



HOW TO KEEP YOUR SPIRITUAL FIRE BURNING

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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How to Keep Your Spiritual Fire Burning

SERMON REFERENCE: Revelation 3:14-22

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #2339

The tragedy today is half-hearted Christians in a world rapidly approaching destruction. Believers find themselves with no fire—no zeal or enthusiasm for the things of God.

In Revelation 3, God warns the seven prophetic churches of the dangers of lukewarm Christianity. God addresses the problem of these churches prophetically, practically, and powerfully, because He is also speaking to us.

Therefore, we must open our ears and our hearts to the instructions about how to keep our spiritual fire burning.

First, we must address the curse of lukewarm Christianity.

“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.” (Revelation 3:15-16).

Lukewarmness is the state of being neither hot nor cold; spiritually, it is the state of being neither unsaved nor on-fire for Christ.

Lukewarm Christians can be indifferent about their sanctification or personal holiness. They can be half-hearted in their service or their study of Scripture. They will allow their prayer lives to dwindle, losing their desire for supplication before God. They know nothing of suffering for Christ because they haven't sacrificed their lifestyle to follow their convictions.

Adrian Rogers says, “Lukewarm Christians are the alibi of sinners; they double-cross Christ. Jesus would rather have you on the wrong side of the fence than sitting on the fence.”

Verse 17 claims that the cause of lukewarmness is ignorance.

These seven churches didn't see their own need for revival. Their backsliding is not drastic; rather, they cool down by degrees, little by little.

Adrian Rogers says, “There are none so blind as those who refuse to see. There are none so deaf as those who have ears but will not hear.”

Finally, verses 18-19 claim the cure for lukewarm Christianity.

The cure is the gold of God's glory and the garments of God's righteousness (18). We are instructed to be zealous and repent (19). Loving God wholeheartedly is the greatest commandment; therefore, to do otherwise would be the greatest sin.

May we return to our First Love and love Him like never before.

LIFE APPLICATION

Do you recognize where your spirit has cooled down over time, and are you ready to be zealous once more? Repent of half-hearted Christianity and return to your First Love.



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- 1) INTRODUCTION
 - a) We have a big problem in the church today where we believe, but we have no zeal or enthusiasm for the things of God.
 - i) We yawn in the face of God.
 - b) There are three divisions in the book of the Revelation.
 - i) Division number one: the things that you've seen.
 - ii) Division number two: the things which are.
 - (1) This is the church age.
 - iii) Division number three: the things that shall be.
 - c) In the second division, Revelation contains messages to seven churches.
 - i) Ephesus
 - ii) Smyrna
 - iii) Pergamos
 - iv) Thyatira
 - v) Sardis
 - vi) Philadelphia
 - vii) Laodicea
 - d) These seven churches were literal churches in Asia Minor, and they are also symbolic churches that have a message for us today.
 - e) At the close of the church age will be the rapture of the church.
 - i) The rapture may happen at any moment.
 - f) Today's message will deal with the last of these seven churches: the church at Laodicea.
 - g) Revelation 3:14-22
 - i) These churches speak to us prophetically.
 - (1) They show us what the church age is like.
 - ii) They also speak to us practically.
 - (1) There isn't a problem faced by any church today that is not addressed in these seven churches.
 - iii) They speak to us powerfully.
 - (1) Revelation 3:22
 - (a) The Holy Spirit is asking if we are listening.
 - iv) They speak to us personally.
 - (1) This is not what God has said; it is what He is saying.
 - (2) This is not what God is saying in general; it is what He is saying specifically to you.
 - (a) The church is made up of individuals.
 - h) In Revelation 1, we see the Lord Jesus pictured standing in the midst of seven golden candlesticks.



