

Norman C. Schwab
Yacolt EV Free
July 25, 1999

Get Hot for God
Revelation 3:14-22

Memory Device plus

Lukewarm Laodicea you think your hot (wave fan in front of face)

You think your rich, but God says, "Not!" (rub thumb and forefingers)

Open your eyes, move close to the fire (Hands near a fire)

a meal with Jesus, be your desire (scoop your spoon)

Turn with me in your Bibles to Revelation chapter 3:14-18. The last of the seven churches in Revelation, Laodicea. It was situated about 45 miles s/e of our first church Ephesus. Laodicea completes the clockwise tour of these cities. It was situated on a high plateau right on the main highway from Ephesus to Syria, overlooking the Lycus river valley. Founded in 300 BC by Antiochus II This city had probably one of highest per capita income of the whole bunch. It was a materially wealthy place to live and center of banking for Asia Minor. (How wealthy was it?) So wealthy in fact that when an earthquake in AD 60 devastated the area, it turned down Romes offer for Federal rebuilding relief money. Laodicea was well known for two products. It was world famous for jet black wool and at the temple of Asclepius there was a very well known school of medicine. Here they produced a world famous eye salve called Tehphra Phrygia. It was distributed in tablet form and then when needed, it was crushed and mixed with a small amount of water and applied to the infected eye area.

Laodicea had a close connection with two other nearby cities, and depended on each other, kind of like the Tri-cities. These nearby cities were Colossae and Hieropolis. The Bible mentions there close relationship in Colossians chapter 4. 13-18. Laodicea depended on these other two cities for their water supply. The poor availability was the Achilles heal for Laodicea. In New Testament times, hot water was piped through stone water pipes. These were square stones with a hole cut out of the middle and the edges sealed with an adhesive. The water came from a hot spring near Hieropolis about 6 miles away from Laodicea...but by the time the water reached the city it was no longer hot..but

lukewarm. The cities cold water was piped in from a refreshing cool spring near Colossae, but by the time it reached the city of Laodicea, it too was lukewarm. The wealthy citizens of Laodicea might proudly show off their two water facets in their sink, but the guests quickly realized that both hot and cold water faucets poured out the same temperature. Both delivered lukewarm water.

As has been the case with many of these Revelation churches, sometimes historical background of a city or place can lend insight into the word pictures Christ was using to try and convey truth to the people who were there. Read with me in Revelation chapter 3 (READ)

Verse 14. To the angel or messenger, the pastor of the church of Laodicea, Jesus writes first establishing His authority to speak the truth in love. Jesus describes himself as the Amen. The true word. The last word. The divine and holy exclamation point. The establisher of all God's promises. Jesus is the faithful and true witness. The One who tells no lies. He is the true witness who describes things exactly as He sees it. He is the Beginning of the creation of God. Jesus was there at the very beginning. Not as the first created being, but the One who began the creation, God Himself.as the first chapter of John describes. Jesus Christ is the Word. In the beginning was the Word and the word was with God and the Word was God..all things came into being by Him, and apart from Jesus the Word..nothing came into being. This One we would do well to listen what He has to say.

Have you ever had such an exhausting day...that you landed in your bed, didn't care what you were wearing and fell asleep dead to the world? Then there is this very distant and dim awareness that the kids are crying...or the dogs are barking...the alarm is blaring...or the phone is ringing..or a mosquito is dive bombing your ear. But you are so tired you just don't care. You knew that if roused just a little bit, you would have to admit your bed had become mosquito heaven. You would have to respond to the screams and rings and stings that shout. Wake up and get up and deal with me. But we do not want to know the awful truth, so we roll over, cover our head with the pillow and hope it will all go away. So we try to dream that reality is sleep and the annoying interruption is merely a dream. Apathy is like sleeping through a mosquito attack. Waking up means we can no longer escape into a dream world, but must

deal with reality. That reality can be unpleasant to confront...no wonder so many wish they could stay in bed all morning.

Laodicea is a church Jesus describes as lukewarm. Not hot. Not cold. Just blah. It lacks the fire in the gut for God. It is missing that burning desire to be with Him and spend time in His Word. If you find yourself this morning asleep and lukewarm for God...We must wake up or we will soon break up. In order to wake up we must realize we truly are in denial and asleep in lukewarm water.

