

# Luke Warmness

by John R. Rice

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*John R. Rice's sermon emphasizes the dangers of lukewarmness in the church and calls for a passionate commitment to God.*

**Duration:** 57:56

**Scripture:** Psalm 119:11, Matthew 6:33, John 14:15, 2 Corinthians 12:9, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, James 1:22, Revelation 3:14

**Topics:** "Christian Life"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the messages to the seven churches in the book of Revelation. He emphasizes that the problems in the world are actually rooted in the churches themselves. The speaker shares a story about a woman who initially hesitated to share the message of salvation with children from different religious backgrounds, but eventually realized the importance of teaching them how to be saved. He highlights the danger of being lukewarm in one's faith and urges listeners to be wholehearted in their devotion to God. The speaker also expresses his passion for teaching the Bible and encourages the audience to prioritize gaining a deeper understanding of God's word.

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## Transcript

Now stretch yourself and you may be seated. We have a pretty heavy schedule here. Prayer meeting tomorrow morning at 7.30. Better get up at 7, have a few minutes with your Bible, and be at the prayer meeting at 7.30. This morning the crowd is down there.

Some at 7, some at 7.15. If the crowd's there, Bill, we'll begin early. Down at the prayer service, right down beyond Louise Hall, in the big steel-framed tabernacle, plenty of comfortable seats. Better come and sit down toward the front.

Let's have two or three be there to save the back three or four seats for the late comers tomorrow morning. So we'll move down there on time. Good prayer meeting at 7.30 in the morning.

But if you get there, dear, we'll start the prayer meeting earlier. Then breakfast will be at 8 o'clock. Then first service at 9. Three services tomorrow morning.

Tomorrow afternoon for recreation, rest, study, and prayer. And perhaps some tours, scenic points. Then tomorrow night at 6.45, the evening service, and two messages at that time.

Dear Lord, will you open our hearts. Thank you for this good crowd. How we thank you for our brethren in the ministry.

What a comfort that these good men of God have come apart from the burdens of the pastorate and the burdens of revival work. Come to meet one another. Come to have all of us.

We need our hearts warm together. We want, dear Lord, we preach to others. We want you to preach to us.

We want to be fed. We're always feeding others. Feed our souls, dear Lord.

We pray, bless the preachers. God, comfort them and fill them and refresh them, everyone, and the missionaries and evangelists. And Lord, bless all these others that have come from various places.

From many states they've come. We've seen them here. They've come from Connecticut.

They've come from Virginia, from Pennsylvania, from North and South Carolina, Georgia, from Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and from Texas and Illinois and Tennessee. Dear Lord, we pray, bless everyone here. And now speak through thy servant.

We have this treasure in earthen vessels. Thou knowest, dear Lord, I'm poor and weak and unworthy, but I have a great Bible and a great gospel, and thou hast promised you'd never leave me. Lord, we pray tonight, make the Bible like you say it.

It's not my word like. It's a fire like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces. Lord, let us tremble all before thy word today.

And then you've said that the word of God is quick, alive, and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword. Lord, we pray, pierce our hearts with it tonight. Change us.

Oh, God, change us. Do not let us go on in mediocrity. Do not let us go on in a half-heartedness.

Oh, God, transform us, change us, for Jesus' sake. Amen. We return to Revelation chapter 3, please.

Revelation chapter 3. I'll read the story of the message to the church of the Laodiceans, and I pray that God will speak to all of our hearts together. Somebody said, don't you think it a strange thing to turn to preach to a lot of Christians, Christian workers, the best Christians in the churches, pastors of churches, and speak to them on the sin of lukewarmness, speak to them on the sin that makes God sick, that makes God vomit, and then I answer back, no, I need it, so maybe somebody else needs it, too. I know I need this, and I believe that preachers need help on this matter as well as anybody else, just as I do and other preachers would.

So let's pray that God will speak to our hearts. Revelation chapter 3, beginning with verse 14. Unto the angel, or messenger, or pastor, of the church of the Laodiceans write, These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thy work, cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth, because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.

And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. I counsel thee to buy me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich. O God, if we'll get the gold tonight, the gold of the power of the Holy Spirit, and the white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, the righteousness that God gives a Christian who waits on Him.

And the shame of thy nakedness do not appear. And anoint thine eyes with thy salve, that thou mayest see a vision, a vision of lost souls. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.

Be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. Jesus knocking at the heart's door of church members here, as well as lost people.

I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. Here we have a message.

There are seven such in Revelation chapter 2 and chapter 3. Seven messages to churches. This is a message to church. And that leads me to say by way of introduction, startling as it may seem, what is wrong with this world is in the churches, not in the world.

Oh, they say the wickedness is in the world. Yes, I know. Who say, well, the churches, you can't get sinners to church.

And I hear preachers talking about how wicked New York City is to people that have never been around New York City. I hear preachers telling about how wicked Los Angeles is, but you don't know it, maybe you're not impressed with it, but the people in your community are wicked too. And you better preach to the people that you're preaching to, instead of about somebody that will never hear you.

You know, people give the finest testimony for Jesus down at church on prayer meeting time for a bunch of old saints that don't need it. But I've heard it would do some good for you to say, Jesus Christ saved me, and I love Him, and I want to tell you about it. Now, if somebody do some good, you don't say a word, you shut your chops and go on and clam up.

I'm just saying that this is a message for church people, and we'd better hear it now. What's wrong with the world is not with the sinner, primarily it's with the saints. I know that sinners are dead in trespasses and in sins, but don't blame them.

Blame people that have no power. They blame their kinfolks that are saved. Blame the churches around about them that don't have any Holy Ghost revivals.

Blame the preachers that somehow cannot make men tremble anymore, like Felix trembled before Paul. Blame, I say, the church members. No power, no anointing from God, no weeping over sinners, no nights of prayer, no power of the Holy Ghost, nor any teaching about the power of the Holy Spirit.

I say, blame the Christian people. This is a message to the churches. Somebody said, can we have a revival now? Yes, we can have a revival, provided you're willing to begin at the place that needs it and work on the people that are the key to revival.

