



# SEVEN DAYS WITH THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF REVELATION 2-3

# INTRODUCTION

What would you do if you received a handwritten letter from Jesus? In many ways you have! Jesus' letters to the seven churches in Asia Minor are an incredible resource for Christians who want to live ready for the return of Jesus. In each letter, Jesus reveals something about Himself to the pastors and people of the church, along with commendations and confrontations. These letters apply to us as well and they will help us live in a way that is pleasing to the Lord.

Over the next seven days, we want to invite you to study the letters to the seven churches. We believe that you will be encouraged, challenged, and convicted—all of which will help you to live ready for the return of Jesus.

As you study these two chapters, drink in the background information and then look for crossovers into your own life. The application and encouragement will lead you in a direction that will matter for eternity.

Each chapter of this study will have 3 portions: What does the text tell us about Jesus? What does the text say to the churches? What is Jesus asking me to do? Our prayer is that this study will help you live ready for the return of Jesus.

# DAY 1 - EPHESUS

Welcome to Ephesus, a port city on the Western Coast of Turkey. The ancient city of Ephesus exists now only in ruins, but in the first century, Ephesus was the most important city in western Turkey. Once a bustling port city, Ephesus now sits 7 miles inland due to silting by the river (Cayster River). Today, Ephesus sits in the shadow of the popular port city of Kusadasi. Ephesus was known for being a great export city; moving goods from the entirety of Turkey through to the Roman empire. Since it was such a great export city, it also became a landing spot for Roman armies and dignitaries traveling throughout Asia Minor. The roman road that ran throughout the city to the port known as the Arcadian way was seventy feet wide and lined with magnificent columns. Ephesus was cosmopolitan, wealthy, and bustling with people. Home to an estimated 250,000 people, it was the 3rd largest known city in the Ancient world (Rome and Alexandria were larger).

The church in Ephesus was planted by Paul. **You can read about it in Acts 19.** Paul went to Ephesus, found a few believers there, and then disciplined them. While there, he spent over 2 years teaching, lecturing, and discussing about Jesus. This had such an impact that Acts 19:10 says:

*"This went on for the next two years, so that people throughout the province of Asia—both Jews and Greeks —heard the word of the Lord."*

What an exciting thing to be a part of - the movement of God in such powerful ways that everyone was hearing about Jesus! This was Ephesus!

One final piece of information on Ephesus has to do with the local trash heap. Not exactly a lovely place, however it was here that the Christians in Ephesus originally developed a reputation for loving God and loving others. Often if a family in Ephesus had a child that was not wanted, they would bring them here and leave them to die of exposure...maybe they were severely handicapped or maybe the mother gave birth to a daughter when the father wanted a son. This was openly accepted and practiced in Ephesus. But the Christians, out of a heart of love and adoption, took these abandoned children in and raised them. Likely this is why the Ephesian church was so influential for a long time. No one could argue with their sacrificial love. However, over time this practice stopped. It seems that the practice stopped because the Christians here in Ephesus began to substitute knowledge and wisdom for faith and love. They knew a lot but they didn't love others anymore. This is why Jesus calls them to repent. Let's look at the message to Ephesus.

**1** "Write this letter to the angel of the church in Ephesus. This is the message from the one who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the one who walks among the seven gold lampstands: **2** "I know all the things you do. I have seen your hard work and your patient endurance. I know you don't tolerate evil people. You have examined the claims of those who say they are apostles but are not. You have discovered they are liars. **3** You have patiently suffered for me without quitting. **4** "But I have this complaint against you. You don't love me or each other as you did at first! **5** Look how far you have fallen! Turn back to me and do the works you did at first. If you don't repent, I will come and remove your lampstand from its place among the churches. **6** But this is in your favor: You hate the evil deeds of the Nicolaitans, just as I do. **7** "Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what He is saying to the churches. To everyone who is victorious I will give fruit from the tree of life in the paradise of God." (Revelation 2:1-7)

**What does this letter teach us about Jesus?**

(Note - the seven stars are references to the pastors in each church, and the seven lampstands are references to the seven churches He is writing to. See Revelation 1:19-20)

---

---

---

---

**What does the letter say to the church?**

Where does He commend them?