- i) These seven golden candlesticks represent the church.
 - ii) This tells us that Jesus is here with us, in the midst of the church.
 - (1) Matthew 18:20
 - i) Revelation 3:14
 - i) Jesus is the factual one.
 - ii) Jesus is the faithful one.
 - (1) Whatever He says, you can count on.
 - iii) Jesus is the forceful one.
 - (1) He created it all and is the sovereign Lord.
- 2) THE CURSE OF LUKEWARM CHRISTIANITY (Revelation 3:15-16)
- a) The Greek word for “spew” means to vomit.
 - i) God is saying that there is a sin that nauseates Him.
 - ii) It is the sin that is probably the most prevailing sin in the modern church: the sin of lukewarmness.
 - b) Lukewarmness is the state of being a little too cold to be hot and a little too hot to be cold.
 - i) Too cold to boil and too hot to freeze.
 - c) The Lord here is not talking to the out-and-out sinner or to the atheist, nor is He speaking to those who are zealous and have a burning passion for Christ.
 - i) He is speaking to those who are in between.
 - (1) The half-hearted Christian.
 - d) How do you know if you’re lukewarm?
 - i) Indifferent about personal holiness and sanctification.
 - (1) The passion of our hearts ought to be holiness.
 - (a) Mark 7:6
 - (2) We won’t tell an out-and-out lie, but we will tell those little lies.
 - (a) We see someone we don’t like, and we say, “It’s good to see you.”
 - (3) We may not steal, but we don’t pay our debts.
 - (4) We do not commit adultery, but we laugh at filthy jokes.
 - ii) A lack of concern for serving others.
 - (1) Do we pray and weep over our Sunday school classes?
 - (2) Are we concerned for the unsaved in our churches and our communities?
 - iii) Our singing is not Spirit-filled.
 - (1) Ephesians 5:18-19
 - (2) We should sing with gladness, urgency and feeling.
 - iv) A lack of real hunger for the Scriptures.
 - (1) We often believe the Bible in general, but we don’t believe it with specificity.
 - (2) Most Christians have never read the Bible through.
 - (3) We do not spend time in the Word of God.
 - (4) We do not love the Word of God.
 - v) Prayer time is not a priority.
 - (1) When was the last time we missed a meal to pray?



- (2) When was the last time we fasted and prayed for a day?
- (3) The devil would rather us keep our buildings, programs, classes, etc., as long as we leave out the power of Almighty God that comes through earnest, persistent prayer.
 - (a) The good often becomes a substitute for the best.
 - (b) We need to learn how to pray.
 - (c) James 5:16
- vi) Reluctant to sacrifice.
 - (1) Many Christians are too embarrassed to carry their Bibles to work.
 - (2) Some are ashamed of the Lord Jesus and will not bow their heads to give thanks in public for their meal.
 - (3) Most of our giving never changes our lifestyles.
 - (4) We pray without fasting, give without sacrifice, witness without tears; is it any wonder we sow without reaping?
- vii) A lack of passion for soul-winning.
 - (1) Do we have a passion for the lost?
 - (2) Do we believe that our next door neighbor without Jesus is doomed to hell?
 - (3) It is our responsibility and glorious privilege to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- e) The harm of lukewarmness:
 - i) Lukewarm Christians are the alibi of sinners.
 - (1) Jesus had rather us be on the wrong side of the fence than sitting on the fence.
 - (2) Revelation 3:15-16
 - ii) Lukewarmness sets us up for other sins.
 - (1) The lukewarm Christian is a sitting duck for the devil.
- 3) THE CAUSE OF LUKEWARM CHRISTIANITY (Revelation 3:17)
 - a) Their indifference was caused by their ignorance of their own need.
 - i) They didn't know what their need was.
 - b) The lukewarm Christian is generally the last one to know that he is lukewarm.
 - i) There are none so blind as those who refuse to see.
 - ii) Revelation 3:22
 - c) Revelation 3:18
 - i) Laodicea was famous for three things:
 - (1) Its wool.
 - (2) Its wealth in gold.
 - (3) It was a medical center that treated blindness.
 - ii) God the Holy Spirit is telling them that in spite of their wool, wealth and medicine, they need a holy fire.
 - d) The complacency and self-satisfaction of lukewarmness can begin gradually.
 - i) Revelation 2:2-4
 - (1) The Lord said many wonderful things about the church at Ephesus.
 - (2) However, they had left their first love.
 - (a) First love is enthusiastic.