Judgment begins at the house of God, and revival begins at the house of God. God has more trouble getting a Christian fit to win souls than He has getting a sinner saved. It's harder to get somebody ready to do the will of God to reach sinners than it is to get sinners saved.

You know, God could have a revival on Mount Carmel just as soon as He got Elijah with power enough to pray down the fire. God could have a revival in Nineveh as soon as He got Jonah over his backsliding so He'd go and preach. By the way, He preached a sermon that was what they call a negative sermon.

My, the modernists wouldn't like Jonah. They've hated Jonah ever since. He preached a negative sermon.

He said, 40 days and Nineveh shall be destroyed. God's trouble was not with the Ninevites getting them to repent. God's trouble was getting Jonah to go and preach boldly and condemn sin.

Listen, we need to face this point. The church has failed today because of the people in the church, not because difficulties on the outside. If you want to have revival, we must remember, revivals begin with the church.

The devil's crowd can't start a revival, and they can't stop one. That depends on the people of God. God's ready, but God has to have some people He can use.

This message is to church members. This is to the angel or pastor or leader or messenger of the church of the Laodiceans. Go and tell these people, church members, this message.

Now, I want you to notice some things Jesus had to say. It's a remarkable thing. I want you to notice His proposition.

What's Jesus talking about? He must be talking about the drunkards. No, He isn't. No, He isn't.

I don't know why He wouldn't. Drunkenness is a terrible sin. The Bible says, the Old Testament says, Wines are markers, strong drink is raging, Whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

I don't know why He wouldn't come out strong on drunkenness because Revelation says that outside the gate are drunkards. And in 1 Corinthians 6.10, the Bible says that drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom. But that's not the crowd that Jesus is most concerned about or blocking God's program.

It's not the drunkards that keep down revival. Did you know that? He's not talking to the whoremongers and the harlots. It looks like He's saying, Look here, you dirty living people.

Look at you people that are so lewd and foul in your life. But He didn't say that. They're not the people that are primarily blocking revival.

No. And He didn't say the infidels. He didn't say you're cold as ice.

He didn't say you don't believe the Bible. He didn't say you're against God. He didn't say you're enemies of the church.

He didn't say that. That's not the crowd that blocks revival. That's not the reason God can't have His power shown in this country.

It's another crowd and another sin. It's a respectable sin of respectable church members. It's a sin, the respectable sin, of nice Orthodox preachers, of successful pastors.

It's a sin of lukewarmness. Now then, I wouldn't have been surprised if the Lord had jumped on the whoremongers and harlots and the drunkards and the infidels. But that's not what He's jumping on.

He says the sin of lukewarmness. And that seems to be the sin that God hates more and the sin that does more harm and blocks the Word of God more and stops revival more than any other sins. This is a sin of Christians.

It's a sin of respectable Christians. This is not the backslidden Christian that never goes to church. This is not the Christian that fell into sin like Peter and denied the Lord.

Now then, doesn't go to church and you've got to look him up and urge him to come. No, no. This is the sin of the Sunday school teachers and the deacons and the elders.

This is the sin of the preacher in the pulpit. This is the sin of the best church people everywhere. He said, so then because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I'll spew thee out of my mouth.

You know, it's a striking thing. The Lord Jesus didn't have too much hard to say about Zacchaeus, a dirty crook if there ever was, living off of widows and others. He beat them out of money and he took a lot of the tax money himself onto the Roman tax system, the farming out tax system.

But Jesus didn't say much bad against Zacchaeus when he came sliding down that tree. And the poor woman that had lived the life of a sinner and fell down at his feet and kissed his feet and wept over his feet, he told her, go and sin no more. He didn't say hard things about her.

But oh, how burning are the words of Jesus about all those people so meticulously nice, the Pharisees, that prayed in public and read their Bibles and bought their tithes and kept up the record, all that kind of business. The folks that you'd like so well to have deacons in your church. Why, they're the crowd that Jesus spoke with the heat of, warn you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, how can you escape the damnation of hell? That's the way Jesus talked to people who had the meticulous outward form of religion but had a cold heart.

Now let me tell you, lukewarmness is a terrible, terrible sin. And God said, this sin. Don't you think it's a strange thing? Look, if you will, at the dear Savior.

John saw him on the Isle of Patmos. His hair was as white as wool. His eyes were like the shining of the sun and his garments as white as the light.

And John said, I fell at his feet as one dead and I felt his hand upon my head. And Jesus said, John, write down this message to the churches. Now to the church of Laodiceans, this is what you shall write.

And John wrote it down. And now would you think about the dear Savior in heaven in a glorified body and that Jesus is so disgusted and nauseated. He says, it makes me vomit.

I can't abide you, I'll vomit you out. What is it, Jesus? It's these half-hearted Christians. These lukewarm Christians.

These good Lord, good devil, milk and cider, half in, half out kind of Christians. Jesus said, they make me sick. They are an abomination, Jesus said.

They make me sick. Now we should stop and think about that for a little bit. Lukewarmness, what a sin.

I believe God's called me to take the old gospel pitchfork and heat it in a furnace seven times hotter than Nebuchadnezzar's and go up and down this land and say, get in and get out. Get off the fence. Mean

business to take down your sign.

I believe God wants people to decide, I'll be out and out for God. Notice this sin that he's talking about is the sin of lukewarmness. The common, ordinary, garden variety of sin that everybody's guilty of.

Lukewarmness. Not cold, not hot. I want you to notice, he didn't say you're a bunch of infidels.

No, no, they believe the Bible. He didn't say, well, you don't care about church. No, no, they went to church every Sunday.

He didn't say that you never do and pray about sinners. Oh, they say, yeah, we pray every day. He didn't say that.

He didn't say you live outrageous, vile, corrupt, and base life. No, that's not what he said. That wasn't their sin.

It was not a coarse sin. It was a refined sin. It was not an outrageous sin.

It was a respectable sin. But it makes Jesus sick and nauseated. He says it stinks, it's an abomination, I can't abide you, I'll spew you out because you're not cold, you're not hot, you're just lukewarm.

