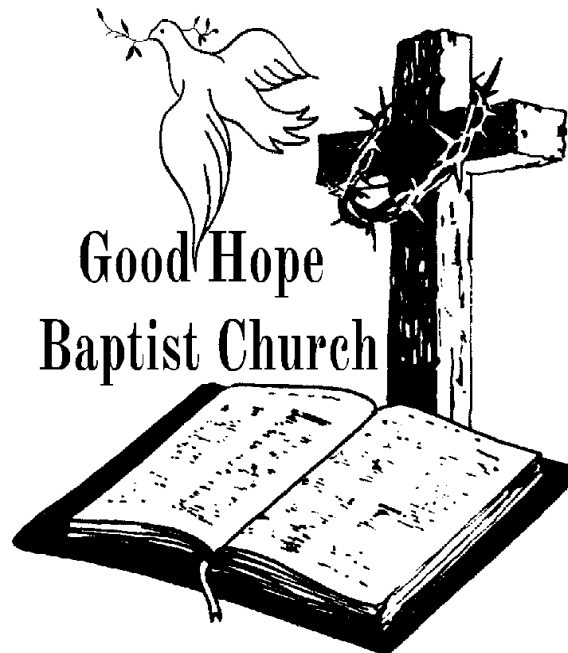


Jesus In - Satan Out

Revelation 3:20



Living Together In The Love Of God

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FOCAL Read Together Revelation 3:20 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.

The "Southern Baptist Faith and Message" - our statement of faith as Southern Baptists - defines the Church this way:

"A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture."

In the year 2000 the Baptist Faith and Message was revised and re-released. There was an uproar in both the liberal news services as well as many Southern Baptist Churches. Why? Because many of our local Churches had begun to drift from the clear teaching of the Word of God, and had begun to compromise with the world. A **New Testament Church** is indeed an **autonomous local congregation of baptized believers**, but by **autonomous** we mean that each local Church is

governed and under the leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ. Baptists join together an *associate* in order to do mission work, but we do not believe in a hierarchy of power, where men oversee and govern groups of local churches. Each Southern Baptist of Church follows the Word of the Lord, **calls its pastor and deacons under the leadership of the Lord Jesus and the Holy Bible, and then follows the called pastor and deacons as long as those individuals conform to the clear teachings of the Word of God.** The Bible is what guides us and grows us. Because Baptists had begun to compromise the Word of God Dr. Adrian Rogers lead the Southern Baptist Convention to add to the Baptist Faith and Message, and in particular this statement you just read defining the Church:

"Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture."

I was reading the **September 3, 2011** issue of our North Carolina Baptist newspaper *The Biblical Recorder*. As I went through the paper I was gratified to see the number of articles where we as Christians are planting new Churches and carrying the Word of God out both locally as well as internationally. This is great! Then I came to a section of the paper called **Tar Heel Voices** where an individual named **Gene Ryder** wrote

"I offer my congratulations to the Flat Rock Baptist Church in Mount Airy. Calling a woman as their pastor is to be commended."

No, it's not to be commended.

God took time in His Word to establish requirements for both the **office of the Pastor and the office of the Deacon**. In those requirements the Lord said:

1 Timothy 3:2 ^(HCSB) **An overseer, therefore, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, self-controlled, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an able teacher,**

1 Timothy 3:12 ^(HCSB) **Deacons must be husbands of one wife, managing their children and their own households competently.**

Though women are capable to serve the Lord - and do, praise God - the Lord established the requirement that these offices be filled by "**the husband of one wife**", that is, a God called man. I have heard people make the statement:

"Well, women have had to step up and fill the office of Pastor and Deacon because there were no men available to do so."

Illustrate Let's apply this same standard to other instances you have found in life. You're standing in line at the bank, and there's only one teller. **There's not enough tellers in the bank.** So you decide to help out. You step behind the counter, go back into the vault, and cash your own check. **Would you get away with it?** I know and you know that the guard would arrest you, and

you'd spend the night in jail. Here's another scene. You're going down the highway, doing the speed limit, when somebody whips past you speeding. **Looking around you see no police officers in sight, so you chase the offender down, run them off the road, then hold them until the police come.** What do you think will happen? A letter of commendation from the Police Commissioner for *helping out*? I don't think so.

I applaud women and their faithfulness to serving our Lord. I praise God for every woman who works in missions. Tonight we'll be listening to a telecast by a woman I greatly respect, **Anne Graham Lotz**. One of my heroes in the faith is Nazi Concentration Camp survivor **Corrie ten Boom**. But we must remember that ...

God establishes the standards for leadership in the home and in the Church. His Word is to be obeyed no matter what we may think - for *leadership matters*.