- (b) First love doesn't count the cost.
 - (3) They still loved the Lord, but there was a time when they had loved Him more.
 - ii) We can become lukewarm when we assume we are alright and begin cooling down by degrees.
- 4) THE CURE FOR LUKEWARM CHRISTIANITY (Revelation 3:18)
 - a) They needed the gold of God's glory; gold that had been through the fire.
 - i) To know how rich you are, add up everything you have that money cannot buy and death cannot take away.
 - b) They needed the garments of God's righteousness.
 - i) They thought they were clothed; they assumed they were alright.
 - ii) The white raiment speaks of righteousness.
 - iii) They thought they could see, but the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit.
 - (1) 1 Corinthians 2:14
- 5) CONCLUSION
 - a) Revelation 3:19
 - b) Lukewarmness is a horrible sin.
 - i) The greatest commandment is to love God with all of our heart.
 - ii) In contrast, the greatest sin is to not love God with all of our heart.
 - (1) If I do not love God with all of my heart, am I willing to repent?
 - c) Revelation 3:20
 - i) The Lord is speaking to those who are in the church but are not saved.
 - ii) Will you open your heart's door and let Him in?
 - d) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
 - e) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31



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Would you take God's precious Word, turn to the book of the Revelation and I want you to turn to Revelation chapter 3. I want to address a problem today that is a great problem in today's church and it may be in your life. It's what I call ho-hum Christianity, where we believe but we yawn in the face of God. There's no fire, there's no zeal, there's no enthusiasm for the things of God, and the tragedy today is a half-hearted, dry-eyed church in a Hell-bent world. God may be speaking to you through this message today.

Now we're in the book of the Revelation and we're going to come to this second division. Division number one, things that you've seen. We've talked about that; it was a glorious vision of the Lord Jesus Christ. Division number two is the things which are, and that is the church age and we're going to be speaking today about the messages in the book of the Revelation to seven churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamus, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea. Now these were seven literal churches, but we're going to see that they're also symbolic churches and have a message for us today. At the close of the church age will be the rapture of the church. That may be today. Who knows when that's going to be?

I want you to notice the message to the last of these seven churches, because we're not going to deal with all seven. We're going to deal with the last message, and then we're going to move on, because time will prohibit us to spend much time in chapters 2 and 3 because your heart is hungry and needs to know the things that will be hereafter. But I want to address your attention to Revelation chapter 3 beginning in verse 14, "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things saith the Amen, the faithful and the true witness, the beginning of the creation of God. I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would that thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of My mouth, because thou sayest, I'm rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. I counseled thee to buy of Me gold, tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear and anoint thine eyes with eye salve that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous therefore and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with Me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne even as I also overcame and am set down with My Father in His throne.'" And then it closes with this injunction, "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the church."

Now, again I want to tell you there were seven churches in Asia Minor, what we would call today Turkey. They were seven literal churches, and our Lord gave a message to these seven churches, and our Lord is giving a message through that message to today's churches and to you today. Now these messages, these churches speak to us prophetically. As we see these seven churches, it is a prophecy



of the church age, beginning with Ephesus, a church whose love was waning and growing cold, on down to Laodicea, a church that was lukewarm. And so these messages speak prophetically. If we want to see what the church age is going to be like, we look at the seven churches.

But not only do they speak to us prophetically, they speak to us practically. I want to say that there is not a problem that this church or any church will ever face that is not addressed in those seven churches. They speak to us practically.

But I want to say a third thing, they speak to us powerfully, chapter 3 verse 22 says, "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the church." Now this is the Word of God. The Holy Spirit of God is asking you, "Are you listening?" Boys and girls, don't pass notes. Mister, forget about that business deal. Lady, put aside what you're going to have for lunch today and listen, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." God is going to hold you responsible today for what you hear, and God is going to hold you responsible today for what you would've heard had you listened. These words speak to us prophetically, they speak to us practically, they speak to us powerfully and they speak to us personally. This is not just what God has said, it is what God is saying. It is not what God is saying in general, it is what God is saying to you.

Now listen to verse 22, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." You say, "Well this may be a message to the church." No, friend, it is a message to you. The church is made up of individuals just like you, so would you open your ears, open your mind, open your heart to hear this message to these seven churches on how to keep your spiritual fire burning.

Now this is a great encouragement to me because as we see in chapter 1, the Lord Jesus Christ is pictured standing in the midst of seven golden candlesticks. Now those seven golden candlesticks, candelabra, as it were, lamps fed by oil, are an illustration of the church, the light of the world. And Jesus is shown in the midst of those seven golden candlesticks. Now what does that tell us? It tells us the same thing that Jesus taught in Matthew chapter 18, "Where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Look to the person to your right and the person to your left. Jesus is closer to you than that individual. Jesus is here today.

