

Church in Laodicea

by J.B. Stoney

The sermon highlights the problem of the Laodiceans, who do not know the gospel and have not changed from the flesh to the Spirit, and the Lord's gracious remedy to bring them into a new life in Christ.

Scripture: Romans 8:9, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 2:20, Galatians 5:16, Ephesians 3:17, Philippians 2:13, Revelation 3:17-18, Revelation 3:20

Topics: "Spiritual Transformation", "Gospel Vitality"

Description

J.B. Stoney preaches about the church of Laodicea, emphasizing their lack of true understanding of the gospel despite their boastful claims of wealth and possessions. He highlights the importance of being transformed by the gospel, with Christ formed within believers, leading to a new creation and a life lived in the Spirit. Stoney points out the danger of assuming a position in the church without a genuine relationship with Christ, illustrating the need for true vitality and righteousness found through surrender and conflict. The sermon concludes with the gracious remedy offered by the Lord for Laodicea to open the door to Him, allowing for a complete transformation and intimate fellowship with Christ.

Transcript

Revelation 3: 14-22

It must strike every careful reader that the Laodiceans are addressed as if they did not know the gospel.

They are very boastful of their great acquisitions. "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods and have need of nothing"; but when they come to be inspected, they are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked". Now where the gospel is truly known a man has "joy unspeakable and filled with the glory"; he is not "wretched and miserable".

It is very remarkable that of the last church it should be insisted on how little they had learned the gospel truly; for they are "miserable and poor", and Christ is outside! The gospel is that the man under judgment has been removed in judgment in the death of Christ, while He, the Man of God's pleasure is "raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father"; so it is clear that if you know the gospel you are out of the man in the flesh, and in Christ; "all things are become new".

This is the first great point with Laodicea, they have not known the gospel, they have not changed the man in the flesh for the man in the glory; Christ is not formed in them, "I am crucified with Christ; Nevertheless I

live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me"; there is no new creation. It is deeply affecting that it is to the last of the churches the painful fact is divulged that after all the church is not established in the gospel!

While assuming to have all the blessings bestowed on the church, it comes out that the source of all their blessing is not in their midst: He is outside the door!

It is deplorable to see the assumption to which man can come in the church of God, to aspire to the highest position, and at the same time not to know the beginning and foundation of all, namely, the gospel of the glory of Christ. In testimony he is lukewarm, no apparent vitality in his manner of life; on the contrary, to the eye of God, they were "wretched and miserable", with all their boast of great possessions they have nothing, they are not happy, their inside condition is "miserable"; their outside condition is that they are "blind", they cannot see what an ordinary Christian sees; and naked" - their blemishes and defects are conspicuous to those who can see. There could not be a more lamentable company assuming to be the church of God. But no one could know his place in the church who had not Christ formed in him. If Christ be formed in you He lives in you. Evidently this company does not know what it is to have Christ formed in them.

If Christ be in me, it is not I but Christ; I know that Christ lives in me. It is a very different thing to know that Christ liveth in you and for him to be outside, knocking at the door.

It is really inconceivable the degree of incongruity to which the human mind can run, to suppose that such a company can be a part of Christ.

In the first place they do not need Him, they are lukewarm in action, as those not interested about Him; and in the second place, they have not a single trait of Him!

Those who speak the most of the greatness of their possessions have none of the energy or vigour of those who really possess. The remedy the Lord proposes to them shows where they are; they must buy, they have nothing to give for it except themselves. It is plain they have not done so.

There is no bargain made to give up oneself for another, no exchange; they have not sought the righteousness of God through conflict, "gold tried in the fire".

In every way they disclose that they have never changed from Adam to Christ; they are not in the Spirit; they are in the flesh. Those who say that everything is pure grace, limiting God's grace to all that He has done for us, and who overlook the working of His grace in us, correspond in a way to the Laodicean state; and they disclose the characteristic of men walking in the flesh, and not in the Spirit.

You notice this very strikingly in what is called the objective school; they are very conscious of the greatness of their possessions but they never give you the idea of being possessed by them. Early in this [18th] century in a very special way the Lord revived the knowledge of His grace, and exposed the folly and ignorance of the Arminian school; but those who are exclusively wedded to objective truth betray that they do not understand the work of the Spirit in them.

No one could be in company with either of these schools without seeing how each has suffered loss; but it is worse for a man to assume to have great possessions while having none of the virtues of them, which is to be too objective, than for one to be wishing for them, as if he by his own assiduity could acquire them, which is to be too subjective. The Lord's remedy is most gracious, embracing the whole moral destitution in a way beyond all conception. He knocks, and if any man open the door He comes in to him to sup and

be with Him.

So that the reform of Laodicea is new in every particular, a reflex of the life and manner of the Lord Jesus Christ - He is inside with them. Wonderful change from the greatest moral distance to the greatest social nearness. The church of the Laodiceans describes the full blown and worst state of apostasy - profession without principle, while those delivered from it are made, by association with Christ, an epitome of Himself. A beautiful triumph of the grace that "worketh in you".

J. B. S.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jb-stoney/church-in-laodicea/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net