

SUNDAY

February 19, 2012

READ: Revelation 3:14-21

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: Laodicea is located in what is now Turkey. During the period of Roman supremacy it grew to wealth and prominence. It was a military outpost and a trade center. Some of its wealth came from the wool of its famous black sheep and its production of a poultice that was widely sought for the treatment of eye ailments. It was widely known as a banking center and the business of money changing prospered. Laodicea minted its own coins several centuries before Christ.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER: How does the Laodicean context material above compare to life in our own community and nation? Can you picture yourself living in that time and place? How do you think your values would be different from what your values are now? Does the word of God in this passage from Revelation speak with equal relevance to the people of the first century and those of the 21st century?

PRAY: Isaiah 40:8 says “The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.” As this week opens, spend a time of worship to God that His word is eternal, and that He can speak to you across the millennia.

MONDAY

February 20, 2012

READ: Revelation 3:14-21 (Focus: verse 14)

OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS: How does John refer to Jesus in verse 14? What is the meaning of the three phrases he uses?

KEY CONCEPT: John lets the Laodiceans know that the words that follow have authority and are to be given great importance.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER: “Amen” is an exclamation expressing agreement with a statement. At the end of a prayer it expresses the genuineness or truth of the petition or praise. Amen means “truly.”

How do the phrases used here relate to your understanding of who Jesus is? Does that give you comfort? Why or why not? If he were speaking directly to you, how would this description make you feel?

PRAY: The phrases describing Jesus describe one who is true, faithful, with ultimate power and authority. It is this Jesus who we owe our lives, for he has laid his down on our behalf to secure our salvation. Today, spend time contemplating that the one who fits these words was so humble as to die for you. Worship Jesus with a heart of praise and thanksgiving.

TUESDAY

February 21, 2012

READ: Revelation 3:14-21 (Focus: verses 15-16)

OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS: What do you think Jesus means by the church being neither hot nor cold? What would a hot church look like? A cold church? What is the consequence of just being lukewarm? What do you think Jesus means by the metaphor of being spit out of his mouth?

KEY CONCEPT: Being lukewarm is akin to “playing church,” going through the motions without true conviction or passion. It is dishonoring to God to treat him in this way. He is not deceived, as he knows and judges the heart of people.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER: How would you overlay Jesus’ description of the Laodicean church on what that would look like today in an American church? Do you see signs of that description in any fashion at McLane Church? How does your personal approach to living for Christ impact the church as a whole? Are there aspects of “lukewarmness” in your faith that you would like to change?

PRAY: If you answered yes to the last question above, spend time in prayer today, asking God to help you move from lukewarm to hot in your pursuit of being Christ-like. Ask him to make you unsatisfied with just talking the talk of faith...and to give you a desire to walk the walk in the power (and with the guidance) of the Holy Spirit.

WEDNESDAY

February 22, 2012

READ: Revelation 3:14-21 (Focus: verse 17)

OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS: Review the historical context section from Sunday’s devotion. What are some of the ways in which the Laodiceans may have acquired their wealth. What is the impact on our sense of security that comes from financial riches? How does Jesus turn that perspective on its head?

KEY CONCEPT: Humanity draws security from financial prosperity, fame, and power. The truth is that these things are fragile and will not transcend eternity. People who base their sense of well being on them delude themselves.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER: : Read 1 Samuel 16:7, dealing with how God selected David to be king. How does that compare to today’s focus verse in Revelation? Proverbs 11:1-8 give additional perspective on security. Where do you find your sense of security? How has that changed over your lifetime? Do you suspect that what you think is giving your life a strong foundation may in fact be unstable? If so, what needs to change?

PRAY: The circumstances of life, and the troubles of the world, are enough to cause sleepless nights. Take time today to give these to God in prayer, asking for His peace, and for His help in recalibrating your perspective on what can bring you a sense of security that transcends the uncertainties that you face.

THURSDAY

February 23, 2012

READ: Revelation 3:14-21 (Focus: verse 18)

OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS: Review the historical context from Sunday's devotion. Compare the things that helped make the Laodiceans prosperous (black wool & poultice) to what Jesus says in verse 18. Was he relating clearly to these people? What is the "gold refined in the fire" that Jesus is talking about? (1 Peter 1:3-8 may offer some help.) How is Jesus challenging the Laodiceans?

KEY CONCEPT: Jesus challenges us to get out of our comfort zones, putting at risk that which we feel gives us security and well being, in order to secure for ourselves the true wealth that not material in nature. See Matthew 6:19-21.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER: Think of the trappings of material wealth that many organizations use to impress people...things such as lavish buildings. When you consider McLane Church, are we using our money in a way to impress ourselves and others...or to achieve the vision and mission that God has given us of transforming a region and removing barriers to Christ? Are you personally allocating your resources (time, talent, treasure) in a way that allows God to use you for His purposes? Do you sense you are storing up treasure on earth or in heaven?

PRAY: Pray over Matthew 6:19-21 today, asking God to help you understand its application in your life.

FRIDAY

February 24, 2012

READ: Revelation 3:14-21 (Focus: verse 19-20)

OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS: What are the components of Jesus' love in verse 19? What is the effect of rebuke and discipline? What happens when we don't experience the consequences of our behavior? How does Jesus want us to react to the thought of His discipline? What does he promise us if we repent? What does it mean to have Jesus come and eat with us?

KEY CONCEPT: Our sin nature makes us unable to be holy and good without correction. Like parental correction and instruction, God's use of consequences in disciplining us helps us to learn. If we do not deceive ourselves, and have a heart of repentance, we may save ourselves from learning lessons "the hard way."

QUESTIONS TO PONDER: Which lessons of life have you had to learn the hard way? Looking back, can you see where you had an opportunity to make a better choice than the one you made? How can you use that experience to help you make better decisions in the future? What is God's place in your decision making?

PRAY: Jesus is our biggest cheerleader. He wants to have close relationship with us (see verse 20)...but he waits for our invitation. Having a heart of repentance for our sin helps to invite Jesus into our lives. Speak to God of these things in your prayer today.

SATURDAY

February 25, 2012

READ: Revelation 3:14-21 (Focus: verse 21-22)

OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS: What does it mean to be victorious in today's verses? Over what? What was Jesus victorious over?

KEY CONCEPT: Jesus gives us the ability to be victorious over what Satan uses to bring us down.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER: Read 1 Corinthians 15: 50-58. How can you apply that passage to help you become victorious over what you struggle with in life? Read Ephesians 6:10-18. Jot down the components of God's armor that will protect you.

Do you truly want to be victorious...or is the lure of what this life offers stronger than the appeal of God to live for Him and to love your neighbor?

PRAY: The material world offers lots of glitzy things that are tempting to value highly in our minds. Having the mind of Christ means to see past the "things of this world" into what is truly important and transcendent. Today be honest with God in prayer, telling him how you feel about this choice, and giving him the opportunity to speak clearly to your heart about it.

Personal Devotional
Guide

February 19 -25, 2012

McLane Church
Erie County, PA