There was a rumor in a particular church that the President of the United States may visit that church. A lady who did not normally attend called the pastor, hoping to get a seat, and she said, "Is it true that the President of the United States will be there this morning?" He said, "No ma'am, that's a rumor. But the King of kings will be there, and that ought to be good enough for you." Amen? Jesus Christ is here. Say to your neighbor, "He's here!" Jesus is here, He is here today. He's in the midst of the church. Would we sing differently if Jesus in the flesh were sitting by us? Would we pay more attention if Jesus in the flesh were sitting by us? I'm telling you that Jesus Christ is in the midst of His church. "Where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I."

Now, we have a message from Him. Look if you will again in verse 14, "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things saith the Amen.'" Now what does that mean? It means He's the factual Christ, the Amen. He doesn't just say, "Amen," He is the Amen. The word Amen means, "It is so, let it be." This is a factual word from the Lord Jesus Christ. The faithful and the true witness. Not only is He the factual one, He is the faithful one. Whatever He says, you can bank on



it. He will not lie and He will tell you exactly what you need to hear. The beginning of the creation of God. He is the forceful one. He is the one who made it all. He is the one who created everything. He is the sovereign Lord of this church, and He is in the midst of His brethren today, and He has a message for you today, and the Bible says, "He that hath ears to hear, let Him hear!"

I pray God that God will open your mind today and speak to you. Don't get the idea the message is for somebody else. Do you have ears today? "He that hath ears to hear, let Him hear what the Spirit saith to the church." Now there are several things I want to lay on your heart today about lukewarm Christianity.

First of all is what I want to call the curse of lukewarm Christianity, the curse of lukewarm Christianity. Look in verses 15 and 16. Jesus says, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would that thou wert cold or hot, so then because thou art lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of My mouth." For the word spew, I'm gonna give you a word that may seem inelegant, but it'll be graphic, "I will vomit you out of My mouth." It's the same word we get our English word emetic from. It's something that causes you to regurgitate. It's the Greek word there that means to vomit. "I will vomit you out of My mouth." What God is saying is this; there is a sin that nauseates Him. There is a sin that, figuratively speaking, makes God feel ill, that makes Him want to regurgitate. What is that sin that is so nauseous to God? It's the sin that is probably the most prevailing sin in the modern church today: it is the sin of lukewarmness.

Now what is lukewarmness? Lukewarmness is that state of being just a little too cold to be hot and just a little too hot to be cold. Too cold to boil, too hot to freeze, that which is nauseous, insipid and to whom is our Lord speaking? Our Lord is speaking not to the out-and-out sinner about lukewarmness, He's not talking about the atheist, the agnostic, the God-hater, those who hate Christ, the Gospel, and the preaching of the Gospel. These are cold. He's not speaking to them. There's a judgment coming for them one day, but that's not the one to whom He's speaking. Nor is He speaking for those who are hot, those who are on fire, those who are zealous, those whose hearts have a burning passion, the going, glowing, growing Christian. He's not speaking to these people, those with holy fire and holy zeal.

But He's speaking to those in between, not the out-and-out sinner, not the on-fire Christian, but that one who is lukewarm. The cold dishwasher Christian, the lukewarm, good Lord, good devil, self-satisfied, half-hearted Christian! I don't want to hurt your feelings, but I've been pastoring long enough to know that most of the people in our congregations fall in that category. That breaks my heart to say it, but I'm not here today to make you feel good. And when we finish with the message, I think you'll agree. As a matter of fact, I had to search my heart today before I could preach this message, and I had to do some repenting.

How is lukewarmness manifested? Let's just see whether or not you are lukewarm. I want to mention six ways that you may find yourself to be lukewarm. Some Christians, many of them, are lukewarm about their sanctification. What I mean by that is this: they are indifferent about personal holiness. Holiness is an old-fashioned word, isn't it? How many of you in this place today say, "Pastor, I long to be holy?" The passion of my heart is to be holy. Mark chapter 7 and verse 6, Jesus is speaking,



“He answered and said unto them, ‘Well hath Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites. As it is written, this people honoreth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.’”