In March 1994 a German tourist checked into a hotel near Miami International airport. That night in his room he noticed a foul odor. But travelers must put up with a certain amount of discomfort, so he slept in the bed that night without a complaint to the front desk. However, in the next morning the stench became only worse, so he reported the smell upon check out. The cleaning maid discovered the source of the odor later that morning. Under the bed she discovered a corpse. Sometimes we think the easiest thing to do is just ignore the problem and hope it will go away. We always look at others and see problems, But if we realized how serious and close to home our problems are we would take action.

Have you been finding the Bible somewhat dull to read. Have you become unmotivated to pray? Do you find the preaching of God's word boring and irrelevant. (no one say amen to that one) Has worship for you become kind of ho-hum for you? Are you finding yourself more interested in critiquing the quality of the worship than being captivated by the One we are worshipping? How long has it been since you got away all by yourself and just spent some time alone with God? How long has it been since you marveled at seeing God work in a powerful way? How long has it been since you have shared your faith with someone who needs to know our Jesus? Has the doubt become to creep in? Has sin begun to wedge its sharp little fingers into your desires and affections? Have you lost any desire to be with God's people on Sunday mornings? Have you lost the fire that once burned hot for God? This morning do we find ourselves lukewarm. If so...then this message is from God directly to you and me this morning. My purpose this morning is to wake up God's people out of our complacency and renew a fresh zeal for God. We can no longer be content to lounge in lukewarm self-delusion that things are

going just find with us and God. We can no longer be content to say, "I'm just as good, probably better than that guy or gal over there" We can no longer bathe in lukewarm attitudes that say, " look at all the work I'm doing for the church...I must be on fire." I gave twice as much as the average person in this church." I've already put in my time...let someone else shoulder the load for a change."

The remedy for a lukewarm heart begins with a first step. Ist step. Admit your not hot. Can you take a quick evaluation and silently say before God...I admit it, I'm not hot." Jesus writes to the church in Laodicea. You may think your spiritually on fire..but you are not even hot, your lukewarm. As we have looked at several of these churches we see that the Lord looks on apostasy, false teaching, and gets angry. But when the Lord looks and sees indifference and apathy toward the holy things of God..Jesus gets sick. Complacency make God vomit. Look at verse 16. I will spit you out of my mouth."

We will never get right with God, never get out of our complacency as long as we are confident we have nothing to confess, no sin to address, convinced that we are just about as good as the next person. Convinced that we are spiritually quite full and mature. We must open our eyes to our nakedness and see how truly spiritually naked we are.

V. 17 "You say I am rich, have need of nothing and you are self-deluded. you don't even see how wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked you really are."

The Laodicean church had all the latest equipment. They could afford the beautiful stain glass cathedrals. Their pastors all drove brand new Mercedes automobiles. Big buildings, Big budgets. Big programs..They were a great ministry machine. V. 15 Jesus says " I know your works."But..there is no zeal, no passion for Me" You think your spiritually rich just because you are materially wealthy...but you are poor. You think you've arrived at contentment and satisfaction..but you are in reality wretched and miserable. It is you bad you don't even know how bad off you really are. You think your so smart and filled with spiritual insight...but you can't even see..your blind and you don't even know it.

Remember Han Christian Anderson's children's book, The Emperor's New Clothes? Two con men came into the kingdom purporting

to being the finest tailors in all the world, selling garments fit only for royalty. So special were these clothes that only those of greatness and intelligence could actually view and see these clothes. Of course these new clothes required expensive cloth and gold thread to sew. The two con-men made great show of pretending to sew the clothes and of course the emperor could not admit that he was unable to see the clothes for to do so would be to expose his own stupidity. So he along with his whole staff acted as if these were the finest clothes ever. He even wore the new clothes in a parade where the people of the kingdom ooooh and awwwwed at such fine clothes...none of which they could see. It was not until a young boy stood up and admitted. The king is naked. The emperor has no clothes. Are you ready to admit a problem that you've been ignoring far to long are you prepared to admit to God. God I'm not hot for you. Your spiritual condition may have been obvious to those around you for a long time, but it does little good until your realize it and are ready to do something about it. Ready to say, "I'm lukewarm and have lost the fire. That is the first step. Admit your not hot.

Jesus utilized some pointed word pictures to expose the spiritual weakness in the believers at Laodicea. Everytime they reached for their water facets wanting some hot water for coffee and getting only lukewarm water they were reminded..Get hot for God because your water certainly is not hot.