Jesus Calls Us All To Turn Away From Lukewarmness

As we've studied through the different Churches in Revelation we've seen the same phrase over and over again:

"Unto the angel of the Church at ____ write"

Word Study The word "angel" is the Greek *αγγελος* (pronounced *ang'-el-os*), which means not only "angel" but also "**Pastor, Leader, or Messenger**". As the Lord

addresses His Church He speaks to and addresses His rebukes to the leadership first. Leadership matters.

Godly leadership will guide a Church to follow the Word of God and succeed. Ungodly leadership will guide a Church to follow the Word of the World and fail. The leadership at Laodicea had not promoted the Word of the Lord, and as a result Jesus was locked out! He said ...

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Word Study Laodicea is the worldly Church with worldly leadership. We just studied **Philadelphia** and saw that their name meant "**brotherly love**". Philadelphia succeeded and would continue to succeed because they were marked by brotherly love. **Laodicea** however means "**of the people**". What made Laodicea "**of the people**". What did they do that locked Jesus out of the Church?

1 Lukewarmness locks Jesus out of the Church.
Jesus said:

CONTEXT Revelation 3:15-16 (KJV) I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. 16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

What does it mean to **be lukewarm as a Christian?**

Pastor **Francis Chan** wrote in his bestselling book *Crazy Love, Overwhelmed by a Relentless God*, ^{Chapter 4:}

- **Lukewarm people give money to charity and to the church ... as long as their giving doesn't impinge on their standard of living. If they have a little extra and it's easy and safe to give, they do so.**
- **Lukewarm people tend to choose what is popular over what is right when they are in conflict. They desire to fit in both at church and outside of church; they care more about what people think of their actions (like church attendance and giving) than what God thinks of their hearts and lives.**
- **Lukewarm people are moved by stories of people who do radical things for Christ, yet they do not act. They assume such action is for "extreme" Christians, not average ones.**
- **Lukewarm people love God, but they do not love Him with all their hearts, soul and strength. They would be quick to assure you that they try to love God that much, but that sort of total devotion isn't really possible for the average person; it's only for the pastors and missionaries and radicals.**
- **Lukewarm people love others but do not seek to love others as much as they love themselves. Their love of others is typically focused on those who love them in return, like family, friends, and other people they know and connect with. There is little love left over for those who cannot love them back, much less for those who intentionally slight them, whose kids are**

better athletes than theirs, or with whom conversations are awkward or uncomfortable. Their love is highly conditional and very selective, and generally comes with strings attached.

- Lukewarm people think about life on earth much more often than eternity in heaven. Daily life is mostly focused on today's to-do list, this week's schedule, and next month's vacation. Rarely, if ever, do they intently consider the life to come.

Jesus tells His Church **"I would rather you be hot or cold"**. He tells His believers:

Matthew 10:38 ^(KJV) ... he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

It is uncomfortable to carry Christ's Cross. People look at us and mock us. We stand out when we carry a Cross. It's tiring. But the Lord says, **"If you love Me, take up the Cross and follow Me"**.

2 **The Lukewarm Church is more intent on satisfying self than it is in satisfying the Savior.**

Illustrate When **Dr. Adrian Rogers** first went to pastor Bellevue Baptist Church a lady came up to him and said, **"Dr Rogers, this is a big Church. How are you going to please all these people?"** Dr Rogers replied, **"Ma'am, it's not my job to please the people. I am to preach to the people, and to please the Lord."**

Listen, Leaders of the Church. It is not your job to

please the people. We are called to PLEASE JESUS by DOING HIS WORD. We are called to be *outgoing and missional*, not self loving and stagnant.

CONTEXT Revelation 3:17 ^(KJV) Because thou sayest, I am 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 ...

The Church and leadership of Laodicea ceased being missional, Jesus commanded His Church to "Go" and "Teach the Gospel". The Church of Laodicea said "Let's stay here and build bigger buildings". The Lukewarm Church does not walk with Jesus, but it settles down where it is. It "knowest not" that it is wretched! It doesn't move outside of its comfort zone. Our Lord Jesus Christ went into the uncomfortable areas with His Gospel.

We have a GO AND TELL Savior and a GO AND TELL Gospel.

Jesus witnessed to the **publicans and the harlots**, even **though His enemies accused Him of being a drunkard**. Jesus **healed the lepers** though the Law forbade that any come in contact with them. **Jesus found Zacchaeus sitting in a tree** and, entering his house, brought salvation to this wretched little man's life (**Luke 19:9-10**). **Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman at the well**, and led her to salvation by faith in Him (**John 4:7-28**). The woman went out and told all her friends:

John 4:29-30 ^(KJV) Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? **30** Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

3 The lukewarm Church considers the Word of the World to be greater than the Word of the God Who made this world. Jesus said:

CONTEXT Revelation 3:18 ^(KJV) 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 eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

Jesus tells His Church "come to ME for gold". He was in fact saying, "Here's where your gold is. Here's where your riches are, dearest Church. It is not found in this world, but in ME! I am where your power is. I am where your hope is. I am the One Who opens a door that no man can shut, and shuts a door that no man can open." We get our gold from Jesus. He is our riches, and as we grow in Him and reach others through His Gospel His Church grows and His Kingdom grows.