Is your heart far from God today? You sing these glorious songs, but is there burning passion in your heart for holiness? You say, “Well Pastor Rogers, we Baptists don’t believe in sinless perfection.” I wish Baptists were as much afraid of sin as they are of sinless perfection. We ought to be as holy as we can be. Oh, we have people today, you won’t tell an out-and-out lie, you won’t tell big lies, but you tell those little lies. You see somebody you don’t like and say, “Well, it’s good to see you.” You say to a friend, “I’ll be praying for you,” and you never pray for them. You may not steal, but do you pay your debts? You don’t commit adultery, but do you laugh at filthy jokes and entertain yourselves with lasciviousness on television? You don’t curse, but do you use second-hand cursing, golly, gosh-darn? These are just euphemisms. Heck is a euphemism for Hell. Are you cold about holiness, about purity? Oh, you say, I don’t commit adultery, but do you entertain yourself on television with those who do?

A little girl prayed, “Lord, make me good. Not too good, just good enough not to get a spanking.” Lukewarm about sanctification.

What about service? Many people are lukewarm about service. How many Sunday School teachers who are teachers in this church, Bible fellowship teachers, are burdened for their class, that weep over their class, that pray over their class, that witness? How many of you are concerned about the unsaved that are members on your roll, and how many of you are trying to enroll more unsaved that they might come to the Lord Jesus Christ? How many preachers in today’s world preach with urgency and fire and tears and conviction?

When I was in seminary, we were talking about preaching, and our preaching professor said that, “Preaching is very much like making any other kind of a speech. You don’t need to have a preacher tone, you don’t need to have preacher mannerisms. It’s just like making any other kind of a speech.” That’s what he was trying to teach. There was a man, an elderly man, in our class. He’d been pastoring for a long time. His name, Famous McElheney, I’ll never forget the name, Famous McElheney. Famous McElheney lifted his hand and he said, “Professor, I hear what you’re saying,” but he said, “When I get up to preach, something gets a hold of me.” Would to God, would to God that there are more preachers who would not just preach with exactitude and eloquence and pronounce every word correctly, but would have a burning fire in their heart as they serve the Lord. Somebody described the average preacher as a mild-mannered man standing in front of mild-mannered people exhorting everybody to be more mild-mannered. We’re lukewarm about our service to the Lord.

What about singing? The most important thing about a song is not that it’s always in perfect pitch, that every word is memorized. The most important thing about a song is that we sing in the Spirit. Nobody ought to be in our choir who’s not Spirit-filled. Nobody ought to ever lead music who’s not Spirit-filled. The requirement for singing is this, in Ephesians 5 verses 18 and 19, “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with singing, making melody in your heart to the Lord.” That’s what we ought to do; we ought to sing with gladness, we ought to sing with urgency, we ought to sing with feeling. We ought to sing with tears. Our singing ought to bless people and warm people. I was so



blessed by the song service this morning. Thank God for it. That's the way we need to sing always.

How many are lukewarm about the Scriptures? How many of you really love the Word of God? How many of you really hunger for the Word of God? We believe the Bible in general, but we don't believe it with specificity. The average Christian, the average Christian has never read the Bible through. The average Christian could not name the books of the Bible. I would not embarrass you this morning by asking you to turn to the book of Hezekiah. Some would be looking for Phillips 66. You don't even know what are the books of the Bible. You have never read the Bible through. The entire Bible can be read through in ten months with only four chapters a day.

How many of you believe everything you read in the newspaper, let me see your hand? Not one hand went up and I'm glad. How many of you believe everything in the Bible, let me see your hand. Now I'm not gonna ask a third question. How many of you spend more time with the newspaper than you do with a Bible? How many of you spend more time with something you don't believe than something you say that you do believe? We are lukewarm about the Scriptures. We do not love the Word of God.

