

The Letter to the Church in Laodicea

by Stephen Kaung

The church in Laodicea is warned by the Lord to be either cold or hot, not lukewarm, and to seek spiritual experience and faith through testing and discipline.

Duration: 1:14:29

Scripture: Exodus 3:2-5, Matthew 6:33, Revelation 3:14-22

Topics: "Laodicea"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of having a revelation from God when reading the Bible. He explains that simply reading the Bible without God opening our eyes to its meaning will have no effect on our lives. The preacher also highlights the need for faith, the working of the Holy Spirit, and revelation from above in the church. He emphasizes that God disciplines us because He loves us and uses all circumstances to build His life in us. The preacher encourages believers to have spiritual exercise and to let their knowledge become faith through practical experience. He concludes by urging the church to be zealous, repent, and open their eyes to see what the Spirit is saying.

Transcript

Will you please turn to the book of Revelation? Chapter 3. We'll read from verse 14 through verse 22. Again, I will read it in English first, and my dear brother will read it in Chinese. And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write, These things says 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 thou wert cold or hot, thus because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot. I am about to spew thee out of my mouth.

Because thou sayest, I am rich and am groomed rich, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art the wretched and the miserable, and poor and blind and naked. I counsel thee to buy of me gold purified by fire, that thou mayst be rich, and white garments that thou mayst be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness may not be made manifest. And I sell to anoint thine eyes that thou mayst see.

I rebuke and discipline as many as I love. Be zealous, therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and am knocking.

If anyone hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him as he with me. He that overcomes, to him will I give to sit with me in my throne, as I also have overcome and have sat down with my father in his throne. He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Behold, I stand at the door and am knocking. If anyone hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him as he with me. He that overcomes, to him will I give to sit with me in my throne, as I also have overcome and have sat down with my father in his throne.

He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Dear Lord, with gratefulness, we gather together in thy presence. We praise and thank thee for thy precious promise.

Thou hast promised us that Thou wilt be with us. Dear Lord, we are truly standing on holy ground, and our hearts are open towards Thee. We wait upon Thee to hear what Thou hast to say to us.

Speak, Lord, Thy servants heareth. We ask in Thy precious name. Amen.

Thank God for gathering us again this afternoon. This time we are fellowshiping together on the last two churches in the Book of Revelation. Yesterday we talked about the church in Philadelphia.

Again I want to emphasize that the church in Philadelphia is not an ideal church, because it is the church at God's own heart. Even though to human thoughts this seems to be too high, too ideal, but so far as God is concerned, not only this is what He has decided from the very beginning, but He has made every provision for it. And if we really trust Him, if we really give ourselves over to Him, His grace is sufficient for it.

So I hope that in our thoughts we will try to get rid of it as an ideal church, but believe that it is the church that God really desires. And this is by His grace we want to be. Let us never be satisfied less than what it is.

By the grace of God we will press on towards the goal until God's thought is fully realized. Now this afternoon we would like to go into the letter to the church in Laodicea. We find that it is just the opposite of the church in Philadelphia.

One is God's thought, and the other is man-made church. Now why is it that the Lord should put these two churches before us? Because on the one hand He wants to encourage us, but on the other hand He wants to warn us. It shows that it is possible, even for the church in Philadelphia to fall, becoming the church in Laodicea.

And here you find the warning of our Lord Jesus to us. Laodicea, we all know, in Greek means the opinion of the people. We know the church is a theocracy, it is not a democracy.

I think today everybody looks for democracy. This is the idea of the modern world. But so far as the church is concerned, God's thought is it is a theocracy.

In other words, the Bible tells us very clearly, where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them. This is the simplest explanation of the church. Where? The place.

Two or three plurality, gathered together under the name of our Lord Jesus. Now the name of the Lord Jesus is not just something to talk about. There is a reality in it.

In other words, where His name is, there is His presence. And because of that, it requires all who gathered under His name to be under His authority. He is the head of the church, and the church is His body.

The fullness of Him who fills all and in all. So dear brothers and sisters, what is the church? The very meaning of the church is under the authority of Christ. He is the one who rules over the church.

It is not opinion of the people. But you find that how the church has fallen. Instead of a living organism under the authority of Christ, it has basically fallen into the opinion of the people.

And in spite of that, you find how we boast of what we are. And this is what you find in the church in Laodicea. And as usual, our Lord Jesus will reveal Himself to this church first.

In other words, without revelation, there is no church. Without the revelation of our little Jesus given, then the church will have no testimony. So what is that which the Lord has revealed Himself to Laodicea? These things say the Amen.

Here you find our Lord Jesus tells His church that He is the Amen. He is the beginning and the end. He is always the truth.

And all His promises are yea and amen in Christ Jesus. You remember when Moses was in the wilderness, he saw a vision. He saw a bush burning.

Now, burning bush is a very common sight in the wilderness. Because in the wilderness it was very hot. And a bush can easily caught fire.