---

---

---

---

Where does He speak against them?

---

---

---

---

You see, knowledge and belief is never a substitute for love. This is why Jesus calls them to repent. They were to be lights in the world, and yet lately their faith had grown stale and inward focused. It's here that Jesus says, "You started so well with compassion for others and a desire to help others know me. Where has that gone?"

**Doctrinal purity and loyalty can never be a substitute for love. Since Jesus is Lord, love must rule our lives!**

**What is Jesus asking you to do?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

4 Areas of love:

- Love for the Lord
- Love for each other
- Love for the lost
- Love for your leaders

**Today I need to demonstrate love toward:**

---

---

---

**Today I am going to pray for an opportunity to share Jesus with:**

---

---

---

# DAY 2 - SMYRNA

Welcome to the modern day city of Izmir, the city that was once known as Smyrna. Today, Izmir is the third largest city in Turkey with approximately 4 million people calling it home. Even today, Izmir is a beautiful place and a busy place hosting Turkey's 2nd largest port. The city of Smyrna during the 1st Century was a very important city with just under 100,000 people living there. Smyrna was important for a few reasons: it's wealth and influence and it's allegiance to Rome. Now, while Smyrna was very wealthy, that wasn't the only reason for it's influence. The city was very proud of it's history of poets, authors and other important citizens. Homer, the author of the Odyssey and the Illiad, was born here in Smyrna. Second, Smyrna was known for being very faithful to Rome and because of that faithfulness they were often left alone and not hindered by the Roman empire.

There are at least two major pieces of background information to the letter that Jesus sent to the church at Smyrna. These important archaeological and historical truths would have informed how this small band of Christians in Smyrna would have understood His message. The first of the two has to do with the city itself. When Jesus wrote to this church He talked about suffering, death and resurrection and He talked about rewards such as crowns.

Each of these ideas finds some background in the city of Smyrna. First, Smyrna was a city that had endured significant suffering. While the city was likely started in the 9th Century BC, it was completely destroyed in 600 BC and left in ashes. The city was later rebuilt, but laid in ashes for nearly 300 years. In fact, many have said that Smyrna was a city that was "resurrected". Alexander the Great is said to have had a dream telling him to rebuild the city while sleeping on the hill called Mt. Pagus—just outside the city. So even



within the history of the city there has been suffering and a sort of resurrection. They would have identified with these themes.

The name Smyrna comes from the word “myrrh” which was a costly perfume in the ancient world that was also used to embalm and perfume dead bodies. In John 19:39 we read that myrrh was used to embalm Jesus’ body, and He was also given myrrh by the magi in Matthew 2. This particular meaning has an undertone that reminds of the fact that Smyrna would and did suffer similar to Jesus. As a result, Jesus’ letter to them revolves around the themes of death and resurrection.

Second, here in Smyrna we find the first city in Asia Minor to build a Temple to the Roman goddess Roma. In order to show their allegiance to Rome, they built this temple in 195 BC. About 200 years later, Smyrna became a center of emperor worship, having won the privilege from the Roman Senate in A.D. 24 of building the first temple in honor of Tiberius. Under Domitian (the emperor at the time of the writing of Revelation) emperor worship had become compulsory for every Roman citizen on threat of death. Once a year a citizen had to burn incense on the altar to the godhead of Caesar, after which they were issued a certificate. Without which you were unable to do many necessary things in Smyrna—you couldn’t buy food from vendors, you couldn’t be involved in leadership in the city and you certainly couldn’t own a business. Life as a Christian who stayed faithful was very difficult. Obviously, for many Christians, this was impossible to do!

So, what does Jesus say to the church at Smyrna? Let’s take a look.