What a sin it is to be half-hearted. Oh, I'll tell you this. I have prayed.

I could take time to teach the Bible, and God has given me some gift as a teacher, and I've studied the Bible, and I could say, well, let's gather around the Word. You know, I'm called to Bible conferences all the time. I turn most of them down because of such a burden for a Bible.

I do go where I can get the preachers, where I can preach to preachers and so on. But I'm saying all the time I have a burden about this thing, and the Lord stirs up my heart to do it. I can do Bible teaching, but today, what you need is not so much to know more Bible, though God knows I want you to get more Bible, but what you need is to get to where you feel what you do know, and act on what you know and mean business about what you claim.

If we ever get to the point where there's a fire of God in our souls, brother, then we know enough Scripture that we can learn some more, and we can get the rest of the things we need if we get the anointing of God and the fire of God. Oh God, send the fire upon the people. That's what we need, isn't it? That's what we ought to have, and may God send it.

At Pentecost, do you remember that there were tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them? Oh God, send that kind of tongues, the burning tongues to preachers, burning tongues to Christian workers. You know, I think it's a disgrace for people to talk about heaven and not have a holy light in your eye and have a lilt in your voice. I think it's terrible.

I think it's an abomination for people to talk about Jesus, the wonderful Jesus, wonderful, wonderful Jesus. In the heart he implanteth a song. Listen, it's a shame to talk about the wonderful Jesus and not have a lilt in your voice.

And preachers that preach about hell and don't tremble and don't weep, God have pity upon us. And preachers who call them in to repair their sins and who have no flash in the eye and no boldness to reprove it. Oh, what will God do with half-hearted preachers and indifferent, lukewarm church members.

Well, here's what he said, I'll spew thee out of my mouth. Notice a little further, Jesus said, so then because thou art, I would, he said, thou wert cold or hot. I would, thou wert cold or hot.

What is he saying, Jesus? Jesus said you could be three things. You could be red hot. You could be ice cold.

You could be in between. Now Jesus said of all things, I wish you'd be red hot. But if you're not going to be red hot, skip the lukewarm.

Leave that out. I don't want you there. I'd rather you be cold if you're not going to be hot.

What's the Lord saying? He's saying if you don't mean business, take down your sign. You know what's the matter with our churches these days? We have too many members of the kind we have. There's half in, half out.

We're in the church and in the world. We love the church and we love the lodges. A good woman wrote to me and said, Dear Brother Rice, I saw your book advertised.

A lodge is examined by the Bible. She said, I want a copy of that book. I'm sure I'll enjoy it.

What could be nicer, my Bible and my lodge? She said, I'm sure I'll enjoy it. Please send me the book. I sent her the book, but I never heard from her anymore.

Yes, what could be nicer, my Bible and my lodge? What could be nicer, I've got the devil and the Lord both. What could be nicer, I've got my son to school and then I've got the movies. What could be nicer, oh, I can talk nice words and then I can smoke cigarettes too.

Oh, I can go to Sunday school and teach a Sunday school class, then before church service I go outside and smoke a cigarette and before my boys or my class then throw it down on the church steps and go back in sanctified now to hear a sermon until I can get out and smoke another one. I'm just saying this lukewarm, good Lord and good devil, half in, half out, milk and cider kind of religion is an abomination that Jesus despises. He said if you're not going to be red hot, why get cold? Don't stop halfway.

Don't stop halfway. You say amen, but I wonder if you mean it. I was in revival services and my good friend way up in the Rocky Mountains, I'll not call his name, a great church and I was called for a month's revival campaign with wonderful crowds and a wonderful revival.

He said to me, he said, Brother John, there's a deacon in my church and he's a good man, but he's after me with his knife all the time. He's talking me down and he's an influential man. He said, What to do? I said, Why don't you go to him and talk to him? He said, I have, again and again.

And he said, Brother John, I wish you'd talk to him. Well, I said, Wait, what would you want me to tell him? He said, Well, whatever you say. And I said, I'd tell him this.

The trouble was, the man had been a member of the church a long time, thought he owned it, been treasurer of the church, member of the deacons and so on. And so he said, Now this pastor's an evangelist and I don't want an evangelist here. Pastor, this business of hooping up all the time, invitation every service, baptizing every Sunday, that's all right, but us old timers here in the church, he didn't like it used to be.

And built this great tabernacle here and all that. He said, and so I said, I'd tell him what I'd tell him. I'd tell him, Now look, the church has called this man.

God has blessed his ministry and it seems obviously of God. Now you get in or get out. I'd say to him, You either come along and play ball, if you can pray about it.

Say, Lord, help me to back up the pastor, not be a thorn in the flesh, not be a crook and a burden and a splitter. Don't let me be a kicker and a critic. I said, I'd say, Lord, if I can get along with the pastor, help me to do it.

If I can't, let me get out and go where my kind of folks are and I'll be happy. Well, the preacher said, That's right. That's what you're telling.

That's right. So I talked to the good deacon. I said, Now here, these people have called the pastor and you see, don't you see that you have no chance? The majority of the church is for him.

He said, I see that. But he said, This business of an invitation, every Sunday morning, every Sunday night, and sometimes Wednesday night, and this business of revivals and big crowds and hoop it up. And he said, Well, he's an evangelist.

He's not a pastor. I said, But the Lord seems to have called him to the church and all the people say He has. And now what are you going to do, buck everybody else? Well, he said, Well, What ought to do? I said, You ought to pray for God to forgive you for being a troublemaker and you ought to get along and go along with the preacher if you can.

And if you can't do that, you ought to get out and join some church that's having a kind of a dead program you like and don't be a troublemaker and so on. Next Wednesday night, he joined another church, joined another church. Now listen, that's not the end of the story.

Then the pastor came to me with a long face and said, Brother John, that man put in twenty dollars every Sunday. Now listen to me. Oh yes, it's all right.

See, everybody ought to get in or get out. Do you mean that if they put in twenty dollars a Sunday? Huh? Huh? Do you mean that? Well now, they're not the same basis, my brother. Did you notice that? That's not exactly the same basis.