Listen, Leaders! If it doesn't glorify the Lord, and if it cannot be backed up by the Word of God, *run from it*, for its a trap of Satan.

The sign of a saved soul is a new mission. "I once was lost, but now am found, was blind but now I see. The man who wrote these words was, at one time, a slave trader. Once saved, he loved, and turned from the world

and to the Lord.

Let's Work Together To Keep Jesus Locked IN The Church And The Devil Locked Out

FOCAL Revelation 3:20 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.

When Jesus addressed the Church of Laodicea He opened by talking to "the angel or messenger of the Church", that is, the leadership. But as He closes His letter to this Church He says "if ANY man". How do we keep the Church from lukewarmness? How do we keep the devil OUT of the Church and Jesus locked in?

1 Lock Jesus in the Church by HEARING His voice, His Holy Word, and DOING what He says. Jesus said "if you hear My voice, THEN OPEN the door". The Scripture tells us:

James 1:22-25 (HCSB) But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 Because if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man looking at his own face in a mirror. 24 For he looks at himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. 25 But the one who looks intently into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but one who does good works — this person will be blessed in what he does.

We must all HEAR and DO the Word of God. Jesus said,

Luke 6:46-49 (KJV) And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? 47 Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: 48 He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. 49 But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.

To both HEAR His Word and DO His Word - to put it into practice - is to insure that Satan will not be able to get into the Church. If we do as He says then we have His promise that "upon this Rock He will build His Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18)

2 Lock Jesus in the Church by growing in YOUR relationship with Him. Jesus said:

FOCAL Revelation 3:20 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.

Spend time with the Lord in prayer. Read His Word, and "have supper with Him". Seek to grow in your faith.

3 Lock Jesus in the Church by actively showing love to your brothers and sisters in the Lord. Show love to the strangers and neighbors who come among us. We need one another.

1 Corinthians 12:12 ^(KJV) For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also [is] Christ.

Illustrate A mouse looked through a crack in the wall to see a farmer and his wife open a package. "I wonder what food is in that box?", he said to himself. He was then shocked, for he realized it was a mousetrap! Running into the farmyard he cried out, "There's a mousetrap in the house". The chicken said, "Well, it looks like you're in a PECK PECK of trouble. That means something to you, but nothing to me. I can't be bothered with it." The mouse ran to the pig. "There's a mousetrap in the house". The pig said, "I'm very sorry, Mr. Mouse, but there's not ONE OINK I can do about it. Be assured, though, you are in my prayers." The mouse turned to the cow and said, "There's a mousetrap in the house!" The cow said, "I'm really sorry, dear friend, but there's nothing I can do. Let's MOOve on!" The little mouse went off to face the mousetrap alone. That night there was a SNAP, and the mousetrap went off. The farmer's wife heard it, and ran to pick it up. She didn't see that it wasn't the mouse, but the trap had snapped shut on a venomous snake's tail. The snake bit her. The farmer rushed his dear wife to the hospital. When she returned home she had a fever. To help her get well the farmer went out to

the barnyard, got the chicken, and made soup. Yet his wife continued to be sick! Friends and family came to sit with her around the clock. To feed them the farmer butchered the pig. But sadly, she never did get well. In a few weeks she died, and the whole community turned out for the funeral. In order to feed them, the farmer killed the cow. And the mouse, looking through the crack in the wall, sadly watched as everyone he cared for died. We are all in this Church TOGETHER.

Conclusion

Illustration A little boy had just given his life to Jesus. Just like the woman at the well, and just like Zacchaeus, the little boy couldn't wait to tell someone about the Lord Who loved him. He sat down on a pew next to a man who looked looked upset. The little boy said to the man, "Sir, do you need to get saved?" The man replied rather angrily, "Listen boy: I've been a Deacon in this church for over 30 years and Chairman of Deacons for 15 years." The little boy responded, "Sir, it don't matter what you done, Jesus loves you and He'll still save you!"

I was saved by faith in Christ before I was ever ordained to anything. I was ordained a Deacon long before I was ordained to the Pastorate. It was a great and humbling honor in my life when the Lord called me to serve His Church as a Deacon. Deacons, you, just like me, represent the Lord Jesus Christ. So we approach what we do with wonder, awe, and respect for the Lord Who called us. We adhere to His Word. We model love to the flock. To be "ordained" means "to be put under

orders". You are not going under my orders today though the Scripture commands you follow me as Pastor while I follow Jesus. But you are "**put under orders**" today to follow Jesus wholeheartedly. Being a Deacon will not save you - faith in Christ does that. But being a good Deacon will bless this Church by locking Jesus in and locking Satan out.

May God help you all to strive with me to do just that.



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