

Introduction: Pg. _____

**“Open the Door”
Revelation 3:14-22**

This morning we are going to hear Jesus’ final words to the last church he addresses in Revelation 3, the church at Laodicea. I believe they will serve as a well-timed gift from God this morning as we launch into Holy Week, the week of Jesus’ crucifixion, leading up to his resurrection.

I believe that because they call us to a place of full commitment, and if there’s any week of the year we want to our commitment to be full, it is this week. No doubt, Easter is the Sunday of all Sundays, the Super Bowl of the church calendar, because it is the crowning achievement of Jesus Christ and the decisive act that verifies God’s kingdom has arrived and is coming through the HIM. Secondly, it is the Sunday of all Sundays because it is the Sunday when the 1000s upon 1000s of people around us are most likely to say yes to our invitation to join us.

So... here’s my challenge: let these words from Jesus propel you into living your life fully surrendered and fully awakened to the reality of who he is (in your personal worship, in your praying, in your serving and in your sharing) . . . AND then, allow this week to be the debut performance for how you can live every other week of the year.

WHY? Because deep down, you and I both know. Easter is the EVERY DAY reality for everyone in Christ. He died and rose again that we might live the Resurrected LIFE EVERY DAY. (Galatians 2:20)

Read 3:14-22

I want to ask you to carefully consider two massive questions as we move through this text...

1. Do you see any spiritual indifference & ineffectiveness in your life? (3:14-17)

In verses 14-17, we have a major juxtaposition: What the people of the church at Laodicea think of themselves vs. What Jesus sees and knows about them.

What they think is summarize with three words in verse 17: “I need nothing.”

This statement most likely carries a double-meaning, referring to their material wealth, on the one hand, but also their view of themselves spiritually on the other hand.

First, their material riches:

- The fertile ground of the Lycus River valley was perfect agriculturally for raising crops and for grazing sheep. Through careful breeding practices, they bred black sheep that produced a much desired and lucrative wool.
- Not only that, Laodicea stood at the cross roads of two major trade routes making it a center for commerce and banking.
- They also, like Boston, were widely known for a medical school, which specialized in ophthalmology.

T: They were secure in their material wealth, which helped lead to a self-sufficient and indifferent approach in their relationship to God. Jesus says: “You are...”

“ . . . materially rich, spiritually impoverished.”

Revelation 3.14-22. Get Hot.

- And as we've been highlighting throughout these letters, once again, they really couldn't see their true condition. Look at what Jesus says, For you say.... NOT REALIZING you are..."
- Hanns Lilje, a German pastor and theologian in the confessing church that stood against Hitler's Nazi regime, once said: **"The inevitable result of spiritual complacency and self-satisfaction is the loss of all true self-knowledge."**

T: They THOUGHT they were good. They thought they were all set, BUT Jesus saw a different story.

What Jesus sees: Indifference leading to ineffectiveness (15, 17)

In verse 17, Jesus describes their true condition with five terms...

- Wretched (State full of distress. Extremely unhappy)
- Pitiable (their condition should not be celebrated but pitied. They are in a sorry state)
- They are not actually rich, but poor.
- When they stand 15 feet away from the eye exam, they do not have 20/20 vision, but are legally blind.
- They are not well clothed spiritually, but spiritually naked (exposed, shamed).

Jesus lovingly takes direct aim at their three areas of greatest pride to wake them up and help them see! Financial wealth (Jesus, you are poor), a popular eye salve that was exported across the world (Jesus, you are blind), the textile industry - with their precious black wool clothing (Jesus, you are naked).

This assessment helps us understand what he is saying in verse 15 with the hot/cold/lukewarm metaphor.

Laodicea was isolated from an adequate supply water. That meant it had to build aqueducts to pipe the water from two locations.

- Heirapolis, sat to the north, and boasted famous hot springs that was full of minerals that carried medicinal value.
- Colossae, sat to the south, and was widely known for their cold refreshing drinking water.

As you would imagine, by the time the water arrived from these two locations, it was lukewarm. The hot water lost its healing effect. The cold water lost its ability to refresh and revive.

I believe there are two important lessons here.

1. It reveals the indifference made explicit in verse 17. They were not one thing or the other. This is, by the way, is where most people have taken this verse - highlighting their lack of passion and zeal (which I can get behind), but that is implied, not the key focus.
2. The focus is on what their lives were producing. They were not useful or effective in the God-given purpose. This is evident from the first four words from Jesus: "I know you works." Verse 17

But listen: the two always go hand in hand. A lack of passionate, wholehearted devotion will lead to spiritual ineffectiveness.

"Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work." (2 Timothy 2:21-22)

Does God use us in spite of us? Absolutely. But God is looking for people who are not half-hearted, but whole-hearted in their commitment to accomplish his greatest work!

T: Verse 16 shows us...

The seriousness of their indifference (16).