**8**“Write this letter to the angel of the church in Smyrna. This is the message from the One who is the First and the Last, who was dead but is now alive: **9**“I know about your suffering and your poverty—but you are rich! I know the blasphemy of those opposing you. They say they are Jews,



but they are not, because their synagogue belongs to Satan. **10** Don't be afraid of what you are about to suffer. The devil will throw some of you into prison to test you. You will suffer for ten days. But if you remain faithful even when facing death, I will give you the crown of life. **11** "Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what He is saying to the churches. Whoever is victorious will not be harmed by the second death. (Revelation 2:8-11)

### **What does this letter teach us about Jesus?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

### **What does the letter say to the church?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

What are your thoughts about the following statement? "Jesus is eternally in charge but that doesn't eliminate suffering"

---

---

---

**Why all the suffering? Take a look at these ways that God uses suffering.**

- It may be disciplinary (1 Corinthians 11:30-32; Hebrews 12)
- It may be preventative (2 Corinthians 12:7)
- It may teach us what we couldn't have otherwise learned (Hebrews 5:8)
- In general it produces change in us (Romans 5:3-5)
- Often through suffering we bear a better testimony for Christ (Acts 9:16)

**What is Jesus asking you to do? How can you focus on faithfulness and not just what you feel?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

*"For eighty-six years I have served Christ and He has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who has saved me?"*  
- Polycarp of Smyrna -

# DAY 3 - PERGAMUM

Welcome to Pergamum, Turkey, a city set approximately 65 miles north of Smyrna and 10 miles inland from the Aegean Sea. Bergama is the modern city that used to be known as Pergamum. Today, Bergama is one of the most amazing archaeological sites in all of Turkey. While Pergamum was not as important of a commercial city as Ephesus and Smyrna, it was likely even more important in two areas: politics and religion. If ever there were a city that we might want to avoid it was Pergamum. In other words, if Ephesus was the "New York City" of Asia, then Pergamum was the Washington D.C. It became a very important city after the death of Alexander the Great in 133 B.C. when the last King of Pergamum, Attalus III gave his territory and his city to the Romans. This was a really good day for the Romans, because at that point they controlled everything around the Mediterranean Sea, Aegean Sea and the Black Sea except this skinny land bridge that we now call Turkey. When this area was gifted to Rome, Pergamum became a very important political center. Rome had power in the west, and they set up power in the east from Pergamum. This is the city to which Jesus writes in Revelation 2:12-17.

There are three pieces of background to note: First, the religious environment. Many people from all over the area traveled to Pergamum for two very well known religious temples—the temple to Zeus and the Asclepion (a temple to the goddess asclepius known for healing). These were the most prominent religious temples in the city but certainly not the only ones. You could come to Pergamum for just about any issue you might have. Zeus was the king of mount Olympus where all the gods and goddesses lived according to Greek Mythology. So here you could worship the one known as king of kings. If you were in need of a good crop and

provision for your family you would visit the Temple to the goddess Demeter. Here you could make an offering to a goddess who could supposedly guarantee food and a good crop. If you were in need of wisdom you could go worship the goddess Athena, the Roman goddess of wisdom and strategy. If you were simply needing a break you could go and get drunk and have fun in worship to Dionysus, the god of wine and festivities. This temple was much like the modern promises of Las Vegas or simply many other vacation locations for us today. Last but not least was the Asclepion, a temple dedicated to Asclepius. If you were sick you could visit here and the priests would place you in a coma-like state by drugging you. In doing so, you would supposedly have dreams about a cure for your ailment. Often times snakes would be allowed to crawl over you while you slept and that was supposedly to help heal. There was a very real spiritual battle between the demonic spirit of Asclepius and the followers of Jesus. The question was, who is the real savior and healer—Jesus or Asclepius? Jesus came and truly healed people but healing in Jesus' name could get the believers in serious trouble. It would be a direct challenge to their god. Even though Asclepius had shrines in other places, he was really recognized as the Pergamum deity.