But the Lord said, I want you cold or hot. Get in or get out. Don't be lukewarm.

It's worse. You know, I thought very seriously going to the foreign mission field, Mrs. Rice and I in Baylor University seriously considered Brazil as a mission field. And I wanted to go, but God didn't let me.

I'll tell you the truth is, I thought how wonderful it would be if I could go to a country and if I was one of the Christians they ever saw, my wife and my children and I were the only Christian. And if I said, It's wonderful to be a Christian, and I meant it, and I delighted in the Bible and in soul winning, and they'd look at me and say, Well, maybe it's so. But as it is, everywhere I go, I've got people, I've got to drag sinners over the old carcasses of you backslidden church members.

I say, It's wonderful to be a Christian, but a boy would say, if he told me the truth, he'd say, My dad didn't make him wonderful. He goes on with chewing tobacco or smoking cigarettes and stinks just like he did before he saved. He joined in with the dirty lodges, taking blasphemous oaths, counting the unconverted

men their brethren, and promising that they'll meet them in the Elysian fields of the grand architect of the universe, just the same as you did before you saved.

And everywhere I go, I've got to live down and talk down and overcome all the lukewarmness and half-heartedness before I can ever get revival. Listen, I used to have independent revival campaigns. I used to have them.

Now, in recent years, I've gone with churches and with groups of churches and had them in. But I'll tell you the truth, that's the harder way to have revival, to get all the churches in. I can have revival quicker.

I can reach big crowds. I can get as many saved and get them saved quicker if I went alone. But it wasn't as good for the churches.

The churches needed my ministry. They needed the new converts. And so I'm going more and more with the churches.

But I'll tell you frankly, the churches are a thorn in the flesh. They don't mean business. And you've got to work and cry and pray to get Christians ready before you get the kinfolk saved.

I'm just saying that don't call your heart. The Lord said, don't be lukewarm. Get out.

If you don't mean to get in, get out. You know, a little girl went to bed at night and then after a while, she had a bad dream or something and she fell out of bed. Well, she bumped her head and she cried and her mother came and kissed her and soothed her and put her back in bed and she went to sleep again and was restless and nervous and she went to sleep and she fell out of bed again.

And so she cried and the mother said, now look here honey, what do you suppose is the matter? Why are you falling out of bed? And she thought about it a little bit and she said, I guess it's because I went to sleep too close to where I got in. That's the trouble of too many church members. They went to sleep too close to where they got in.

Now listen now, lukewarmness is an abomination that hurts the heart of God and this just Jesus Christ and he said, it's an abomination you make me vomit. I'll spew you out. I cannot abide to Jesus said, you half-hearted church people.

God help us to see the shame of it. And then, let's see, let's see, Jesus said, I'll spew you out. What did he mean? What did Jesus mean when he said, I'll spew you out of my mouth? Did he mean, I'll break my promise? I said everlasting life but I'll just give you life for a little while.

No, I don't think he meant that, did he? You say, what did he mean? Well, somebody said, maybe he said, I'll let this old sinner go to hell. I promise to keep him but I won't keep him. I'll let him be lost.

No, it doesn't mean that. What does it mean? I think it means the same as it means in 1 Corinthians 9, 27 where Paul says, I have buffeted my body, this old carnal nature, and bring it into subjection lest I, after I have preached to others, should be a castaway. Oh, he said to be a castaway, thrown away.

God couldn't use me. I preached to so many I've had so many people say, if God said, Paul, I can't use you anymore, that would break my heart. Paul said, I'll buffet this old body and beat it black and blue, this old carnal nature and keep it down.

I don't want God to cut me out of the ministry. I don't want God to lay me aside and say, you can't use me anymore. I know that happens to preachers.

I know that happens to church members. I remember, my brother Bill, do you remember that old man Mooney? Mooney, out at Prescott Church, do you remember? And later they moved to Decatur. I was out there in Revival Services.

The first summer I started out as a preacher. I went out there and preached. That old man Mooney sat in front of me.

One day, I preached on, let's see, I preached on, on the shelf or on the victory. I preached on those two texts in Corinthians about, on this proposition, cast aside or my grace is sufficient for thee. God's grace to take the weak ones and make them strong if you come to Him.

But God will lay you aside and that old man took me after service and he got me to the sleeve and led me and looked at me and tried to talk and he couldn't talk for emotion. And his lips were trembling and tears streaming down his face. He led me around behind that old country church house, around there and saw old sunflowers and so on.

And finally when he could look at me, put his hands on my shoulder. Bill, you know how I live. You know how it's so hard to win his boys and so on.

That old man put his hands on my shoulder and he said, Brother John, I've had lots of preachers come here and they berated me and they were mean men. I didn't care. I let it go.

But you told what's the matter today. He said, God got tired of my fooling a long time ago. He said, I've been truly converted.

I know I was saved, but I wouldn't follow the leading of the Lord and I wouldn't win souls and I wouldn't control my temper. And I went on that way and God got tired of monkeying to me and God won't let me do anything anymore. God won't show me how to win anybody.

God won't give me any victory. God won't help me. God got tired of monkeying with me.

God laid me on the shelf. He said, Oh, he said, I'm going to heaven. I believe I'm saved.

But he said, I wish God would use me. I wish God used me to win my boys. I wish God used me, but He won't do it.

He said, I've tried and tried and God got tired of fooling with me and God laid me on the shelf. Now I know that kind of thing happens. I'm thinking right now about a preacher.

A graduate of my school, Baylor University, Waco. He was a graduate of Southern Baptist Seminary at Louisville. A man that, a south-wide minister as an evangelist.

Preached a great crowd. Had great revivals. Had multitudes saved.

But, he married a wife. This wife was of a pretty well-to-do family and a famous aristocratic family. She liked fur coats.

She liked the nice brick homes. She liked the entertaining and the style and fashion and so on. She kept nagging at this preacher, The boy's coming on.

They've got to have an education. I ought to get in here and make an estate for myself and my family. Have something for my boys.

Guarantee an education for them. And so he quit preaching for a while and bought land. Bought sections of it.