But when it is caught by fire, it usually finishes very quickly. But Moses saw this burning bush. It was burning, but it was not consumed.

Now this is something strange. Unusual. So Moses went over to see what has really happened.

And while he was approaching, a voice came out of the burning bush. This is holy ground. Remove your shoes.

And there you find Moses was commanded to go back to Egypt to deliver God's people. You know what Moses asked the Lord? He said, when I went back to the people, whom should I say that has appeared to me and sent me? And the Lord said, I am that I am. I am the Amen.

To me always is yes. He is the unchangeable one. He is our solid foundation.

Brothers and sisters, so here you find a revelation of our Lord Jesus. He revealed to that church that he is God eternal. The unchangeable one.

That is the first revelation. And then he said, the faithful and true witness. That refers to his time on earth.

How the word became flesh. And tabernacle among man. Full of grace and truth.

While our Lord Jesus was on earth, he was a witness. He was a faithful and true witness. You know the church is supposed to be the witness of our Lord Jesus.

We witness to the world what Christ Jesus is. Not only by word, but also by life. Our Lord Jesus, while he was on earth, he was the faithful and true witness.

I believe everyone who has read the full Gospels. Can clearly see how our Lord Jesus was a faithful and true witness. He was faithful to his father.

And he was true to his father. And our father opened the heavens three times. And declared, this is my beloved son.

In whom I am well pleased. So here you find our Lord Jesus show to the church in Laodicea. How he was the faithful and true witness.

It is to encourage that church to be true and faithful witness. And this is what has been entrusted to that church. And then the beginning of the creation of God.

Now what do you mean by the beginning of the creation of God? We need to turn to Colossians chapter one. We begin with verse fifteen. Who is the image of the invisible God? First born of all creation.

And this first born of all creation. Means he is the beginning of the creation of God. Now there is much problem over this verse.

Some people feel because it is said he is the first born of all creation. Therefore he is the first created one. But this is a serious error.

Because our Lord Jesus was not first created. According to Dr. Lightfoot. He was a scholar.

And he explained to us what this first born mean in the scripture. In the bible the first born means two different things. Number one.

It means you are born the first. That is the common usage. But as you read the bible.

You find another meaning of the first born. And that is. Sometimes in the bible you find those who are not born first.

Will be put into first. For instance. You find Jacob have twelve sons.

And Reuben was the first born. But as you read on. You will find Joseph becomes the first born.

Because the first born receive double portion of the inheritance. And you find other instances. For instance.

David was not the first king. And yet God made him the first king. But God made him the first king.

So you find there is another special meaning of the first born. It means priority and sovereignty. He is put in a place of priority and sovereignty.

So in this case. The first born is in a special sense. Not that he was created first.

But he have priority over creation. And because of that. He has sovereignty over creation.

And this is explained in the following. He said by him we created all things. The things in the heavens and the things upon the earth.

The visible and the invisible. Whether thrones or lordships or principles or authorities. Now here you find.

By him. All things. Were created.

But the word by. In Greek. It means in him.

But of course. When the translator try to translate the bible. They cannot figure out the meaning of in him.

How can all things be created in him? So they used the word by. But actually in the following. In the following verse.

He said all things have been created by him and for him. And you have the by him again. But this by him is really by him.

So the first by him is in him. All the creation has been created in him. Whether it is the thing in the heavens or the thing on the earth.

The visible and the invisible. Thrones, lordships, principalities, authorities. In other words.

All creation were created in him. Now what does it mean? Use an illustration. My brother was a builder.

And he built lots of houses. But before the building there will be an architect. This architect.

Knew how to build a house. So we will give that architect some idea. What kind of a building we want to have.

And the architect will plan out the plan. In other words. When the building is built.

It comes as the architect has thought. So we can put it in another way. That building is built in the architect.

Because it comes out of his mind. So you find the type of architect will make the type of building. If an architect is very artistic.

The building will be artistic. And sometimes he may be artistic but not practical. And the building will be impractical.

So that is what is meant by in him. All the creations were created in him. It is out of his temperament.

It is out of his character. Everything will express what he is. That is the reason why.

The heavens declare the glory of God. And the firmament shows his handiwork. Because everything was created in him.

But it is more than that. So that is the reason why you find it continues with created by him. By him simply means he is the contractor.

Not only the architect but also the contractor. The contractor will build the house according to the plan of the architect. I remember when I was young I visited my brother's building.

I saw these blue prints there. I could not understand these things. But to my brother he knew exactly what the building will be.

Because he is the contractor. He is the one who really builds it according to the idea of the architect. But it is more than that.

Because he is also built for him. All creations were created for him. He was to be the owner.

The dweller of the building. And for that reason you find he is the first born of all creation. Because it was created according to his character.

It was created according to what he is. And it was created by him and he was the owner. Because it was built by him and it was built for him.

Because he is the owner. You see this is the sign given by the God to Maldives. He is the first born of all creation.