Second, Imperial Cult worship found its headquarters here in Pergamum. The Imperial Cult worship involves sacrificing in the name of the emperors of Rome and declaring them to Lord and Savior. In the year 29 B.C. Pergamum became the first city in Asia to have a Temple dedicated to the worship of the Roman emperor. Similar to what was occurring in Smyrna, emperor worship started with Caesar Augustus but found its stride under Nero, Domitian and Trajan. Citizens of Pergamum and any people traveling to the city would be required to offer incense to the image of the emperors and openly declare "Caesar is Lord", which created a problem for a Christian who believed that Caesar was a man and Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior. It is likely because of the authority and enforcement of this emperor worship here in Pergamum that Jesus called Pergamum the city where Satan has his throne. This was a

major threat to the pursuit of a life following Jesus. If you were going to be faithful to Jesus you could not openly declare that Caesar or any other "god" was Lord and Savior, and if you didn't you could very easily lose your citizenship, your business, your home and even your life as many did. It was here in Pergamum that many new believers had to decide, will I follow Jesus and be faithful or will I blend in?

Third, In Revelation 1:16 John describes Jesus and says, **"In His right hand He held seven stars, and coming out of His mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance."** In His letter to the church at Pergamum Jesus describes Himself as the one who has the sharp, double-edged sword and He clearly states that if they don't repent He will come to them and use His sword against them. This is very vivid imagery and frankly it's a little scary. Jesus seems to be saying that in the midst of the great city, a city with great power because of the seat of the Roman empire, He is the one with the authority. His word rules and what He says goes. So, no matter what the Roman empire says, don't compromise and He will take care of you. What a timely message for those of us who live in a time when standing for Christ is becoming harder and harder to do without compromise. But Jesus is the one who really has authority. Who will you follow?

Now, let's look at the letter:

**12** "Write this letter to the angel of the church in Pergamum. This is the message from the One with the sharp two-edged sword: **13** "I know that you live in the city where Satan has his throne, yet you have remained loyal to Me. You refused to deny Me even when Antipas, my faithful witness, was martyred among you there in Satan's city.

**14** "But I have a few complaints against you. You tolerate some among you whose teaching is like that of Balaam, who showed Balak how to trip up the people of Israel. He taught

them to sin by eating food offered to idols and by committing sexual sin. **15** In a similar way, you have some Nicolaitans among you who follow the same teaching.

**16** Repent of your sin, or I will come to you suddenly and fight against them with the sword of My mouth. **17** "Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what He is saying to the churches. To everyone who is victorious I will give some of the manna that has been hidden away in heaven. And I will give to each one a white stone, and on the stone will be engraved a new name that no one understands except the one who receives it. (Revelation 2:12-17)

**What does this letter teach us about Jesus?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

**What does the letter say to the church?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

We don't necessarily have places we call pagan temples but we have plenty of opportunities to compromise. Where do you need to take a stand and move away from moral compromise?

---

---

---

Questions to ask yourself:

Where do you see your identity being formed by culture or people?

Can you identify areas where you are being tempted sexually? If so, where? Who can you talk to?

**What is Jesus asking you to do?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

We must have a bigger picture of Jesus and tear down the big picture of what we want!



# DAY 4 - THYATIRA

The longest and most difficult of the seven letters is addressed to the least known, least important and least remarkable of the cities. Thyatira is very rarely mentioned in ancient literature, and its site is covered by the modern town of Akhisar. Today if you visit the town of Akhisar you won't find a lot of the ancient ruins from Thyatira today, but there are several things we have learned about the city. First, Christianity likely reached the city when Paul was at Ephesus. The only other biblical reference to Thyatira comes from one of Paul's missionary journeys. In Acts 16 we read about a woman named Lydia who was a seller of material dyed purple. Lydia became a Christian at Philippi, but she was originally from Thyatira.