He paid it out. Some of it. In two years, wheat crop paid the whole price of the land in summertime.

He worked hard and bought the land and sold the land when it consolidated his ownings. Now then, he said, I'll go back to preaching. And he tried to get preached, but nobody wanted to hear him preach.

Some way, something was gone. Something was gone. He came to me with tears running down his face and I was only a boy preacher, a young preacher.

He said, Brother John, help me get a place to preach. I'll preach at a country church. He preached in great revival campaigns in the largest churches in the South.

I'll preach at a country church. I'll take a four-time country pastor and I'll do anything to help me get a church. Well, I tried a time or two, but nobody wanted him.

Finally did get called to a half-time country church and preached down there and preached two or three months and the church had a big row and split wide open and then it was the church threw the church up and then he was out. And he just couldn't get a place and couldn't be used. Listen, God doesn't want to monkey with you all the way.

I'll spill you out of my mouth of all the sins and I'm a poor example. Oh, but I pray that God will help me and that I'll never have an ordinariness about my preaching. I am well-taxed.

Listen, I held a revival campaign not long ago in Duluth, Minnesota and the Baptist church had one of the beautiful, most beautiful buildings, one of the best appointed. It was in every way beautiful. Oh, the finish of the interior woodwork was of the finest oak and it was neatly finished.

And every, listen, the nursery and the Sunday school department and the partitions and the seating arrangements and the pipe organ and everything and the kitchen and the dining room and the serving equipment and everything about it. It was wonderful. And I said to the people, I hope you won't be mad at me, but I'll tell you now, you've got three strikes against you nearly.

You've got two strikes against you, not much chance to have revival. They said, oh, we've got a wonderful pastor. Brother, I, Brother Samuelson, such a wonderful pastor.

I said, you've got such a good pastor and such a nice church house until you get to just about where you don't need God and God's not going to pay you much of mine. You know, if you want to have revival, you've got to find some people that are in trouble and in need, then God will help them. These well-satisfied people do not have revival.

Thou sayest, I'm rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing and nor thou art poor and wretched and miserable and blind and naked. He said, I counsel thee to buy me gold tried in the fire. Your

riches are fake riches.

You've got the satisfactions of this world, but you don't have what you need. If you're self-satisfied, brother, you're about gone. God can't use people who think too much of themselves and their setup and of their church and so on.

You know, I know, I grew up as a Baptist, Southern Baptist. I'm a Baptist now. I'm a member of Dr. Lee Robinson's Highland Park Baptist Church, Chattanooga, but I'll tell you the truth.

This is what we used to say, I'm a Baptist born and a Baptist bred and when I die, I'll be a Baptist dead. I know lots of Baptists could just leave that when I die out. They're already a Baptist dead.

Yes, sir. Now, listen to me. Listen to me.

Anytime you get so proud of whether it's a Baptist, Presbyterian, or Methodist or anything else, that pride is a damnable thing that'll make it so you can't reach God and makes God vomit. To be self-satisfied is mighty bad. Mighty bad.

Oh, God. You know, I was thinking the other day about our colored people, friends. I love the colored people.

They're great problems. We have to work them out in prayer for them kindly. But I was thinking, do you know there's some things that colored people have got the advantage? I go speak to colored high schools.

I go meet them and there's a certain intentness there's an earnestness about it. You know what? They're the underdogs. They've got to get ready to compete.

They've got to learn. They haven't long had the chance at good school buildings and good teaching. They've got to learn.

They're determined to do it. And we've got to send our brats to school and they're spoiled and pampered and they nearly run the teachers off and you can't get them to study. And they go mainly for the basketball and the various enterprises and educations.

A small percentage of interest in the regular schools today. Listen, the people have got the advantage who are the underdogs and they realize they don't have so much. The people that are proud and haughty and well-established and rich and satisfied, God doesn't do much for them.

God doesn't do much for them. Listen, listen to me. Is there a widow here today? A widow can reach God quicker than a woman with a husband to lean on.

Is there a little orphan child here today? Listen, you're dearer to God and God will hear your cry before He would a boy that's got a dad to call on. Did you know that? Listen, preacher, are you out there in some little hole? Are you out there in a place where you've just a few people and they're poor and they're ignorant and the smart guys look down on you and you don't have much equipment and you have poor country ways maybe and so on? Oh, thank God. Listen, God will listen to you pretty quick just so you realize that you need blessing of the poor in the Spirit.

The proud and haughty of heart can't have revival, can't have your prayers answered, can't have God's best blessings. If you're self-satisfied, brother, you are in danger of losing the power of God. Oh, if we'd go

away from here with a hunger of heart, we'd have revival.

I wouldn't care so much for the fire yet fell. I wouldn't care so much for the fire I wouldn't care so much whether it's a big manifestation. If everybody here could get broken hearts and go home and feel so whipped and so burdened and so downcast and so licked until you'd have to have God, I'd say I'd be happy and satisfied.

The rest of it would come. I can tell you, brother, God will send a revival if He ever gets people needing revival or not. My son-in-law, Walt Hanford, went over to Indiana, second revival effort he ever had.

And he'd studied my books and he'd asked me questions and he'd heard me preach and everything he could about it. Went over to have the second revival. Called me up.

He was having a big time. He was having some old drunkards saved in the heart, old sinners saved. He called me up and he was jubilant.

And he said, Dad, listen, I've learned something. What is it, Walt? He said, I've learned if you get men lost enough, you can get them saved. If you get men lost enough, you can get them saved.

You see the point? Now listen, unless you can get Christians naked enough, they'll never get the robe of righteousness. Unless you can get Christians poor enough, they'll never get they'll never go to God for the gold that doesn't perish. Unless you can get Christians to realize how blind as a bat they are to sinners going to hell around them everywhere, they won't go to God to get their eyes anointed.

Oh God, at least let us learn here we're blind and then in due time God will give the anointing. You see what I'm talking about? All right. Self-satisfied Christians not going to get anywhere with God.