Jesus says in verse 15 I wish you were either cold or hot. Lukewarm makes be want to puke. Why? If you are cold spiritually then you are unmoved by the gospel and uninterested in spiritual things. You are more than content to feed the natural man. You have no desire to come to church, you think that is quite a waste of a great day off. A waste of time and money. If you are hot spiritually, it is quite the opposite. Everyone around you knows that God is number one. Even the neighbors dog knows that you love God. You can't wait to spend time in His word. You are looking for those open doors of opportunity to share. You come to every prayer meeting. You truly miss church when unable to attend. You are open and ready for God to change any part of your life that He wants to. All that you have, time, talents and treasure are ready for Him to use. You see God's power at work on a consistent basis. Their is a pervading joy that people can sense when they have spent time with

you because of the time you have spent with God. That describes someone who is spiritually hot. How long has it been since you have been hot for God? Too long?

The reason God doesn't like the lukewarm state is that indifference is not a transitional state, it is a final state. Lukewarm isn't going anywhere. Now cold left unfed will become warmer. Hot must be continually kept near the heat source to stay warm. But lukewarm...it's just like an overcooked noodle...it just sits and sits it will stay lukewarm. It is afraid to get very excited about God and spiritual things. Lukewarm Christians are afraid to be labeled by their friends as a fanatic or extremist. Sure they come to church. They sing the words. They toss a few bucks in the offering plate. They do their service duties...but there is no enthusiastic heart for God. They exist and that's about it. They will allow themselves to jump up and down about a sports game, or one of their favorite music groups. They will weep at their favorite book or movie...but they exhibit no emotion for God. They are merely trudging through the motions. They are like the emperor parading through the town thinking he is spiritually wealthy, but not realizing how naked he really is. We may fool the people around us by our performances here at church, but appearances can not mask reality before God.

Because the Laodicean church was materially wealthy it assumed it needed nothing. But it was spiritually impoverished. Does the rich American church need a major wake up call? Yes. The Laodicean church assumed it could see and discern with great wisdom, but Jesus exposed their blindness. They assumed because they had the famous Phrygian Tephra powder to cure blindness that they needed nothing...but that powder did nothing to improve their spiritual eyesight. They were so proud of their two hot and cold water faucets, but that did not mean they got different temperature water. In fact it all ran out lukewarm.

Are you satisfied with your spiritual temperature? Better yet, do you think God would be satisfied with your spiritual temperature. If he was to take His divine thermometer and stick it in your heart, what would the temperature be? You might reply, Its going to be a whole lot hotter than everybody else around here. No. We are comparing against others we are using God's thermometer. Ist step it to admit your not hot for God. Spurgeon once said that complacency is the death of

repentance." One who is complacent, indifferent, sees no need to repent, no need for change. 1st step. Admit your not hot.

2nd step. Get hot for God Here is Jesus admit, his remedy for the Lukewarm Christian in verse 18. I advise you to buy from Me. Lukewarm Christian's buy from the wrong salesman, the con-artist tailors of the world that tell us how wonderful we will look if only we spend our time talent and treasure on ____ you fill in the blank. Only when it comes up empty to we realized we've been ripped off. We've been naked and exposed all along. Only then do we realize we've been buying from the wrong person. Jesus says, "Buy from me." Buy the solid. Buy the investment that doesn't wildly fluctuate with market conditions. Buy God that is refined by fire. I don't like that refined by fire part because that means God wants to hurt me so that I will forge godly character. As God takes us through tough times and we respond in a Godly way it makes us strong and we can help others. Godly character of Gold is forged in the crucible of difficult times. Someone told me once. It is very doubtful whether God can use someone greatly until he has allowed them to hurt deeply." I don't like that at all...but I do want to be used greatly by God and know that growth rarely occurs where there is no challenge and life is smooth and problem free.

I was talking with Lauren this week about weight lifting and He said in order to get stronger, one must first tear down the muscle..put it past the point of pain, feed the muscle the protein it needs, give it a season of rest and then push again. The work out isn't all that fun..but the results are great. Growth comes from the struggle.

It's just like getting a potted plant whose roots are ingrown and impacted in the circular pot. It might seem easier to just dig a whole and stick the plant in the ground...but far better to pull out some of the roots and entwine the ingrown root system. You may break a few roots in the process, but it opens up the roots so they can breathe and grow. Getting hot for Sometimes involves hot circumstances. Not fun at the time but we love the beauty of the results they produce. When we respond Godly, seeking to buy that gold from God we can even look back and say. God, that was tough but I'm glad I went through that..I would never be where I am today if I hadn't.

