

**Revelation**  
**3:14-22**  
**“The poverty of a people ruled church”**

**I. Intro**

**II. Vs. 14-17 Not cold or hot**

**III. Vs. 18-22 I stand at the door and knock**

This the last of seven letters to the churches which were written to three specific groups:

- a. To the people of that time period that lived in those cities when John was alive.*
- b. To people of differing periods in church history, “this one would be around 1900”.*
- c. Finally, each of these letters ends as Jesus says the same 15 words, “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” Thus, these letters are for each of us.*

**Laodicea means ruled by the people**, a fitting name as it is what lay at the heart of their problem. The city of 17,000, located 40 miles southeast of Philadelphia, was made up of a wealthy class of people and was a banking center made famous by a medical school which produced eye ointment the community was also known for producing a very expensive black wool. It had no fortress and survived through compromised and accommodating all invading armies to be accepted. Jesus’ words against this church are not aimed at their acceptance of false teaching or a lack of morality. Instead, **they are chastised for their attitude that they had need of nothing**, (verse 17).

**II. Vs. 14-17 Not cold or hot**

Vs. 14 **Author**: To the Church that had no need of anything or anyone as they saw themselves as wealthy Jesus reveals how He saw them as “*wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked*”. Jesus proclaims Himself as “*Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God*.” **Jesus’ words serve as a warning for them to realize that it was not what they thought of**

*themselves that matter but rather how He saw them, (Not self-esteem but Christ-esteem).* Jesus alone is the:

- *Amen*: The “***so be it***” or final authority concerning their spiritual healthy.
- *Faithful*: ***It is His faithfulness that mattered*** not what they thought concerning their faithfulness.
- *True Witness*: He is the true witness, and they were only to be a witness of Him.
- *The Beginning of the creation of God*: He is the “***active cause***” of creation, Jesus alone knows what creation should be, no one else has any clue.

All of these words of our Lord reveals his character as alone being the sufficient One. There was only one remedy for this church, Jesus himself.

Vs. 15-17 **Accusation: *The town of Laodicea only had one problem that even their wealth had been unable to fix it was in their water supply. They got their water from hot springs, which contaminated the water by mineral deposits. They had tried to overcome this through an elaborate system of pipes, which made the water drinkable but also, left in lukewarm.*** There is nothing more revolting when you are thirsty then to drink water that is neither hot not cold! In their service they were indifferent Jesus proclaims, they professed interest in spiritual things, but it was only lip service. Paul describes this affection in 2 Tim. 3:5 by saying that they “*have a form of godliness but denying its power.*” **They participated in outward worship, but they did so without an inward reality.** They were members of an organization instead of being in a relationship to Jesus through new birth. They had “***churchianity***” which evaluated their spiritual health upon outward criteria instead of the heart.

Vs. 16 Jesus is honest with this church even though they were not honest with Him. Blessing always begins with honesty, **we cannot receive healing from the Lord until we admit the truth**

**about our condition. Spewing them out of His mouth would cause them to recognize their real spiritual health.** The Bible speaks of **three temperatures of a person's spiritual heart:**

- a. **Heart on fire:** Luke 24:32 This is the passage where the two disciples were on the road to Emmaus when the resurrected Jesus met up with them and “*beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.*” After Jesus departed from them they proclaimed, “**Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?**”
- b. **A cold heart:** Matt. 24:12 This is that passage of scripture called the “*Olivet Discourse*” where Jesus explains to His disciples the signs of His 2<sup>nd</sup> coming and says, “*because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.*”
- c. **A lukewarm heart:** Rev. 3:16 This is the passage before us where **Jesus uses it to describe a person whose heart has become comfortable and complacent to the point that they no longer see their own need.** In the field of science this would be called a “*closed system*” because **no energy can be produced unless something is introduced from the outside.** This is why a refrigerator warms when power goes out and why a fire cools when there is no longer fueled to burn. **A church must never become a closed system for as He told us in John 15:5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”**

Vs. 17 This Church boasted of its self-sufficiency and behaved as though it had no need of the Lord. Based upon Jesus words concerning their attitude they saw themselves as “*rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing*”, this reveal two things about them:

- a. *They based their evaluation upon the world's standards instead of Jesus'.*
- b. *They felt that they had achieved these standards by self-effort and not the Lord's blessing.*

**They were wrong on both accounts:** Jesus reveals to them *five things about their true spiritual condition:*

1. **Wretched:** Unfortunate or pitiful. Far from being the spiritual elite that they saw themselves, as they were pitiful.
2. **Miserable:** They thought themselves in a state of bliss when in reality they were in a state of misery.
3. **Poor:** They said we are wealthy but in truth they were as beggars.
4. **Blind:** They were so blind that they did not recognize their own condition.
5. **Naked:** Like Anderson's tale of a king's new clothes, they were naked and not clothed in Christ's righteousness.

**The issue here is that they thought that the possession of certain things made them right before the Lord.**

### III. Vs. 18-22 I stand at the door and knock

Vs. 18 **Admonition:** Amazingly Jesus "*councils*" them instead of commanding them. In this admonition **Jesus reveals three things that they truly needed:**

- a. "*Gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich*": Gold in scripture symbolizes God's reward, so instead of seeking earthly treasures they needed to lay up treasures in heaven. **This church may have been rich in worldly possessions, but it was bankrupt when it comes to treasures in heaven.** There are two remarkable things about Jesus' admonition to "buy from Me":

1. That they are admonished to purchase anything from the Lord. In Isa 55:1 the Lord said to Israel, “*Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, **come, buy and eat**. Yes, come, buy wine and milk **without money and without price**.” What is the price since it is not money? **The price is trust in Jesus and not in themselves**, as the author of Hebrews puts it “*without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*”*
2. That which they are to purchase by faith in Him alone must also be “*refined in the fire*” which is **a clear reference to trials that their complacency had sought to avoid**.

**What they needed were rewards which come from walking by faith with the Lord during difficult times. Sanctification is the process by which the Lord allows us to go through difficult situations and circumstances so that we learn to NOT trust in anything other than Him.**

- b. “*White garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed*”: **They were clothed in their own filthy rags of self-righteousness, which was like a black wool garment, and they need the righteousness of Christ. For all their wealth remember Jesus saw them as naked before Him. Whenever our identity is found in something we have or have done we are always naked in His eyes and if we do not clothe ourselves in Christ He will expose our nakedness.**
- c. “*Anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see*”: The lack of Jesus in this church produced a spiritual blindness that had gone on to the extent that they failed to see

themselves as they really were. Based upon verse 20 they didn't even realize that Jesus was on the outside of the church knocking to come in.

Vs. 19 The motivation of Jesus' admonition was "love"! It is because of Jesus' love that He rebukes and disciplines (trains). Since this is a sign of His love towards them they ought to be zealous and repent. The word "*zealous*" is a Greek word that means warmth of desire; they need to rekindle the fire towards the Lord which was by way of repentance (turning away from anything that kept them from Him and towards Jesus).

Vs. 20-22 Appeal and Announcement: This verse is most often quoted out of its context, as Christians recite it for non-believers. Yet the words of Jesus were directed towards the professing Church! The truth is Jesus is on the outside of many hearts today that like the Laodiceans are professing believers. His knock was a desire to come in and have fellowship with them, it is the same heart that will leave the 99 and go after the one. How great is Jesus' love that the Church that had kept Him on the outside and were blinded to this fact; He comes and knocks on its door to gain entrance?

Vs. 21 Jesus heart was to take them from the dining room to the throne room and all He asked was that they hear His voice and open the door. To those who have shut Jesus out you have kept yourself from the presence of the One who loves you.

Vs. 22 In summation: To the seven Churches Jesus says:

- **Ephesus:** He speaks leaving our first love as devotion was sacrificed for doctrine.
- **Smyrna:** He speaks of not shrinking from the blessings that can only come through suffering.
- **Pergamos:** He speaks of not compromising on the truth.
- **Thyatira:** He warns of the danger of moral corruption because through false worship.

- **Sardis:** He speaks of being spiritually dead because of intellectual agreement without a personal relationship.
- **Philadelphia:** He encourages them to continue to cling to Him.
- **Laodicea:** He warns against self-sufficiency instead of Christ dependency.