I pray that God you say rejoice, you say hallelujah is in the soul, you say song's in the lips. In due time, yes, but not yet. Oh may God put groans in our hearts.

Oh may God put sleepless heads upon pillars under this old building of these steel roofs tonight. Oh may people begin to get a holy dissatisfaction preachers with their ministry and mothers and fathers with their families and the third school teachers with the work they've done. If God will break us down and take the starch out so we'll get to feel how poor and weak we are, then the rest of it we can get and you can get God can't do much for proud and haughty self-satisfied rich people.

Because I'll say if I'm rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing. Let me tell you this. Did you ever hear anybody say anything bad about John Rice? Maybe you did.

Maybe you did. At least let me tell you one thing. I've got one advantage.

I don't have the advantage of having everybody for me. I mean I don't have the disadvantage. But let me tell you I've got a lot on my side.

One thing is I have my heart broken all the time by every kind of criticism. Every kind of misunderstanding. I'll tell you one thing.

I've got one thing. Let me praise God for it. He means it for good.

I'll kiss the rod that hurts. I will. I say thank God there are plenty of enemies.

And plenty of people think I'm a nut and a fool. And plenty of people would a lot rather see me settle down to build some human organization and denomination instead of breaking my heart to bring revival fires everywhere. I say thank God at least this much I'm the underdog.

And I know that I'm misunderstood. And I know that I'm a nobody. And so I have to have Jesus.

Thank God at least for that. And I pray that God may break us down so we'll come again to feel our need of God and of revival and the power. And I'll say as I'm rich and I'm increased with goods have need of nothing.

And so God says I can't abide you. I can't put up with you. I'll vomit you out.

You're not cold. You're not hot. You're lukewarm.

Now let us consider some of the matters in which we Christians may be lukewarm. I'm not your judge. I'm not preaching saying well I've observed so and so and out of my observation I'll say no no I'm not preaching out of my observation.

I'm preaching out of the Bible what Jesus Christ said to tell the churches. He says I know thy worship. I don't pretend that I know them but Jesus said he knew them and he said to me to preach it.

So I'm preaching well somebody says you don't fit me. Okay. You pass it on back to somebody else and pray for us poor sinners that do need it.

For I need it. God knows. Will you tonight? And so now let's see some of the matters in which we may be lukewarm and which it may be we grieve God and he lays us on the shelf and spews us out of his mouth and vomits us up because he can't put up with the lukewarmness.

What are some of these things? Well first of all it may be that we're lukewarm about holy living about righteous living. Don't squirm so when I say holy. Don't squirm so when I talk about righteousness.

Listen that's still in the Bible isn't it? You read your Bible sometimes see if it ever says sanctified. See if it ever says holiness to the Lord. See if it ever says anything about righteousness.

See if it ever says anything about these matters. Don't misunderstand me. I do not claim and I don't believe anybody has a right to claim that the carnal nature is eradicated.

Isn't that a nice big mouth filling word? Yeah that sounds fine. But it isn't so brother. It isn't so.

I don't claim that. I'm not saying that I have it or that you will have the old nature taken out and sin all done. But I'm saying this.

Everybody that loves the Lord Jesus ought to want to be clean. And let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. I believe in old fashioned repentance.

I believe part of the trouble of lots of Baptists is they haven't done enough repenting. I say that my Presbyterian friends and Methodists and others because so many Baptists are here because I'm a Baptist. If anybody wants to jump on the rest of it you do it.

I'll tend to the Baptists. I'm called to do that. Now listen to me.

I'm saying that God wants us to have a holy concern about holy living. Oh yes. I'm not making any claim that I'm so good.

But I'll tell you this truth. Many and many is the time my heart has cried out to God. Oh make me clean.

I used to sing sometimes for myself. I never could sing it in public much. But I used to sing I used to sing Oh wash me thou without within or purge with fire if that must be no matter how if only sin die out in me die out in me.

And sometimes there's a little Negro spiritual song and it sounds like a bit of dog roll maybe. And the words I've even smiled at the words while I sang it. But I meant something in there.

I ain't going to grieve my Lord anymore. I ain't going to grieve my Lord anymore. And in my heart I said Lord You really no danger.

I wouldn't worry about that if I were you. There's not anybody here that needs really to worry about getting San Luis Infected. Perfect.

You just go right on. Listen to me. Suppose you say but brother I I don't agree with my holiness friends.

Or I don't agree with my Pentecostal friends. Some groups of Pentecostal people believe in eradication. Some do not.

You say I don't believe in my Western Methodist friends and Nazarene friends. Well maybe you don't. But I'll tell you this.

I agree in my heart with what their heart wants at least as a doctrine as I see it is that God does the saving and does the keeping of people that are not fit to save and people that don't deserve keeping. And I didn't earn it to get it and I can't earn it to keep it. And it's only by God's grace that I'm kept out of hell.

I said that's the doctrine. But my heart's cry is Oh God make me pure and make me clean. I wonder if you're red-hot about holy living.

You people I wonder if you're red-hot about holy living. All you nice church people with cigarettes in your pocket. You know it's getting pretty bad for these nylon churches.

You can see a package of cigarettes through them in your pocket and I've seen some of them around here and so on. Yes. Yes.

You're a good Christian aren't you? And you stink just like the Christians I've gone to a church and seen outside the church steps all just piles of cigarette bags cigarette butts of people throwing going into the house of God and with a stinking breath and with a tainted body then singing praises to God and then hurrying out to light another cigarette. Now I'm just saying I believe that when a fellow gets converted it wouldn't be any harm in him smelling like a Christian. Do you think so? What do you think about the kind of Christianity that changes the way a man lives? Do you think that's all right? Well what do you think about the kind of Christianity that changes the way a man talks? Is that all right? Well what do you think about the kind of Christianity that then changes the way a man smells if he sinks? Huh? I wonder why there's not as many amens on that.

Now I'm asking you this. Are you red hot? Are you red hot about being clean and holy? I wonder. I wonder.

Are you red hot about it? There are a lot of good Christians here and some of you are members of lodges. Maybe you went into it just as innocently as I did. Some good men said brother I will pay for your first three degrees in the Masonic Lodge.