Isaiah 55: 1 "Ho everyone that thirstiest come ye to the water and he that has no money come buy and eat. Why do you spend you money on that which is not bread and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully and eat what is good and delight yourself in abundance." God has a difference business plan than the rest of the world. You don't even need money to buy spiritual gold from God. He wants us to invest in spiritual long term reward and stop wasting our time talent and treasure on that which does not satisfy our deepest longings.

Jesus continues in verse 18. Buy white garments to clothe your nakedness. A city know for black wool and black garments. God says you can't produce on your own what is needed to cover your shame and nakedness. Put on white garments. Revelation 19:8 Talks about believers at the marriage supper of the lamb wearing white garments. These garments are described as the righteous acts of the saints. Now we know that salvation is given us by God and their is no work we can do to obtain so great a salvation. But this is talking about the process of sanctification of our righteous acts performed by us through the power of his grace. I think some of us need to get working on this area or else we may end up with some pretty skimpy costumes come the judgment day when God's refining fire will burn off all the fluff and left revealed that with is righteous and worthwhile.

If you realize you are not as hot as you would like to be. After you have admitted this to God..it's time to add to your prayer. God I need to get hot...because I'm not. I need to get closer to the heat source. I realize the problem was not that heat source left me, but that I left the heat source. God reveal where I have move further away from that heat source. God maybe I have put things in front of the flame that have blocked your heat from getting through me. Habits? Sin areas? Affections? Desires? Where God have I subtly blocked your heat from warming my heart? Show me because I see now I'm open to change. God if there be some refining you want to keep doing God give me strength to respond well and not miss out on the godly character you want to forge into my life. I want to get hot for you.

Verse 19 is an interesting encouragement for those who are under the loving hand of God's discipline. Whom I love I discipline. If you were

not part of God's family..there would be no discipline. The fact that he is wooing you back and loves enough to expose and deal with sin means in fact that God has great love for you. I believe one of the toughest but most loving things a parent can do for their children is to discipline and confront their child. Parents that are lazy and love themselves more than their kids will always let bad behavior slide they will not love enough to discipline. God loves His own too much not to discipline.

This leads into the final step of renewing a fresh walk with God out of a lukewarm spiritual blah. Step one. Admit your not hot. Step two. Get hot for God. How? Step three. Spend time next to the heat source. Open your eyes move close to the fire and meal with Jesus be your desire. A very famous verse 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. This verse is often used as an invitation to unbelievers to come to Christ, but the context reveals this is an invitation to believers to open the door and renew their relationship with Jesus. Jesus is always a gentleman. He doesn't force his way in. He stands there and knocks patiently. One who is spiritually naked doesn't want to open the door. They don't want to be exposed. We don't want to be told where we are messing up.. so we try to block out the sound of the voice and knock and hope He will just go away.

Some of you have heard the joke about the pastor going to visits a lady and he thought he heard someone home and so he called out and continued to knock but after awhile gave up, jotted Revelation 3:20 down on the card, stuck it in the door and left." That Sunday the lady pressed the same card into his hand and on it was written another verse Genesis 3:10. "Behold, I heard the sound of your voice, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid myself" There is a theological connection to this joke. Spiritually naked people don't want to spend much time with Jesus, His Word or His people. Because they feel exposed and refuse to deal with there sin and separateness. The problem is not that God has ignored and stiff armed us, but that we given god the brush-off. The music inside our heart is cranked up so loud we can't hear the knock at the front door, we can't hear his voice calling out to us. But Jesus keeps on knocking. waiting. calling out our name.

Where are you at this morning? How is your spiritual temperature? Are you satisfied with your spiritual walk with Him? In this present age Jesus doesn't force himself on anybody..but He is always there.. waiting ready to come in, the neat thing is if you are looking around in your life and say. I can't invite god in for a meal...this place is a mess. God wants to come in and He will even help you clean up before you sit down for a meal. It may feel uncomfortable at first, but once you get used to it, it will seem quite natural for Jesus to come regularly into your living room and vacuum up all the dirt and Clean off last nights food from the kitchen counter, sweep the floors and put it in a trash bag and haul it out to the curb. They He and you can sit down together and enjoy a great meal together. That can only happen if you have begun a relationship with Him. Are you ready? Are you ready to admit you are a sinner? Jesus died and rose again and you desperately need and want him in you life to be the master. To call the shots and begin to live a new life the way god intended? If so bow with me and pray this prayer. (Pray) For those who are already believers, this passage is for us. As the worship team comes to sing...some here need to some business with a lukewarm heart.