

Third Week of Lent

(this week's devotionals come from Revelation 3:14-22)

Monday – ¹⁵ *I know your works; you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were either cold or hot. ¹⁶ So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth.*

The people in the church in Laodicea struggled with apathy and pride. They had plenty of material resources and therefore felt they did not need God. Christ confronted them on this by saying they were lukewarm and he would spit them out of his mouth.

This image would have resonated with the Laodiceans. The nearby city of Hierapolis had hot springs people soaked in for healing. Another nearby city, Colossae, had cool, refreshing water that came out of the mountains. But the water in Laodicea was lukewarm, full of minerals, and tasted terrible.

It matched their faith. Spiritually, it was good to be hot and healing or cool and refreshing, but they were ambivalent. Jesus was not as much their Lord and Savior as he was an ornament. It would be like having a Bible on your coffee table not because you read it but because it fits your décor. Today, consider where you are ambivalent in your faith.

Tuesday – ¹⁷ *For you say, "I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing." You do not realize that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.*

As I mentioned yesterday, the Laodiceans had so much material wealth that they felt they had no need of God. But Christ reminded them that they were blind to their true condition.

Society today tells us that success comes from promotions, money, and power. It isn't bad to get a promotion at work or to seek a job that pays more. It also isn't bad to have "power" in the sense of authority—some people make great leaders and are great supervisors and motivators. It all comes down to attitude. Do we seek more money simply so we can be rich and comfortable? Do we seek promotions because we like the prestige? Do we seek power because it makes us feel superior to others?

Our goal is to follow God's calling for our lives rather than make a comfortable life for ourselves. Today, consider where your ultimate desire is comfort rather than obedience to God.

Wednesday – ¹⁸ *Therefore I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire so that you may be rich; and white robes to clothe you and to keep the shame of your nakedness from being seen; and salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.*

A few weeks ago, we talked about the refiner's fire from Malachi 3. We see the reference again in this passage. Buying refined gold means doing what glorifies God. Doing God's will would make us rich. Wearing a white robe refers to purity—purity in body, mind, and spirit. Anointing our eyes with salve means to have spiritual insight.

How do we get from lukewarm to buying from Jesus what we need? We repent of our own apathy and pride and ask Christ to transform us. Where in your life do you need purity and spiritual insight? Go before God and ask Him.

Thursday – ¹⁹ *I reprove and discipline those whom I love. Be earnest, therefore, and repent.*

Spiritual growth is a choice. We can decide if we want to be “milk” or “meat” Christians. In last week's passage, Paul told the Corinthian church that some of them were not ready for solid food yet because of their immaturity.

God convicts us of sin because He loves us. He wants us to get rid of those dead branches in our lives so we can bear good fruit for His Kingdom. While we will never be sinless this side of heaven, we can work on areas we know do not glorify Him.

For example, let's say you know you have a problem with bitterness...or envy...or anger...or whatever. Come before God and repent, and ask Him to show you why this is an issue in your life. Don't stop with a simply “I'm sorry, God.” Ask Him to transform you. If your issue is bitterness against someone, challenge yourself to forgive. If it is envy, practice bring content with what you have—thank God for everything He has given you. Whatever the area of struggle is, practice doing the opposite as you repent for the sin.

Friday – ²⁰ *Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come into you and eat with you, and you with me.*

This is not an image of Christ knocking on the door of someone's heart for salvation, though it is often interpreted that way. This is for believers. It's as though Christ is saying, "Listen...you profess to believe in me...then let me into your life."

Dining with Jesus is an invitation to fellowship and communion. Do you let Jesus into all the areas of your spiritual home or just some? When we give someone a tour of our home, we only show them the good parts. But what if we want to repair or renovate? When a contractor comes, we show them the things that are broken, that need to be updated, or that need to be torn out completely so something new can be built.

Do not be afraid to show Jesus everything. First of all, he already knows our deepest, darkest sins. We aren't really hiding anything. And second, he wants fellowship with us. He loves us.

Saturday – ²¹ *To the one who conquers I will give a place with me on my throne, just as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.*

What do we need to "conquer?" We need to let Christ into our lives as our Lord rather than simply being satisfied with him as our Savior. So often we are more than happy to accept the gift of eternal life with him, but want to keep him at arm's length and live our lives in whatever way we see fit.

Luke 9:23 says, "And he said to all, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.'" Living life as a Christian means that we daily ask God what His will is for our lives. Perhaps there is someone He wants us to reach out to that day. Perhaps there is something He wants us to do. When we are consistently asking Him how He wants us to live, He will answer.

Make a point of asking God daily what He wants for you that day. He often does not reveal every detail of His plan at once. But we can be content in asking God what He wants for us today.