This city was a blue collar working town! It wasn't the banking and commerce center of Ephesus. It wasn't the beauty and aesthetics queen like Smyrna, and it certainly wasn't the political and religious center that Pergamum was. Thyatira was known for working hard and playing hard like the blue collar, middle class often do! In Thyatira there were many trade guilds, almost similar to our modern day work unions. If you worked with bronze or metal like many of them did, you were a part of the trade guild. If you worked with textiles like Lydia, you were a part of the trade guild, and here's how it worked. The trade guild would help you find work and would protect you if there were any problems, but if you ever got sideways with the guild you were out –and good luck providing for your family on your own.

Here's where it got interesting. The trade guilds at Thyatira had a patron god named Apollo. The Romans worshipped Apollo and over time the trade guilds picked it up too. Apollo was known as the "Son of God" because he was supposed the son of Zeus. In fact, coins that have been found in Thyatira bear the inscription "Son of

God" along with a picture of Apollo. Maybe this is why Jesus introduces Himself as the true Son of God in Revelation 2.

Now, the trade guilds would work hard, but then they would meet and throw parties for their members. During these parties they would worship the god Apollo. There would be food and worship and immorality. If you chose not to go you would often be expelled from the guild making it very hard for you to continue your job and be profitable. One commentator wrote the following:

*"The situation, therefore, was somewhat as follows: if you wish to get ahead in this world, you must belong to a guild; if you belong to a guild, your very membership implies that you worship its god. You will be expected to attend the guild festivals and to eat food part of which is offered to the false deity and which you receive on your table as a gift from the god. And then, when the feast ends, and the real-grossly immoral- fun begins, you must not walk out unless you desire to become the object of ridicule and persecution! In this difficult situation what must a Christian do? If he quits the union, he loses his position and his standing in society. He may have to suffer want, hunger, and persecution. On the other hand, if he remains in the guild and attends the immoral feasts, eating things sacrificed to idols and committing fornications, he denies his Lord."*

- William Hendricksen -

So the question is really this, are we really tolerant of the influences and input in our lives that actually question the teachings of Jesus. Are you really more tolerant than Jesus? Should you be? Or are you serious about rooting sin out of your life and helping others take the same steps? The message to Thyatira seems to be: **you can only serve one master.**

**18**"Write this letter to the angel of the church in Thyatira. This is the message from the Son of God, whose eyes are like flames of fire, whose feet are like polished bronze:

**19** "I know all the things you do. I have seen your love, your faith, your service, and your patient endurance. And I can see your constant improvement in all these things.

**20** "But I have this complaint against you. You are permitting that woman—that Jezebel who calls herself a prophet—to lead my servants astray. She teaches them to commit sexual sin and to eat food offered to idols. **21** I gave her time to repent, but she does not want to turn away from her immorality.

**22** "Therefore, I will throw her on a bed of suffering, and those who commit adultery with her will suffer greatly unless they repent and turn away from her evil deeds. **23** I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am the one who searches out the thoughts and intentions of every person. And I will give to each of you whatever you deserve. **24** "But I also have a message for the rest of you in Thyatira who have not followed this false teaching ('deeper truths,' as they call them—depths of Satan, actually). I will ask nothing more of you **25** except that you hold tightly to what you have until I come. **26** To all who are victorious, who obey Me to the very end, To them I will give authority over all the nations. **27** They will rule the nations with an iron rod and smash them like clay pots.

**28** They will have the same authority I received from My Father, and I will also give them the morning star!

**29** "Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what He is saying to the churches. (Revelation 2:18-29)

**What does this letter teach us about Jesus?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

**What does the letter say to the church?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

Is there anything you've been tolerating that you really shouldn't?

---

---

---

**What is Jesus asking you to do?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

# DAY 5 - SARDIS

Welcome to Sardis, the once great and beautiful city here in western Turkey! While today there is very little except villages in the surrounding area, during the time of the New Testament this was a large city with upwards of 100,000 people and perhaps that was because there was essentially a gold rush. It was rumored that gold was found in the river here and so the same thing that happened in California happened here. Everyone headed to Sardis to strike it rich, and some did. Here in Sardis we also find the origin of the mythological story of King Midas with the golden touch. It is believed that Midas cured himself of his magical golden touch by bathing in the river nearby, causing the river to run with gold dust! So, this spectacular city situated in a beautiful environment became renowned for its wealth. In fact, Sardis is believed to be the first city to mint gold and silver coins. One of those coins is known to have a picture of Domitian holding seven stars in

his hand like he is the one in control. Isn't it interesting that Jesus sends a message to this church saying that He, and not Domitian is the one who is in control?

