



Seven: Letters of Revelation  
The Problem with Being a Thermometer  
Revelation 3:14-22  
06/23/2019

MAIN POINT

Jesus expects and deserves whole-hearted devotion.

INTRODUCTION

**In the past week, what did you do that most excited you? Did you have to do anything that you were apathetic about? If so, what?**

**How would you describe someone with an apathetic attitude?**

No one is excited about everything, but apathy in our relationship with Jesus has no place in the life of His disciples or the church. In fact, Jesus used extreme imagery when He spoke about those who failed to give Him their full affection. Jesus expects and deserves whole-hearted devotion from His people. As noted in the sermon, when we look at the church of Laodicea, it was in the perfect position to offer life and healing to its community, yet it did not! The church at Laodicea was the only church to which the Lord gave no compliment. Jesus reminded the church that He knew their circumstances and their activities. The problem with their deeds was that they were neither cold nor hot. The Lord's wish that they were cold or hot reminds us that passionless people are difficult to reach. People with wrong passions can be corrected; apathy is far more difficult to overcome. The letter therefore serves as a warning then and to us today of how God views apathy and those that will not have compassion towards His own creation.

UNDERSTANDING

| Have a volunteer read Revelation 3:14-17.

***<sup>14</sup> "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:***

***The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the <sup>[k]</sup>Beginning of the creation of God, says this:***

***<sup>15</sup> 'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. <sup>16</sup> So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will <sup>[l]</sup>spit you out of My mouth. <sup>17</sup> Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,***

A group of believers lived in the city of Laodicea, but all was not well in the church. Jesus rebuked the church because they had become spiritually lukewarm, valuing their material wealth more than Him. Their example of spiritual apathy provides a wake-up call to churches in every generation.

What does the Bible teach us about how we are to view our relationship with Jesus?

- Jesus is the originator of God's creation.
- Jesus has invited us to be fully full of Him. Read Colossians 1:27.
- When we reflect the environment and not our Source we become unpalatable. Read Matthew 5:13.

**In your own words:**

**How would you describe a church that is lukewarm?**

**What are the dangers of this type of spiritual apathy for a church and individual Christians?**

**What do you make of Jesus' statement in verse 16?**

"I am going to vomit you out of My mouth" reveals Jesus' intense disgust with the believers. The church's spiritual lethargy made Him sick. Whatever we may say about the Christian faith, we must understand that it cannot be a casual addition to a well-ordered life. The attitude that says, "I have my home, my job, my family, my hobbies, and, oh yes, my religion" is simply not an option. Commitment to Christ must be a passionate priority.

**What attitude about our spiritual lives should we have as the church?**

**What was the root of the Laodiceans' apathy (v. 17)?**

**Why is it so easy for material comforts to affect our relationship with God?**

**What other passages in Scripture warn against this?**

**What does Jesus tell them to do in verse 18? Why? What does this say about true wealth?**

| Have a volunteer read Revelation 3:18-19.

***18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. 19 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore, be zealous and repent.***

Though Jesus' message to the church at Laodicea contained no praise, it did contain grace. Their problem had a solution in Christ. He urged the believers to repent and open their lives to Him as Lord, promising that if they did so, they would enjoy spiritual victory and intimate fellowship with Him. Jesus could heal their spiritual blindness. Jesus' rebuke and discipline arose from His love for them—love for the most dispassionate of all the seven churches. Christians today also can wander off the path, but Christ's rebuke and discipline can lead us back to close fellowship with Him.

**In the sermon the point is made that discipline is loving. Read Hebrews 12:5-11 for additional insight.**

**Describe repentance in your own words. Why is this something God values so highly? What do we communicate to Him when we practice genuine repentance?**

**What does it look like to “eat with” Jesus (v. 20)? Why is this an appropriate picture of spiritual intimacy with Him?**

| Have a volunteer read Revelation 3:20-22.

***20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me. 21 He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. 22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”***

Sermon points:

- Jesus desires to dine with us (verse 20).
- Accepting the invitation to dine with the King leads to Kingdom inheritance (verse 21-22).

The letter to the church concludes with a positive and even urgent invitation to the Laodiceans to return to a close relationship with Him. The invitation is for believers to open the door of their hearts to their Lord for intimate fellowship. The image of a meal is important. Eating together is a sign of fellowship and complete acceptance. That is what Jesus earnestly offers and desires. Although Jesus’ invitation is to the church, if anyone repents, He will come to that person with the most majestic reward possible—to sit at the divine banquet with Jesus on His throne.

**Have you accepted the invitation to dine with Jesus? Not a physical meal, but in a personal relationship with Him as Savior (the only that can save you) and Lord (the Master of your life, thoughts, and desires).**

**When is the last time that you invited someone to “dine with Jesus?” How would that impact your apathy to share Jesus with others? What is holding you back from sharing Jesus? If the church remains silent, what impact could it have for the future?**

Final word:

Verse 22 closes vision one of Revelation. The words repeat the formula found at the end of the previous six letters, but they are a fitting conclusion to the entire opening vision. The same Jesus who, during His earthly ministry, commanded persons with ears to hear (Matt. 11:15; 13:9,43; Mark 4:9,23; Luke 8:8; 14:35), now during His heavenly ministry commands His churches to pay attention. He who has an ear, let Him hear reminds us that He does not force us to heed His words. Yet if the words of the risen Lord to John on Patmos are indeed what the Spirit says to the churches, then we neglect them to our peril.

## APPLICATION

**Are you lukewarm in your devotion to God? If so, how do you sense Him drawing you back to Himself? If not, think back on a time when you were. What did you learn from that season?**

**What causes a church to lose its fervor for ministry and outreach? How does such a church affect the surrounding neighborhood? How can we make sure that isn't happening at our church?**

**What would happen to spiritual apathy if people continually remained aware of God's greatness? How can we help each other remember we are in God?**