

No Calculating Love

Revelation 3:20



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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.**

A few weeks ago I preached a message on the fall of King David into sin. David's fall began when he stopped serving the Lord with all his heart and started focusing on himself. Because David grew lukewarm in his love for his Savior he stayed home when he should have been out serving the Lord. While at home David saw another man's wife, took that wife from that man, then took that man's life. Great sins come when believers become complacent and lukewarm in their walk with the Lord. An iron placed in a fire will heat until it is red hot. Removed from the fire that hot iron can be used to transfer heat to other things. A branding iron well heated in a fire can be used to make an impression where ever its glowing face is pressed. The cold iron leaves no impression on the world, and the lukewarm iron only irritates the user. The iron must burn hot if it is going to make a difference for the good.

Our text today has been frequently used to address the sinner who needs to be saved by Grace.

I suppose the text can be used for that purpose. I do believe that Jesus stands waiting for every man to call upon His Name and so be saved. Yet if we're to be true to the Biblical text we need to read it *in its context*. These words were not addressed to unbelievers in need of salvation. If you look at the context you'll see that these words come at the end of seven addresses made by Jesus Christ to seven of His Churches. Though these

words apply to all seven of the Churches, they are specifically directed toward the Church of the Laodiceans.

What is a “**Church**”? The word “**Church**” in the original text is the Greek (ἐκκλησία **pronounced** *ek-klay-see'-ah*) **ekklesia**, which means “**those who are called out**”. A Church is a group of people who have “**been called out of darkness and into God's marvelous light**” (1 Peter 2:9). The One Who called us is Jesus Christ. “**Ye are the called of Jesus Christ**” (Romans 1:6). A Church is composed of people who are “**Beloved of God, called to be Set Apart Ones, called to be Saints**” (Romans 1:7). A Church is a Body of people who are loved by God. It is God's Flock. It is God's people. It is God's Redeemed, “**which He has purchased with His own Blood**” (Acts 20:28).

The Church is a Body of believers who – working together as a red hot branding iron – make an impression on the world around them. We who are Christ's are to be world changers, not crowd followers or ear ticklers.

As Christ is the **Amen, the Faithful and True Witness** (Revelation 3:14) we are called out of this world to go back into the world bearing the Faithful and True Witness upon our shoulders. Christ loves us, so we love Christ. He is our Head, and our Hope. Jesus Christ is the **Way, the Truth, and the Life**, and we who are His live our lives so as to please Him and not ourselves.

Laodicea Made A Terrible Mistake

ILLUSTRATE I remember one time when I came home after a long day, I came in the house and locked the door behind me. My wife's car was in the driveway so I just naturally assumed she was in the house. When I locked the door I flipped the security bar in place. When that thing's in place you can't get the door open, even if you have I key. I went on to our bedroom when I heard my wife's voice. “Let me in – I'm locked out!” That was a terrible accident. I had no intention of locking my Beloved wife out, and quickly went to let her into the house.

What I did accidentally many Churches do accidentally every week. I don't believe that any true Christian *purposely* locks Jesus out of the Church. I just think we forget that our focus *must be Christ*.

When we do that we lock Jesus out of the Church. I assumed Sherry was in the house. The Bride goes into the building assuming the Bridegroom is there. I was focused on myself and not my wife when I shut the door. The Church gets *self focused*, forgetting why we are here. When we do that our Lord Jesus is left outside knocking on the door, saying:

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.

Is Jesus knocking at the door of your Church, or is He in the meetings? That which makes a Church is not just

knowledge of the Scripture, but it is knowledge of the Scripture *and* love for Jesus. That which makes a Church is not just the building, but it is a building *where there is love for Jesus*. That which makes a Church is not its size. If I had my way I'd tear down the “numbers boards” that we put at the front of our Churches – for I see some of you staring at the numbers while I'm preaching instead of worshipping Jesus.

Numbers don't make a Church. Jesus said:

Matthew 18:20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

What makes a Church is a **body of called out believers worshipping and loving the Lord Who has saved and secured them.**

This is a Church. It is a white hot branding iron leaving an impression on the world, and yet never being shaped by the world around it. A Church is God's tool, God's light, God's garden, God's people, God's building, and God's victors.

Philadelphia Rested In Christ

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.