Sardis was originally set atop a hill with sheer cliffs around it and these cliffs are at nearly 90 degree angles and incredibly difficult to climb. The only normal way of access was along a narrow piece of land to the south, and this was fortified to prevent attack. The city was considered impregnable. This was not only a wealthy city, but it was a protected city. They were safe and comfortable...so they thought. Sardis had everything a city could want: "choice location, climate, wealth and culture." Because of this the people of Sardis became overly confident in their security. But interestingly enough, twice in the city's history it has been caught completely off guard. In 549 BC, Cyrus the Great, King of Persia captured the city using skilled soldier-climbers who scaled the walls and attacked Sardis in

the middle of the night. The city was caught completely off guard and demolished. Years later, in 218 BC, the city was once again caught off guard and captured by soldier-climbers employed by the Greek king Antiochus the Great. This certainly gives us a little insight into why Jesus tells this church to wake up and be alert. The city itself thought it was safe and no one could touch them. The Christians had adopted that same comfort level and had completely forgotten God's call to be on the offensive for Christ.

Maybe this is why Jesus mentions coming to them like a thief. In other words, Jesus was saying "You are so concerned with your money and not with Me so I will come to you like a thief and take what is really important to you." Jesus threatens their safety, comfort and security. Isn't that a timely message for us!

**1** "Write this letter to the angel of the church in Sardis. This is the message from the One who has the sevenfold Spirit of God and the seven stars: "I know all the things you do, and that you have a reputation for being alive—but you are dead. **2** Wake up! Strengthen what little remains, for even what is left is almost dead. I find that your actions do not meet the requirements of My God. **3** Go back to what you heard and believed at first; hold to it firmly. Repent and turn to Me again. If you don't wake up, I will come to you suddenly, as unexpected as a thief. **4** "Yet there are some in the church in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes with evil. They will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. **5** All who are victorious will be clothed in white. I will never erase their names from the Book of Life, but I will announce before My Father and His angels that they are Mine. **6** "Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what He is saying to the churches. (Revelation 3:1-6)

**What does this letter teach us about Jesus?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

**What does the letter say to the church?**

---

---

---

---

Three areas come up in Jesus’ message - Consumerism, Complacency and Comfort. Why do you think those are such a big deal?

---

---

---

Which of those three areas would Jesus write to you about? Why?

---

---

---

**What is Jesus asking you to do?**

---

---

---

---

When you consistently neglect the Spirit of God and the message of God your passion for the things of God will decrease.



# DAY 6 - PHILADELPHIA

If you visit Turkey today you can visit the modern day city of Aleshir, which is built over the location of the previously known city of Philadelphia. Jesus wrote His sixth letter to the Christians in this city and it's the only letter without any correction! The letter to Sardis was only correction, the letter to Philadelphia is only encouragement. But one of the major problems that we have today in understanding this letter is the fact that very little of the city of Philadelphia remains, so I want to share a little with you on the background to this previously destroyed city before we visit the remains. You see, the hard work of understanding the meaning of the Bible involves understanding the history, setting and culture of those that it was originally written to.

Philadelphia means brotherly love. When King Eumenes II of Pergamum founded the city he named it after his younger brother and successor Attalus II Philadelphus. Attalus earned the name Philadelphus when the Romans offered to help him overthrow his brother and succeed him as King and he refused, because of his love for his brother. Thus, Philadelphia was born.

Philadelphia was built as an outpost—a place of protection for several of the other surrounding cities and therefore there were constantly people coming and going. This resulted in Philadelphia gaining the reputation of being a missional city—a place where the gospel went out of regularly. Church history tells us that they were one of the first to send church planters to India! God had given them an open door to reach others! Tying into that background, Jesus tells the church in His letter that if they persevere and stay faithful He will make them a

pillar. This is an important statement and one that tells us something about God and His promises.