Lukewarm about our prayer life, about supplication. The average Christian doesn't spend ten minutes a day in intercession. When's the last time you ever missed a meal to pray? When's the last time you ever missed a night's sleep to pray? When's the last time you have fasted and prayed for a day? I'll tell you what the devil does, the devil looks at the modern church today, the Laodicean church, and he stands off and he laughs and he says, "You can have your buildings, you can have your sound system, you can have your Bible classes, you can have your organization, you can have your staff, you can have your supper room, you can have it all, as long as you leave out the power of Almighty God that comes through earnest, persistent prayer that will not take 'No' for an answer. And the good many times becomes the substitute for the best." We need to learn how to pray. The Bible says, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

We're lukewarm about our sacrifice. How many sacrificing Christians do you know? You don't have to go to some foreign land to suffer for the Lord Jesus Christ. You don't have to die to suffer for the Lord Jesus Christ. Some would not allow themselves to be embarrassed on the job by bringing a Bible and simply putting a Bible on the desk. Some are ashamed of the Lord Jesus Christ and will not even bow their head and give thanks in a public place for their meal.

What about your sacrifice? We give little, but not too much. Most of our giving has never changed our lifestyle. We sing, "Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold," yet withhold it with all our might. We pray without fasting, we give without sacrifice, we witness without tears. Is it any wonder that we sow without reaping?

We're lukewarm about soul-winning. Do you have a passion for the lost? Do you believe that your next-door neighbor without Jesus is doomed to Hell? Do you really believe that? Maybe you don't believe in Hell. Maybe you don't believe the Great Commission. Maybe you don't believe that it is your solemn responsibility and glorious privilege to share the glorious Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. How challenged I was as I prepared this message. I wondered, "Adrian, have you grown lukewarm, grown cold?" I can remember times in my young Christian life when I would get on my



knees and tell the Lord, "I'm going out of this house, out of this place; I will not let sleep come to my eyes until I win a soul to Jesus Christ." Going from place to place, walking up and down the streets, looking for some blessed soul that I could share the Lord Jesus Christ with.

Lukewarmness is a terrible, horrible sin. Let me tell you the harm of lukewarmness. You see, why does our Lord say, "I'd rather have you cold than lukewarm?" Think about it. "I would that you were either cold or hot." Now listen, He had rather have you cold, out-and-out against Him, hating Him, than pretending to love Him and being lukewarm. The lukewarm Christian has done more to harm the cause of Jesus Christ than all the prostitutes and bartenders and drug pushers put together. You may not believe that.

Friend, listen, lukewarm Christians are the alibi of sinners. They double-cross Christ. Jesus had rather have you on the wrong side of the fence than sitting on the fence. That's what He says, "I would that you were cold or hot. So then because you are neither cold nor hot but lukewarm, I will spew thee out of My mouth." I am convinced, if we had only one-tenth of those who name the name of Christ, who call themselves Christians, only one-tenth of those, but they were all on fire for the Lord Jesus Christ, we'd see it a might, a mighty revival. You see, we can't even reach the goal for stumbling over our own players. I'm telling you that lukewarm Christians are the alibi of sinners.

One time in a presidential election, I was with a group, we were interviewing some men who were candidates for the presidency of the United States. And I won't name the name of this particular individual, but he's well-known, held a big government job, former governor of a state. We were at his ranch. Somebody asked this man about his relationship to Christ. And he said, "Well, let me tell you about that." He said, "I used to go to church," and he named the denomination, and I'm not gonna embarrass people by calling that denomination, but a mainline denomination. And he said, "The pastor of that church came in there, I watched him." Now this is a man, a very important man and a very wealthy man. He said, "But I watched that man." He said, "I watched him for a while, and I decided that he didn't believe what he was preaching, so why should I?" I thought, "What a tragedy." There's a lukewarm preacher who is the alibi for a man who thought that he was worthy to be the President of the United States of America.

G. Campbell Morgan, one of the greatest Bible expositors that ever lived, said this that, "Lukewarmness is the worst form of blasphemy." Now friend, that's a mouthful. Lukewarmness is the worst form of blasphemy. What is lukewarmness? Lukewarmness says, "Jesus, I believe in You, but You just don't excite me. I believe in You, but I don't intend to serve You with fire and fervor." What an insult to Almighty God, to yawn in the face of God.

Why is lukewarmness so bad? I'll tell you why it's so bad. Because lukewarmness sets us up for other sins. The lukewarm Christian is a sitting duck for the devil. How do you stay in love, how do you remain faithful to your wife and not run off with some other woman? Stay in love with your own wife. A person who's deeply in love with his own wife is not going to go off with someone else's wife.