Of the seven Churches mentioned in the Book of

Revelation, Laodicea is the only Church for which Jesus had *absolutely nothing good to say*. **The Church of Ephesus**, though it had left its first love (**Revelation 2:4**), nevertheless worked for the Lord and resisted evil. **The Church of Smyrna, through tried, was rich** according to the Lord (**Revelation 2:8**). **The Church of Pergamos (Revelation 2:12) held fast the faith and did not deny Christ**, though they were allowing some false doctrine in their midst. Though **Thyatira** allowed a Jezebel in their midst they were commended for “**thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and patience**” (**Revelation 2:19**). The dead Church of **Sardis** still had a few believers in its midst who “**had not defiled their garments**” (**Revelation 3:4**). Then we come to **Philadelphia** and **Laodicea**. Just as a coin has a face and a back, a “heads” and an opposing “tails”, Philadelphia and Laodicea are exact opposites.

Jesus had absolutely nothing bad to say about Philadelphia, but absolutely nothing good to say about Laodicea. What is the difference between these two Churches?

FOCAL Revelation 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock

Laodicea locked Jesus out of the Church, whereas Philadelphia let Jesus into the Church. The name “**Philadelphia**” is the Greek (φιλαδελφεια pronounced *fil-ad-el'-fee-ah*), which means “**brotherly love**”. This was a Church characterized by love for one another – a primary component of our Christian faith. Our Lord

Jesus Christ taught us that the **greatest Commandments in the Law** were:

Mark 12:30-31 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: **this is the first commandment.** **31** And the second is like, *namely this*, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. **There is none other commandment greater than these.**

ILLUSTRATE You could take all of the Law of God and hang it like a suit on these two nails! God requires that we love Him with **ALL our heart, ALL our soul, ALL our mind, and ALL our strength.** Our love for the Messiah and the Master must be ALL. It must not be a *calculating love*, but a exuberant, exhaustive, and engrossing love. The **Church of Philadelphia** – the Church of Brotherly love – gave everything to the Lord, and held nothing back. They loved one another, obeying the New Commandment the Lord gave us all:

John 13:34-35 **A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.** **35** By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Because Philadelphia – the Church of Brotherly love – loved one another as Christ loved them Jesus said:

Revelation 3:7-8 **These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no**

man openeth; 8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

Philadelphia did not lock Jesus outside of the Church. **He was in the midst of His people.** There was an open door set before them that no man could close.

The Church in love with Christ and loving one another is a force to be reckoned with. The Church's song should be:

Psalms 46:1-7 ... **God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.** **2** Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; **3** *Though* the waters thereof roar *and* be troubled, *though* the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. **Selah.** **4** *There is* a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy *place* of the tabernacles of the most High. **5** **God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.** **6** The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. **7** The LORD of hosts *is* with us; the God of **Jacob is our refuge. Selah.**

ILLUSTRATE The word SELAH means “to rest”. Rest in the Lord. SELAH. There is a door opened by God, and no man can shut it. SELAH. You are invincible, O Church, if God is in your midst. SELAH.

Pause, Stop, Reflect, for God is with us! Though Philadelphia had but little strength it had kept Christ's Word and not denied His Name. Hasn't Jesus promised that:

2 Corinthians 12:9 ... **My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.** ...

ILLUSTRATE It is glorious when trials hit the surrendered Christian and the Philadelphian Church. They are **waves of the sea striking the mighty hull of the aircraft carrier**. Trials cannot hurt Philadelphia, for they do not calculate their love one toward another. The unbeliever has calculating love. The unbeliever says, “You do this, and I'll do that”. The unbeliever says “I love them that love me”. The unbeliever says “I will talk to only those I know, and ignore the others”. The unbeliever says, “I will love those who profit me to love, and all else can go to the devil”. God says:

Matthew 5:46-48 **For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? 47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? 48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.**

God loves everyone, so God's people should love everyone. God's love never excuses sin, but **He so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16)**. He is not stingy nor calculating with His love, and neither should we be.

Laodicea Rested WITHOUT Christ

Laodicea however is a different story. The name **Laodicea** means in the original text (λαοδικεια pronounced *lah-od-ik'-i-ah*) “**of the people**”. Whereas the Philadelphians “**loved the Lord their God with all their heart, with all their soul, with all their mind**” (**Matthew 22:37**), the Laodiceans were *totally focused on themselves*. And because of that focus Jesus said:

Revelation 3:17 **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:**

ILLUSTRATE I heard of a missionary who went deep into Africa to minister among those people. The missionary said that he came upon one tribe of people who were starving to death, their bellies swollen with hunger worms, and their bodies naked to the elements. He saw a group of children sitting on the ground in a circle playing – what looked like – a game of marbles. The missionary looked, then looked again. The children were playing marbles with diamonds.

