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them.*

15 *To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey.*

16 *The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more.*

17 *So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more.*

18 *But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.*

19 *"After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them.*

20 *The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.'*

21 *"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'"*

22 *"The man with two bags of gold also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.'"*

23 *"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'"*

24 *"Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed.*

25 *So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'*

26 *"His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed?*

27 *Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.*

28 *"So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags.*

29 *For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.*

30 *And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*

The **wicked servant** considers himself in the employment of the Master, but he's never offered his talents without reserve for the kingdom.

3. The "goats"

Matthew 25:31-46

31 *"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne.*

32 *All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.*

33 *He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.*

34 *"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.*

35 *For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in,*

36 *I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'*

37 *"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?"*

38 *When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?"*

39 *When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?"*

40 *"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'*

41 *"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.*

42 *For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink,*

43 *I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'*

44 *"They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'*

45 *"He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'*

46 *"Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."*

The **"goats"** thought they were faithfully serving.

But when it came to pouring themselves out for the crushed people of God, they weren't engaged at all.

There is no middle ground.

You are either committed to the mission or not, all-in for Jesus or not, and using your resources for his people and his kingdom or not.

You are either a sheep or a goat.

And that puts the lukewarm Christian in a very dangerous position.

In the parable of the talents, Jesus called the one who buried his talent **"wicked."**

That's a harsh word for someone who just played it safe.

There is more than one way to be wicked.

You can be wicked by ignoring the Ten Commandments, and you can be wicked by failing to invest your life for God's kingdom.

The first makes you wicked by the sin of commission; the second makes you wicked by the sin of omission.

- We preach about the 10 commandments a lot, but what about investing your life?
- Have we offered our life and our talents, no matter our age, as an investment in the kingdom?
- Could people look at our giving and say that we are all-in with the mission of God?
- Would our calendar back up what our words say when we declare, "Jesus is Lord"?

"Crazy Love" by Francis Chan

- I. Lukewarm Christians don't really want to be saved from their sin.** They want only to be saved from the penalty of their sin. God is a useful fire escape they employ, not a God they worship.
- II. Lukewarm Christians are moved by stories about people who do radical things for Christ,** yet they do not do radical things themselves. They call "radical" what Jesus expects of all his followers.
- III. Lukewarm Christians equate their partially sanitized lives with holiness.** But Jesus didn't call us to sanitation; he called us to discipleship.

IV. Lukewarm Christians rarely share their faith with their neighbors, co workers, or friends.

Charles Spurgeon said, **"You are either a missionary or an impostor!"**

V. Lukewarm Christians think about life on earth much more often than eternity in heaven.

VI. Lukewarm Christians love their luxuries and rarely give to the poor in a truly sacrificial way.

VII. Lukewarm Christians do not live by faith; their lives are structured so they never have to.

David Platt: *"If you're not in a place where you feel desperate for the Spirit of God, then there's no way you are on the front lines of the mission. When we are on the front lines, we feel desperately our need for God's help."*

VIII. Lukewarm Christians give God their leftovers — not their first and best.

When our faith becomes lukewarm, we will see these signs:

- **Apathy:** Going to church or praying only out of habit, not out of love.
- **No Difference:** Living a lifestyle that looks identical to the surrounding secular culture.
- **Inaction:** Remaining silent about their faith and doing nothing to help others or serve God's mission.

We should stop calling our complacency and apathy “**a busy schedule**” or “**bills**” or “**forgetfulness.**” Call it what it is: “**EVIL**”

Malachi 1:8 - *When you offer blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice lame or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?” says the Lord Almighty.*

We all struggle with seasons where we are lukewarm, where we are striving to maintain a commitment to Christ but where we falter.

The fundamental question: When you became a Christian, did it include a surrender to get engaged in the mission of God?

Have you personally engaged in the mission of God, offering your time, talent, and treasures as a blank check to Him?

III. THE RESTORATION FOR THE LUKEWARM

The most serious spiritual condition for a child of God to be in, is that of being lukewarm.

And it is serious because of its power of self-deception.

Our Lord said of His people, ***"You think you are okay, all is well, when actually you are in a horrible spiritual condition."***

We are indifferent. We go to church or pray only out of habit, not out of love.

We are living a lifestyle that looks identical to the surrounding secular culture.

We think about life on earth much more often than eternity in heaven.

We remain silent about our faith and doing nothing to help others or serve God's mission.

We give God our leftovers—not our first and best.

**How are we going to fight against
this evil, against this deceiving
spiritual condition?**

- **Determine that the most important thing and relationship in our lives is that with Jesus Christ.** And we will diligently fight against anything or anyone seeking to distract us from this precious privilege.
- **Commit to regularly be with Christians who are zealous for the Lord.** Get involved with believers in the Word, prayer, and service.

John Bunyan: ***"Keep company with the soundest Christians that have most experience of Christ."***

3. Think every day that today could be our last day on earth. Think often of seeing Jesus face to face.

Above all, in our blind, dead, and sinful ways, Christ comes to us, telling us the truth of our situation, providing the solution which rests in His own self-giving love.

Jesus says you are, in fact, poor, wretched, pitiable, and blind, but I am rich.

I will give you gold of eternal value which is my blood shed for you so you can be rich.

You are naked and your shame is exposed, but I will clothe you in the white garment of Righteousness that can cover every great shame and vice.

You may be blind to your own folly in sin, but I will salve your eyes so you can discern the things which are good.

Furthermore, Jesus promises the ones who heed His call, that He will be with them and dine with them.

As the Church, we recognize this as God's presence in the **bread and wine** and finally in the **feast of the Lamb** to come at the resurrection!

To the one who conquers by the blood of the Lamb by grace through faith, Christ even promises His very own throne which His Father gave to Him.

“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.”

CONCLUSION:

With these promises ringing in our ears, we can view both the letter to the church in Laodicea and Revelation in its entirety as a profound message of hope and comfort for the Christian.

Jesus is our finest gold, purified under the heat of His suffering on cross, that makes us rich and He gives us pure garments to cover our nakedness, when he was naked on the cross.

And it was He who opened our eyes so we can see.

Despite our sin, He still knocks at the door of our hearts, so He could come in when we open it.

He wants to enter, dine with us and remain in us.

He also promises that one day He will give us the right to sit on His throne when we become victorious.

And we know that victory is ours when the battle is the Lord's.
This is the gift we have in Christ.