Now I've talked to you about the curse of lukewarmness, let me talk to you about the cause of it, the cause of lukewarm Christianity. Look in verses 17 and 18, "Because thou sayest, I'm rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing." It must've been some kind of a church. Rich,



increased with goods: we don't have anything, we don't need anything, "And knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked." Now there is the cause, it's summed up in two phrases, "Thou sayest," and, "knowest not," "thou sayest," and, "knowest not." Their indifference was caused by their ignorance. They didn't even know what their need was. Their greatest need was to see their need.

The lukewarm Christian is generally the last one to know that he is a lukewarm Christian. And you may be sitting here this morning saying, "I wonder to whom he's speaking?" And God may be speaking to you, and you may be on this platform, it may be the pastor that God is speaking to today. There are none so blind as those who refuse to see. There are none so deaf as those who have ears but will not hear. That's the reason he says, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the church."

A pastor had one particular man in mind every time he preached. That man needed the message, but the man seemed never to hear. He'd always meet the pastor at the back door and say, "Pastor, you really told 'em today, you really told 'em today." One day the pastor got the idea that, "I'll let him have it today," because the man was the only man present, so he said, "He can't say that today," and he preached the message that was on his heart. Went to the back door to shake hands and the man said, "Pastor, if they had been here, you would've told them today." The lukewarm Christian! So many times he does not even know that he is lukewarm.

Now notice what he says in verse 18, "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear and anoint thine eyes with eye salve that thou mayest see." Laodicea was famous for three things: for its famous wool, for its wealth in gold and it was a medical center where they treated blindness. And so, God the Holy Spirit is making a play here on words. And He says, "In spite of your wool and your wealth and your medicine, you need a holy fire." I wonder if these were people who'd bought into the health and wealth Gospel that's preached on television today by the happy boys. "I have need of nothing and knowest not that thou art miserable, wretched."

Now, think of it, think of it. Here they were, sitting there so self-satisfied, "Thou sayest and knowest not." Now, how does this lukewarmness begin? How does this self-satisfaction, this complacency begin? What is the cause? How did they get to this state? Well, people cool down by degrees. Now over here we have seven churches. Ephesus was the first, Laodicea the last and all kinds of conditions in between those seven churches.

Now, our Lord begins in chapter 2 speaking to the church at Ephesus. And our Lord says some marvelous things to the church at Ephesus. It speaks about their program, it speaks about their power, it speaks about all of their purity and all of these things, and as you read it, you say, "My, what a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful church was Ephesus." And yet He says one thing to the church at Ephesus in Revelation chapter 2 verses 2 through 4. Listen to it, "I know thy works and thy labor and thy patience and I know that thou canst not bear them which are evil and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not and has found them liars and has borne and has patience



for My name's sake hast labored and hath not fainted."

Sounds like a glorious church, but there is a nevertheless in verse 4. Listen to it, "Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee because thou hast left thy first love." Now it's not that they didn't love the Lord anymore, they just lost it, they left their first love. What is first love? Do you remember when you first got married? Do you remember your honeymoon? That's first love. Somebody said the honeymoon is that period of time between, "I do" and, "You'd better." The honeymoon ought never to end. If you don't love your wife more today than you did when you married her, you love her less. Love is not a static thing. How sad it is when people leave their first love. First love is enthusiastic, first love is reckless, first love doesn't count the cost, first love says, "I love you with all of my heart, all of my soul." Those of you who are married, you need to keep the honey in the honeymoon.

Joyce and I were at breakfast one day. She looked away and I took some honey and put it on my lips and gave her a big kiss. She liked it. I thought, that's a pretty good idea. We were at another meal so I got some hot sauce and put that on my lips. That didn't go over so good. I thought, well, hot lips, that ought to be as good as honey lips. But, you've got to keep the honey in the honeymoon. You've got to keep that love hot and glowing and growing. And here's what our Lord says to this church, "I have somewhat against thee, nevertheless, you've left your first love." Question: was there ever a time when you loved Jesus Christ more than you do right now? If so, to that degree, you're backslidden. And you're beginning to cool down and before long you will assume room temperature. And when you do, you'll look around and you'll say, "Well, I must not be so bad, I'm like everybody else." Somebody has well said that an average church is so lukewarm that you have to backslide to be in fellowship. If you really get on fire for the Lord Jesus Christ, people are going to think that you're odd.