The Laodiceans were every bit as foolish. Begun in the Spirit and saved by the love of God in Christ they were resting in the **riches of this world**. Listen Beloved, the Church of Jesus Christ is **the Bride of Christ**.

ILLUSTRATE You've all seen these fashion shows where the women walk down these “runways” and people “ooh” and “aah” what they're wearing while

photographers take the pictures of the “latest fashion”. The Church is identified by its affiliation with her Head and her Groom. **A Bride walking down an aisle with no groom in sight is no more than a model in a white dress at a fashion show.** When the Bride goes down the aisle she isn't posing for the crowd. If she is, then the marriage won't last very long. The Bride is always *focused on her Groom*. She's headed toward Him as she walks down the aisle of the chapel. She focuses on Him while she says her vows. She is not *calculating* in her love, but loves Him with abandon just as He loves her with abandon. It's like that old song, **“I Only Have Eyes For You, Dear!”**

Laodicea's eyes were on herself. She wasn't always this way. When the Apostle Paul wrote about Laodicea in the Book of Colossians (see **Colossians 2:1; 4:13, 15, 16**) they were well spoken of. Now Jesus says to His Church:

CONTEXT **Revelation 3:15-16** **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 spew thee out of my mouth.**

The **Laodiceans were neither cold nor hot**. They were *lukewarm Christians*. They were lukewarm in their works for the Lord. They were lukewarm in their love for the Lord. The Lord said of these believers **“I would that you were either cold or hot”**.

A hot believer and a hot Church – like Philadelphia – mark society by their very presence. Such a Church is

talked about and – in general – hated by the world at large. These people are on fire for the Lord. They make a difference. The cold believer and the cold Church have absolutely no effect whatsoever on society. They are **not the Light of the world**, and such a Church is largely unnoticed. People may note the size or historicity of its structures, but that sleeping giant neither harms nor helps the work of the Gospel. It just *is*.

ILLUSTRATE *The Lukewarm Church is the comfortable Church.* No one is ever drowned by accident in a hot or a cold bath. If you soak in a hot tub or an ice bath you stay awake. But let the water get lukewarm and comfortable, and you may drift off to sleep and slowly go under the water to your death.

The Lukewarm Church does not walk with Jesus. Jesus went into the uncomfortable areas. He 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 said:

Matthew 12:30 **He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.**

If you're going to walk with Jesus, then you will walk with discomfort! Christianity says **“all have sinned”**, whereas the world says **“there are good people and bad people”**. The world says **“we can be good enough to get to God”**, whereas Christianity says **“we're so bad**

that God had to make payment for our sins by **shedding His Blood on Calvary**". Christianity says, "**he who does not come to Christ with empty hands and believe on Him and Him alone shall be damned**". The world says, "**many religions reach toward God – one way is as good as another**".

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, **I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**

The Lukewarm Church is comfortable with the ways of Satan. It is an uncomfortable thing to be a Christian in the devil's world, but it is what the Lord calls us to be. We are **called out and set apart, kings and priests unto God.** We are wed to Him, and He to us. The Lord tells us "**be hot or be cold – but don't be lukewarm. If you're lukewarm you hurt the cause. If you're lukewarm you compromise when you should be standing firm. If you're lukewarm the things that don't matter to Me will matter to you.**"

That's how Laodicea began to drift away from Jesus.

CONTEXT Revelation 3:17 **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:**

Laodicea began to focus on *material earthly riches* rather than on the Lord Who loved them. They said, "**I am rich, and increased with goods**". I have the riches of the world. I have a great big building to worship in. I

have lots of money – oodles of money. We can hire what we need, for **I have need of nothing.** Laodicea began to focus on the riches of this world, and began to be calculating in their love. It's like the poem written by **Wilbur Rees** called "**3\$ Worth of God**":

"I would like to buy three dollars worth of God, please.
Not enough to explode my soul and disturb my sleep.
Not enough to take control of my life.
I want just enough to equal a cup of warm milk.
Just enough to ease some of the pain from my guilt.
I would like to buy three dollars worth of God, please.
I would like to find a love that is pocket-sized.
I don't want enough of God to make me love a black man
or pick beets with a migrant.
Not enough to change my heart.
I can only stand just enough to take to Church when I have time.
Just enough to equal a snooze in the sunshine.
I want ecstasy, not transformation.
I want the warmth of the womb, but not a new birth.
I would like to purchase a pound of the Eternal in a paper sack.
If it doesn't work, I would like to get my money back.
I would like to buy three dollars worth of God, please.
I would like to hide some for a rainy day.
Not enough for people to see a change in me.
Not enough to impose any responsibility.
Just enough to make folks think I am OK.
Could I just get three dollars worth of God, please?"