They said come on take the first degrees and we'll pay for them. They said you'll have more influence. You'll have more influence.

I said okay I want influence of men. Some best men I knew were members of lodges so I went on. I took the headed apprentice degree.

They gave me line by line and I repeated ungodly heathen old set no Christian off to say and I never would have said it if I had known ahead of time. But I did. They put a lambskin apron on me and said that when I was buried that the lodge would have charge of my funeral and they'd march around the grave they'd do this and that and the other.

But my heart cried but I'm a Christian. When I die I'm a preacher of the gospel. When I'm buried I want somebody to preach the gospel and tell sinners that Jesus died for them and this man put his trust in Jesus and preached the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I want a Christian funeral when I'm buried. And I saw my father a devout and godly man. A man who had been a preacher of the gospel and I saw him there and his crony and buddy in the lodge that stood at his hand and prompted him as he gave me the editor apprentice degree was that dirty blaspheming old cousin sinner that mocked at the Bible.

I've forgotten his initials. His last name was Smith Bill. You knew Smith.

Cursed all over the caterer. Laughed at the Bible and my dad's crony in the lodge. And I said this is a poor place for a Christian.

I never went back. I never went back. I asked God to forgive me.

I asked God to forgive me. I renounced the ungodly oaths I took. I left them alone.

I'm free from them. I have a right to be free from them. Listen, if you're going to be a Christian, why don't you mean business? Why don't you cut the ties? Why don't you come out and be separate? Out and out.

I'm not saying you're not saved. I'm not saying you're not sincere. I'm just doubting whether you're red hot for holy living.

I'm just doubting whether you're red hot as long as when God says a swear not at all. Above all things brothers, swear not. The scripture says.

And yet you take those bloody oaths and bind yourself as a brother to unconverted men to serve them or to buy from them, help them in their business, to defend them when they're on trial and so on. And you bind yourself to tell secrets to them that you don't tell your wife or your pastor. I'm just saying now, I'm doubting.

Are you red hot about holy living? Everybody wants to do right. All Christians want to do right. But are you red hot, I wonder.

Some young people here today, you love the Lord, but I wonder, are your habits the habits of the world? You're a Christian, but I wonder, you're out here with the wildness and the lewdness, the necking, the petting promiscuously of barnyard animals and you're Christians, I wonder, would you say you're red hot about holy living? I wonder. I was in a revival service in Waterloo, Iowa in the big Walnut Street Baptist Church, largest church in Iowa I suppose. And one night I preached on lukewarmness and the girl at the piano came after the service was over and came weeping to me and she said, brother, I ought to have come.

Look at me. What kind of a Christian is this? I played for a dance last Saturday night and then Sunday morning played the pipe organ in church. She said, what kind of a Christian is that? I think there's some sense to that, brother.

I think there's some sense to that. And she said, I ought to have come tonight. I will tomorrow night.

I promise you I'll be the first one to come tomorrow night. She said, well, the next night we had a great crowd and the power of God was there and the preacher gave the invitation and people started down the aisles before they quite stood up from the seats and the piano started and she just gave about three or four chords on the piano and got up and run to be the first one here as she promised me and promised God. I ask you tonight, what kind of a Christian is that? Got the world and the church both.

Yeah, I got that and I talk like a Christian, smell like the devil's crowd. What kind of a Christian is that? Yes, I'm a Christian. I go to church and if it's not Lord's night, I'm a half in, half out, good Lord and good devil, milk and cider kind of Christian.

And now, do you think that pleases God? Are you red hot about Christian living? I'm going to tell a joke on myself. I was in revival service at Huntington, West Virginia. Scratch you felt led to singing.

Thirteen, fourteen, oh, let's see, some churches were cooperated. We had a lot of people saved in the Big East, Huntington High School auditorium. I remember that in that service one night, a pilgrim holiness pastor came early and pulled me to the side, met me at the door and pulled me aside out in the dark.

And he said to me and his voice trembled, he said, Brother Rice, here's a bill. And he put something in my hand, some money and said, this is very much, but I don't have much income, but the Lord told me to give it to you. He said, Brother Rice, I've been so blessed for your ministry.

And he said, the way you preach against sin and get Christians to clean up and start family altar and start to live in clean and try to win souls. He said, my heart's been so blessed and I thank God for it. Now that's funny.

Here's a man, you know, he's preaching the eradication of the carnal nature and I'm not. And he states his one way and I another. And he's Armenian and I probably would be called a moderate Calvinist.

But, and you would think we're far apart as the fools. But one thing we had in common, he wanted to be pure and good and I did. And he preached against sin and I preached against sin.

He got Christians to clean up and I got Christians to clean up. Now the joke part, he said to me, Brother Rice, he said, I believe you are sanctified and don't know it. Go ahead, laugh.

I know it's funny. I know I'm not sanctified in the sense that he meant. But I'm sure glad he saw the point.

I was trying to get Christians to do right. I was trying to get Christians to do right. And I don't care what your doctrine is, if it doesn't make you want to be pure and good for God and out and out for God, I'm sorry for you.

Yes, sir. Are you really red hot for holy living? I wonder. Listen, until you're kind of a nut and a fanatic and a fool, you're not much of a Christian.

That's right. Not much good to God. We had one of the Sword of the Lord evangelist down in Missouri in revival service to a little church.

And he bore down on sin, had a good revival, but there was good evil criticism. My son-in-law went there later. Chuck went down to Bill to have film services there.

And the men out, some of the men of the church met and stood out under the trees and chewed tobacco and spit and talked a while before church time. And my son-in-law was there. And one old brother expressed the sentiment of most of them.

He said, out there and chewed tobacco. And the evangelist had borne down on cleaning up and smelling right and living right and make a change when you're saved. And so he bore down and one of the old fellows shifted his tobacco cup to the other side of his mouth and said, I'll tell you.

He said, listen, fellas. He said, what's the matter with that young evangelist? I know what's the matter with him. He's a fanatic.