Now, how do you become lukewarm? You just assume that you're alright, but you're cooling down by degrees.

Now what is the cure for lukewarm Christianity? Look again in verse 18, "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear and anoint thine eyes with eye salve that thou mayest see." They needed the gold of God's glory, gold that had been through the fire. Are you rich today? Add up everything that you have that money can't buy and death cannot take away, you'll know how rich you are. They needed the gold of God's glory.

They needed the garments of God's righteousness. "Buy of Me white raiment that thou mayest be clothed and that the shame of your nakedness do not appear." "The shame of your nakedness." You see, they thought they were clothed. They'd take themselves up and came to the worship service; they looked so fine. God says, "You're sitting there naked." Can you imagine yourself this morning sitting in church naked? Use a little imagination. You're naked this morning, sitting there, but you think you're clothed.

You remember Hans Christian Anderson's story of the emperor's clothes? There were some cheats, some conniving men who pretended to be tailors and they said to the king, "Look, we have woven a beautiful garment, it is magnificent, it is for you, O king." Course, there was nothing there, just, it was nothing, but they said it was clothes that anybody with intelligence could see. And the king bought



into it, took off all his clothes and put on nothing, walked up and down the streets showing everybody his magnificent clothes and everybody was ashamed to say the king has no clothes, because only the ignorant could not see these wonderful clothes, so no one would admit that the king didn't have any clothes on, and the king walking around absolutely naked. Till a little boy one day had the audacity to say, "Look at the king. He is altogether as naked as the day he was born."

You can't help but think of that story as you read this, "Buy of Me white raiment that you may be clothed." The white raiment speaks of righteousness. And eye salve, "anoint thine eyes with eye salve that thou may see." They said that they saw, but the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, they're spiritually discerned. Would you pray, "Oh, God, not only give me ears this morning to hear but give me eyes to see!" Is God speaking to me today?

Now, God sums it all up in verse 19, look at it, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous, therefore, and repent." Lukewarmness is a horrible, listen, a horrible, a hateful, a heinous sin. The greatest commandment is to love God with all of your heart. And I'm gonna tell you that the greatest sin is not to love God with all of your heart. If the greatest commandment is to love God with all of your heart, the greatest sin is not to do it. Can you say amen to that? That's the greatest sin.

Now ask yourself this morning, "Do I love the Lord my God with all of my heart? If not, am I willing to repent?" Because I'm gonna tell you something else. If you don't, He's gonna rebuke and chasten you. You can't just waltz on to Heaven in a lukewarm condition without God meeting you to chasten you. That's His word. Repent! What do I do with my lukewarmness? I call it a sin. It is not weakness, it is wickedness. It is not small sin, it is great sin. It makes God nauseous, it makes God nauseous and our Lord says that's gonna be the condition of the average church in the last days and I believe we're living in the last days.

Then He says a word to the unsaved; in verse 20 He says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man will hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to Him." Now He's speaking to those who are in the church but they're not even saved. He says, "Listen to me, I'm knocking at your heart's door." What a loving Lord He is. How much He loves you, even if you're lukewarm. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." And if you're lost, He wants to save you, and He sent me here to tell you that He's knocking at your heart's door and He's not going to break it down, He's not going to force the lock. It's not enough for you to whisper a prayer through the keyhole; it's not enough for you to shove an offering under the door. Would you open the door today and let Jesus in? You say, "Pastor, I really want to do that, I really do. I want to be saved." That's so wonderful. Could I help you to do it? Could I lead you in a prayer and in this prayer you could receive Jesus Christ?

Would you bow your heads in prayer? And those of you who are saved and know that you know the Lord Jesus, would you begin to pray for others who may not know Him? And friend, if you're hungry to know Him, would you pray this prayer? "Oh, God, I'm a sinner and I'm lost. Thank You for shedding Your blood on the cross to pay for my sin. You told me if I would trust You, that You would save me, and I do trust You. I open the door of my heart. Come into my life, now, come in, Lord Jesus, forgive my sin. Save me, Jesus." Lord, I pray that many today will pray that prayer in Your holy name, Amen.



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