Laodicea had transferred their love from God Who saved them to the god of money, from the Lord Who loved them to money which could not love them. They used a **God substitute.**

They were comfortable, and had set the pegs of their tent deep into the soil of this present earth. God's people do not belong on this earth. We are the Bride walking down

the aisle toward our Groom. This life is **but a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanishes away (James 4:14).**

Colossians 3:1-4 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. **2** Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. **3** For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. **4** When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Jesus Christ is our life. **We are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God.** He is at the end of the aisle of this life. He is with us now. What did Jesus tell Laodicea? He said:

CONTEXT **Revelation 3:18** **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.**

Jesus told them “**buy of ME gold**”. He said, “**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.**” God from Jesus is **gold tried in the fire**. There is no impurities in it.

Do not approach the Lord with *calculating love*. It will

destroy you, and destroy the Church. When Jesus saved Zacchaeus that little man said:

Luke 19:8 ... Behold, Lord, **the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore *him* fourfold.**

This is not *calculating love*. This is the love of those who are saved.

Pastors all across America never know what to pray for on a Sunday morning because there are so many calculating Christians. Do we pray for a *sunny day*, knowing that many will be off playing ball games in the park because it is such a pretty day? Or do we pray for a *rainy day*, knowing that many will not brave the rain to go to Church, but will gladly go through a deluge to visit the department store or to go out and eat Sunday dinner?

Do You Really Want To Lock Jesus Out?

I have begun to pray that every believer in God's Church – no matter where it is – will begin to see the picture painted in

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.**

See Him, Who died for you, locked outside of the Church. See Him standing on the stoop, knocking on the door and wondering where His Beloved is. See the nail scarred hands as they knock. See the blood stained brow

as He stands, patiently waiting, patiently knocking. The Shepherd said:

John 10:27-28 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

Great and precious promises are given to the Church Who loves her Lord. May God never be found knocking on the door of this Church wanting to come in. May He always be welcome in our services, and may He always be seen through the love we have – and visibly show – to one another!

ILLUSTRATE The owner of an orchard was in the habit of pruning the trees and piling the pruned limbs up for burning. He would do this for a week, then he would burn the pile of trimmed limbs. One day as he was working he noticed that a bird had built a nest in the dead limbs. Not wanting to be cruel the farmer took a stick and stirred up the nest. The infuriated bird flew out of the limbs and up into the trees where it chattered angrily as the farmer burned the pile.

Is God poking your nest? Is He messing with your nest? If so, remember the words of our Lord:

CONTEXT Revelation 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

If you have been rebuked today – REPENT. Turn away from selfish self centeredness and look unto Jesus. Be on

fire for the Lord. **Be zealous!** Jesus is coming again, and it may be this very day. Do not get bound up into lukewarm religion. **Open the door of your hearts, and Jesus will come to you and fellowship with you, and you with Him.**

May God touch your hearts with His Word!

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.**

1 Peter 2:9; Romans 1:6; Romans 1:7; Acts 20:28; Revelation 3:14 _____

Laodicea Made A Terrible Mistake

Matthew 18:20 _____

Philadelphia Rested In Christ

Revelation 3:20; Revelation 2:4; Revelation 2:8; Revelation 2:12; Revelation 2:19; Revelation 3:4; Mark 12:30-31; John 13:34-35; Revelation 3:7-8; Psalms 46:1-7; 2 Corinthians 12:9; Matthew 5:46-48; John 3:16

Jesus had absolutely nothing bad to say about Philadelphia, but absolutely nothing good to say about Laodicea. What is the difference between these two Churches?

Laodicea Rested WITHOUT Christ

Matthew 22:37; Revelation 3:17; Colossians 2:1; 4:13, 15, 16; Revelation 3:15-16; Luke 19:9-10; Matthew 12:30; John 14:6; Revelation 3:17; James 4:14; Colossians 3:1-4; Revelation 3:18; Luke 19:8

Do You Really Want To Lock Jesus Out?

Revelation 3:20; John 10:27-28; Revelation 3:19

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