However, since they were an outpost designed to protect other parts of the country, Philadelphia was regularly under attack and in danger. Philadelphia was a place that was often unsafe and unstable. Everything about their situation was drawing them toward fear and anxiety. It is in this context that Jesus writes:

**7**“Write this letter to the angel of the church in Philadelphia. This is the message from the One who is holy and true, the One who has the key of David. What He opens, no one can close; and what He closes, no one can open: **8**“I know all the things you do, and I have opened a door for you that no one can close. You have little strength, yet you obeyed My word and did not deny Me. **9** Look, I will force those who belong to Satan’s synagogue—those liars who say they are Jews but are not—to come and bow down at your feet. They will acknowledge that you are the ones I love. **10**“Because you have obeyed My command to persevere, I will protect you from the great time of testing that will come upon the whole world to test those who belong to this world. **11** I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take away your crown. **12** All who are victorious will become pillars in the Temple of My God, and they will never have to leave it. And I will write on them the name of My God, and they will be citizens in the city of My God—the new Jerusalem that comes down from heaven from My God. And I will also write on them My new name. **13**“Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what He is saying to the churches. (Revelation 3:7-13)

**What does this letter teach us about Jesus?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

Interact with this statement: "Security and stability are found not in your *strength* but in your *God*." What areas of your life are you tempted to base your security and stability on, as opposed to God? Work? Performance? Money? Relationships?

---

---

---

**What does the letter say to the church?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

Two statements flow out of this letter: "Self reliance kills" and "The character and track record of God is *reliable*". What steps could you take in light of these ideas?

---

---

---

---

**What is Jesus asking you to do?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

Spend more time on God's *promises* than you do on God's current *provisions*. Now is the time for us to press on!

# DAY 7 - LAODICEA

Since we addressed the background to the church at Laodicea in the sermon series, we will simply revisit them briefly. The city of Laodicea is seated in between two cities with water sources—Colossae and Hieropolis. One was known for its hot springs and the other known for its cool springs. Water had to be brought into Laodicea by piped aqueducts. By the time the water arrived in Laodicea, not only was it tepid, it was often good for nothing due to contaminants in the pipes. Jesus spoke to this church in language they could understand—their faith had impacted them so little that it was essentially good for nothing.

Plain and simple, they needed to change.

Laodicea was a wealthy town due to their health care and dyed wool trade. The people had become incredibly self-reliant and quite proud of their self-reliance. They possessed much for this life but nothing for the next. Read Jesus's word to the church at Laodicea.

**14** "Write this letter to the angel of the church in Laodicea. This is the message from the one who is the Amen—the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's new creation: **15** "I know all the things you do, that you are neither hot nor cold. I wish that you were one or the other! **16** But since you are like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth! **17** You say, 'I am rich. I have everything I want. I don't need a thing!' And you don't realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. **18** So I advise you to buy gold from Me—gold that has been purified by fire. Then you will be rich. Also buy white garments from Me so you will not be shamed by your nakedness, and ointment for your eyes so you will be

able to see. **19** I correct and discipline everyone I love. So be diligent and turn from your indifference. **20** "Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear My voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.

**21** Those who are victorious will sit with Me on My throne, just as I was victorious and sat with My Father on His throne.

**22** "Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what He is saying to the churches." (Revelation 3:14-22)

### **What does this letter teach us about Jesus?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

The Laodiceans were challenged by Jesus to break away from their inactivity for eternal matters. What would that look like in your life?

---

---

---

### **What does the letter say to the church?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

What “comforts” keep you from being fired up for God and His mission of more and better disciples?

---

---

---

**What is Jesus asking you to do?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

With Christ, a relationship is within the reach of the poorest. The only thing that enables you to come buy of Christ is the recognition of your own deep need and poverty.