Wait a minute. I wonder, are you lukewarm about another matter? Are you lukewarm, we'll say, about brotherly love? How much do you love other Christians? How much do you love Christians? Oh, you say, I love my people. Yes, I know.

You love yours. But you remember Jesus said, you love them that love you. What tank have you? Do not even the publicans the same? You love the crowd of your denomination, do you? You love the crowd that loves you, do you? But do you love anybody that loves God? I wonder.

You check up your own heart. Are you, does your love just burn just as hot for somebody born again who loves the Lord, who's an assembly of God man, as if you were a Baptist? Or if you're a Presbyterian, do you love someone just as bad, just as hard, and just as warm, do you love him? Do you not just run over with joy at his fellowship just as much if he's of another persuasion entirely? I wonder, do you? I wonder, do you? I've had some interesting experience. In Dallas, Texas, we had a great eight-night debate with a Church of Christ preacher, Camelot preacher.

And they came from two or three or four states. And we filled that tabernacle night after night in midwinter. My, what a time we had.

And I had a chance to preach the gospel in good time. And I, one of the Church of Christ preacher in Dallas, the doctor, what's that doctor's name? Huh? No, I'm talking about the dentist, the good doctor, dentist, in the town who was a premillennialist. Hm? Yes, Dr. Wood.

One night after service, debate, hot and hard, and as bitter as some of those people as they could be. But this good man, he was of the Church of Christ, too. And preacher among Church of Christ and so on.

But he had learned the blessed truth that Jesus is coming. And he was so pleased that I talked about Jesus coming, and held up the scriptures of his coming, and he walked over from his friends and from his church people, this Camelot preacher, and took me in his arms and kissed me on the cheek. He had grace, didn't he? And he loved the Lord.

I wonder, are you red-hot in brotherly love? I wonder, do your heart just burn within you for Christian people anywhere? Do you? Or do you love your own crowd? Then what thank of you? You're no better than a publican. They love their crowd, too. You go down to the tribe and all the beer drinkers, they like their bunch, too.

But do you love people because they love Jesus anywhere? Do you? That better be a good check-up for you, don't you think? Another man asked him, are you red-hot about the Bible? Now, that wasn't the question you were thinking about. If I ask, how many believe the Bible? Yes, sir, everybody believes it, don't you? Yeah, believe the Bible from cover to cover, don't you? And keep the cover shut. Yeah.

I didn't ask you if you believed it. I'm not talking about that poor adult painted head of yours. I'm talking about your heart.

I say, do you love the Bible? Are you red-hot about the Bible? I wonder. You know, I think it's a disgrace in this country where the Bible's free, everybody can own a copy, we're free to read it, free to talk it, free to preach it. It's an abomination and disgrace in this country that so few people ever even read the Bible through.

Now, we have here tonight, we have a very select group. We have the best Christians. We have a high, very large percentage of preachers.

We have the best Christians. Let me ask you this, how many here read the Bible through? Now, wait a minute, I mean genealogy and all, I mean Ezekiel, I mean Chronicles, I mean Habakkuk, I mean the genealogies, I mean every line. How many here read the Bible through? I mean even one time, even one time read the whole Bible through.

Let's see your hands. Let's see your hands just a minute. Hold them just a moment.

Now look around. Look around. About one-third, maybe toward half, a little more.

And the average Christian doesn't know how many books in the Bible at all. Listen, the New Testament. Many Christians never read the New Testament through.

You know how much is in it, the New Testament? About as much as one copy of the Saturday Evening Post without the advertisement. And a lot of people have never even read it through. Never read through.

You read the New Testament through in a little more than a day if you really worked at it, but you never did it. What do you think? Oh, we're so familiar with things of the world. People go on radio quizzes and so on and they are television quizzes and they can tell what star, what movie and who sang this song and so on.

And we have the comic books and everything. Everybody, more people these days know about Little Abner than they know about Paul the Apostle. More people know about Dagwood and Blondie these days than know about Sarah and Abraham.

Yeah. And listen, isn't it a strange thing that people know so little about the Bible? I've been astonished to find how little people know about the Bible. I wonder what's your favorite book in the Bible? It'll probably be either the Gospel of John or Psalms.

I'll tell you that ahead of time. Some people will have Romans and some will have Luke and some have Ephesians and some will have the Book of Acts. I can't quite tell.

One chapter's my favorite for a while but I've been reading Isaiah and I declare I'm getting such blessing and out of that, that's nearly my favorite now. Sometimes it's Romans and sometimes it's the Book of Acts and so on. But most people it's either Psalms with all the wonderful 23rd Psalms, the 103rd Psalm and 34th, 37th and the Blessings or maybe it's the Gospel of John with the third chapter and the 14th chapter and such.

Well I don't know what it is. How many say my favorite book in the Bible is the Book of Psalms? Let's see your hands. Some of you like the Psalm better? All right.

How many say it's the Book of John? Let's see your hands. Well, more of you. Well, come on, you tell me.

What's your favorite book? Ephesians. How many have Ephesians as your favorite book? Let's see your hands. Well, several of you.

All right. Name another. Galatians, he said first.

How many of you prefer Galatians? All right. How many prefer Romans? Oh, a good many Romans. Okay.

All right. That's good. Now let's see.

Name another. Do you really care about souls? My daughter was with me in Brooklyn, New York in a tent revival right by the big auditorium there in back of the YMCA. We had a wonderful tent revival.

And there were more little children, little Jewish children and Italian Catholics everywhere, mainly Jews and Italian Catholics in that part of Brooklyn. And Grace said, Dad, could we have some children's meetings? I said, sure. I'll help you.

We'll announce it. We'll get some workers. We'll have some advertising.

And that great crowd of children came, little Catholic children, Italian Catholics and little Jewish children. And she rounded up a bunch of them. Now she said to herself, if I go to tell her about salvation, why Jesus, why the Catholics won't like that, and the Jewish, why they'll all bring the children home, I'll lose them all.

She went several days just told Bible stories and taught them little choruses. And then finally she said, I'm not going on this way. It's a sin.

I've got to tell them how to be saved. So one day she took the third chapter of John and talked about sin, and God loved us. And God

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