



Sermon Series: The 8th Letter  
September 4, 2022  
CHRIST FIRST CHURCH

Sermon #6:  
The Church at Laodicea  
Revelation 3:14-22

Pastor Wayne Chasteen

**INTRO:** Will you please find your place at the Book of Revelation chapter 3 again this morning. We will start reading at verse 14.

**(PUT UP MAP)** We have made a large loop around what's known Biblically as Asia Minor, and what we know today as Turkey. As you look at the map behind me, you will see that we are coming to the last of the seven churches, the Church at Laodicea. I would say that Laodicea is not accurately represented by this particular map. The city actually lay approximately 40 miles southeast of Philadelphia, near the Meander River. And about 90 miles due east of Ephesus. It was one of a triad of cities with Colossae being nearby to it's south, and Hierapolis being just a few miles north. The city itself was located in a great and beautiful valley. The city owned tremendous wealth and was known as a strategic banking center. It also boasted a highly respected and large medical college for that day. It was famous for its Phrygian Powder, a salve for the eyes.

One of the greatest faults of the city, was that it had no viable water source of it's own. Aqueducts were built to carry water into the city from miles away. Hierapolis was famous, and still is for it's hot thermal springs that is believed to have healing properties. Colossae had very cold water that ran into the city from mountain springs. The water at Laodicea was ducted into the city and was Tepid when it arrived and full of sediment. Not good. And Jesus will bring this to their attention when He writes. **READ WITH ME...**

**Revelation 3:14-22** *"To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Originator of God's creation. 15 I know your deeds; you are neither cold nor hot. How I wish you were one or the other! 16 So because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to vomit you out of My mouth! 17 You say, 'I am rich; I have grown wealthy and need nothing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. 18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, white garments so that you may be clothed and your shameful nakedness not exposed, and salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. 19 Those I love, I rebuke and discipline. Therefore be earnest and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and dine with him, and he with Me. 21 To the one who overcomes, I will grant the right to sit with Me on My throne, just as I 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."*

Notice...

**LETTER INTRODUCTION:** v 14 *"To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:"* Some have suggested, and there's good reason to believe it's true, that this particular angel is Archippus who was named as the first bishop of Laodicea in the Apostolical Constitutions. Paul mentioned Archippus in Colossians 4:17, and also in the little letter to Philemon. Archippus is presumed by many to be the son of Philemon.

**LETTER INTRODUCTION:** v 14 CONTINUED If it's true that Archippus is the angel being addressed, then it's also true that the ANGELS of the seven churches are indeed human pastors, or overseers, of the church, as we suppose.

v 14b "...These are the words of the *Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Originator of God's creation.*" "*faithful and true*" is descriptive of Amen. It's the definition of Amen. "Amen" means, "of a truth," "most assuredly," "so let it be, and firm" In other words, Jesus is faithfully true, and His word is firm and settled. Psalm 119:89 "Forever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven."

"...the *faithful and true Witness*..." Greek, martūs which means, "an eye or ear witness" Jesus hears everything and sees everything! Oh, if we were just ever mindful of that. Older theologians called it, "practicing the presence of God". We should always be aware of who surrounds us! A witness is also one who testifies for or against another. Let this thought sink in, one day, Jesus will be both our WITNESS and JUDGE, as we stand before Him to give an account of our lives. That's a solemn thought.

"...the *Originator of God's creation.*" Greek, arché, meaning, beginning, origin, or that by which anything begins. John 1:1-3 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made... 14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

Colossians 1:16 "For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him." WHAT AN AWESOME GOD WE SERVE!  
Now, let's get into the body of the sermon. Notice...

**I) THE REPULSIVENESS OF THIS CHURCH:** vv 15-16 "I know your deeds; you are neither cold nor hot. How I wish you were one or the other! 16 So because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to vomit you out of My mouth!" Here, Jesus says again, I know your deeds. Not only does He know, but He's a faithful and true witness that will give an account of our deeds someday. "...you are neither cold nor hot. How I wish you were one or the other! 16 So because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to vomit you out of My mouth!" Jesus hits them where they live with this statement. The Christians at Laodicea would have immediately picked up on the meaning of this message. The tepid water of the city was a source of disgust for everyone who lived there. Warm water has been used throughout the years as a means to induce vomiting. It's as if Jesus was saying to this church, you make me sick!  
Something to note is that Jesus goes straight into this condemnation with the church. There was no commendations at all, like with the other churches. All the churches but this one had something good or positive that Jesus could speak of, but not this church. Since there was nothing good for Jesus to say, He got right to the point.

Listen to me, this is pretty much the state of the church today, spiritually speaking. I mean, we may have cold water fountains in the foyers, but spiritually we are lukewarm. And God hates it as much today as He did when this letter was written. We don't like to think that we make God sick, but it's probably true! And that's why we speak of the need for revival, the need for brokenness and repentance, the need for turning away from our sins and turning to God for help. (But Pastor Wayne, we're doing good, God has blessed us. We have a lot of stuff, and a big building, and 15 HVAC units running)

## LETTER INTRODUCTION: v 14

**I) THE REPULSIVENESS OF THIS CHURCH:** vv 15-16 That's what the church at Laodicea thought. NOTICE...

**II) THE REALITY OF THIS CHURCH:** v 17 "You say, 'I am rich; I have grown wealthy and need nothing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked." The old proverb goes, "There are none so blind as those who will not see." I don't know who said that initially, but I heard it on The Andy Griffith Show. And I still believe it's true.

The city of Laodicea was wealthy, with their banking and textile industry and their medical breakthroughs. Pride and self-sufficiency had crept into the culture and the culture had crept into the church. How sad! Notice this 4 point pattern of history...

- Men suffer lack and affliction and turn to God.
- God responds to repentance with provision and blessings.
- Men glory in their condition of prosperity and grow cold toward God.
- Judgment falls and the wheel goes around again.

That's God's great CATCH 22. God desires to bless His children. But when He does we turn our back on Him. C H Spurgeon, "I looked to God and the dove of peace filled my soul. I looked to the dove, and it flew away." Oh how easily we take our eyes off God and put it on other things. NOW NOTICE...

**III) THE REPENTANCE SOUGHT FROM THIS CHURCH:** vv 18-19 "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, white garments so that you may be clothed and your shameful nakedness not exposed, and salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. 19 Those I love, I rebuke and discipline. Therefore be earnest and repent." "gold. . . white garments. . . eye salve" These are the remedies for the previously-stated ills, for they were poor, naked, and blind.

Gold - 1 Peter 1:6-7 "In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

White garments - The mention of white garments would be especially noteworthy since Laodicea was known for its production of high quality glossy black wool:

Salve to anoint the eyes - Laodicea was famous for their eye salve powder.

v 19 "Those I love, I rebuke and discipline. Therefore be earnest and repent."

**IV) CONCLUSION:** vv 20-23 "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and dine with him, and he with Me. 21 To the one who overcomes, I will grant the right to sit with Me on My throne, just as I 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."