"I will spit you out of my mouth." Wow! These words are meant to jolt us. Jesus cannot tolerate, literally cannot stomach Laodicean Christianity. Their indifference and consequent ineffectiveness makes him sick.

This should cause us to take an inventory of our lives. Carefully consider any indifference that might be leading to ineffectiveness in your own life, as I ask the following questions:

Diagnosing indifference

- Are you excited to come to worship?
- Do you have a growing concern for the physical *and* spiritual needs of the people around you?
- How alive is the Bible to you?
- Does your sin bother you?
- Are you sensitive to God's presence?
- Is prayer reflexive?
- Do you enjoy being around your brothers and sisters IN CHRIST?
- When is the last time you told someone about Jesus?
- Do you believe God has more for you?
- Do you believe God wants to do more through you?

T: What's the solution to our indifference, our ineffectiveness? Open the door!

2. Will you open the door to a deeper relationship with Jesus? (18-22)

Don't miss the imagery in *verse 20*.

Jesus is knocking

- We talk a lot about our role in asking, seeking, and knocking as one of the preeminent metaphors for prayer, but here, Jesus is the one knocking on the door.
- What does this tell us? He's coming after us! He does not leave us in our complacent indifference. He wants us to experience all he has for us, and he wants to dwell with us. He wants to grow deeper in friendship
- If you've grown up in church, you have probably heard this verse addressed to people yet to believe in Jesus - as an invitation for them to receive the salvation Jesus offers. That's not what this verse is saying, but the imagery does fit in the sense that Jesus desires a relationship with every person in the world!
- So if you've never opened the door to a true, real, vibrant relationship with Jesus. Do so today and LET US KNOW!
- But the picture here is not the beginning of a relationship but the continuation, the progress of a better and deeper relationship!
- To dine with someone was to extend them friendship.

Do you hear Jesus knocking? Do you hear his voice? He is calling each one of us to a deeper place!

But how do we open the door?

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1. We listen to his counsel and act accordingly! (18) (RW)

Jesus counsels them... to buy from him... HIM! We all need counsel. We all need advise. To conclude otherwise is to PRETEND we have all the answers, so what I would love in this family known as RHC, is for their never to be a stigma about seeing a counselor - whether that's with a Pastor or other leader, or a professional counselor (always preferably who loves God and counsels from a biblical worldview).

When metaphors are used, we have to be careful to press the details. Jesus counsels them to buy spiritual resources, *not because* they actually have money to do so, but because this is an image they would understand living in Laodicea. They had bought all of the these worldly possessions that gave them a false sense of blessing, security, and satisfaction. Jesus says, you're shopping at the wrong store!!

- Buy gold! True riches to meet deepest needs.
- Buy white garments! Through receiving my power for a life that reflects my purity and will bring honor, not the shame of nakedness.
- Buy eye salve! So that you can truly see! As Jesus said in Matthew 13:16, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear."

And then, Jesus commands them... be zealous and repent. (19)

I like how N.T. Wright translates this verse: 19 When people are my friends, I tell them when they're in the wrong, and I punish them for it; so stir up your spirits and repent!

Out of love, Jesus reprovess and discipline...

- To reprove is to correct. It points a problem, a weakness, or area of sin in our lives and convinces us to do something about it!
- To discipline is care for someone like a father or mother does their children. Discipline brings correction and at times punishment designed to train and guide us into a better path.

His discipline helps wakes us up to our need to: be zealous & repent.

- Be zealous to live for God. Once we see who he is... once we see what he has invited us to... once we understand the joy that comes in this wholehearted, we will go after it with everything we are!
- And we will repent. We will align our thinking, desires, and actions with the heart of God!

T: Based on these words, here's my invitation to you..

The Point: Open the door to a new season WITH CHRIST.

Conclusion:

Let this Easter Week be full of passionate devotion to Christ, that kisses indifference goodbye, says hello to being a useful, effective contributor in God's plan.

And as we do... let's watch God use this week as the preview for what is to come for the rest of 2019.

When our Groups got together last week, one of the women in our church who was leading a segment of the prayer night, really sensed the Holy Spirit speaking to her heart. Here was the message: "You invite them. I will save and renew them."

Sounds consistent with what we read here.
Who have you invited? Who will you invite?

Who's Your One?

(Easter Booklet - hold it up - you'll receive one as you walk out. Check this out. It will take you 5 minutes to read. I'd love to hear what you think.) At minimum, it's a conversation starter. Our prayer is that it is a tool that introduces someone to life in CHRIST!

200 Steps Story...

Who's your one? (Why not, one more?)

What an opportunity... Let's consecrate ourselves to God in these moments....

PRAYER TEAM.

God, give me a fresh start. Make this a new season.

God, save me.

God, take away any indifference in my heart that I might live wholeheartedly for you.

God, use me for your name.

Those who share this meal, and who are thereby strengthened to 'conquer' as Jesus 'conquered' through his death, will have the most extraordinary privilege. It is already quite mind-blowing to think of Jesus sharing the throne of God