And as he is the beginning of the all creation. So he is the beginning of the new creation which is the church. We thank God that he gave the church in Laodicea a tremendous testimony.

A tremendous vision. And this is what our Lord wants the church in Laodicea to be his witness. The more you see the revelation of the Lord Jesus to the church.

The more you realize how we have fall short. And then he said I know thy works. What is the condition of the church in Laodicea? What is the condition of the church in Laodicea? The Lord said you are neither cold nor hot.

Brothers and sisters we all like something lukewarm. When you are eating you want lukewarm food. If it is too hot it bites you.

If it is too cold you feel uncomfortable. And the food that we want to consume is lukewarm food. That is the nature of fallen human beings.

So far as our fallen human nature is concerned. We want lukewarm. But so far as God is concerned.

He wants it either cold or hot. Why? Because if it is cold there is hope. God is able to make it hot.

If it is too hot. Then it will not seem that it will not need God anymore. That man is sufficient for everything.

So here you find God do not want us to be lukewarm. If you say you do not love the Lord. You do.

But if you say you really love the Lord. But you love yourself more than the Lord. Now if you do not love the Lord at all.

That is clear. But if you love the Lord and yet you do not love him with your whole heart. Then this is the most difficult situation to handle.

Because you are satisfied with yourself. Brothers and sisters. Is it not the condition of the church today? If you say the church is hot.

No. If you say it is cold. Neither it is cold.

There is something there. There is something loving God. But they do not love God to the uttermost.

Here you find God. Here you find that is human nature. We feel comfortable with such situation.

But God is very uncomfortable. The Lord Jesus said I wish they were either cold or hot. Then there is hope.

But if it is lukewarm there is no hope. Because you are so satisfied with yourself. But so far as the Lord is concerned.

He said I am about to spew you out. This is the sentence of our Lord. But now look at what they feel themselves.

When you are in the state of neither cold nor hot but lukewarm. You will say I am rich. And I am grown rich.

And have need of nothing. Your estimate is just the opposite of God's estimate. When the people in Laodicea look at themselves.

They say I am rich and am grown rich. And have need of nothing. Now how can it be? So probably.

Laodicea falls from Philadelphia. In the beginning there is a Philadelphia feature. People really has a little power.

They know the power of the Holy Spirit. And they really keep his word. And do not deny his name.

And they really keep the word of his patience. They are willing to suffer for the Lord's sake. But gradually.

You find the situation begin to change. You know usually. In the first generation.

People pay a cost for the truth. But when it comes to the second generation. They inherit all the truth from the first generation.

But they have not paid the cost. In other words. It is more of their knowledge instead of life.

And maybe when you come to the third generation. Even the knowledge has lost. So strictly speaking.

There is no second generation nor third generation. So far as God is not concerned. Everyone is first generation.

We need to have the first generation. First hand experience. We need to pay the cost for the truth.

Brothers and sisters. Knowledge puffs up. But love builds up.

And where does love come from? It comes from suffering. So brothers and sisters. Very likely.

Laodicea condition is the fallen Philadelphia. Now what is the Lord's estimate of Laodicea? They say I am rich and have grown rich. And in need of nothing.

But the Lord said. You are wretched and miserable. That is the estimate of our Laodicea.

You are wretched. And you are miserable. You do not know where you are.

And then the Lord mentioned three things. Number one he said. I counsel you.

You are poor and blind and naked. I counsel thee to buy of me gold. Purify by fire.

That thou may be rich. They think that they are rich. And they are growing rich.

And they have lack of nothing. That is what they say. Not what the Lord said.

It is just the opposite. The Lord said you are poor. What do you mean by poor? They are rich in knowledge.

But they are poor in faith. In other words. Their faith has not been tested.

Their faith has not gone through fire. They have big brain. But they have very small feet.

So you find in Peter. In first Peter chapter one. Verse seven.

That the proving of your faith. Much more precious than of gold which perishes. Though it be proved by fire.

Be found to praise and glory and honor. In the revelation of Jesus Christ. In other words brothers and sisters.

Do not feel rich because. You have lots of knowledge. You have lots of theological knowledge in your mind.

But the point is. Has your knowledge become your life experience? It is only something in your mind. You can talk about it.

But it is not in your life. You cannot live it out. Just like the scribes and the pharisees.

You remember they studied the old testament. And they know the old testament so well. You remember when Christ was born.

And the magi came to Jerusalem. And they asked where was the king born? And you know Pilate called the scribes and the pharisees. And asked them where should Christ be born? And immediately they could say he was born in Bethlehem.

Now this is just a verse in the minor prophets. But they know the bible so well. They do not need to go to the concordance and the finance.

Brothers and sisters you can know their knowledge of the old testament. But what is their experience? They were troubled just like Pilate. They hoped that the Messiah would not be born yet.

Because they were not prepared for it. Brothers and sisters. Knowledge kills.

But life builds. And life is according to faith. Our faith needs to be tested.

That is the reason why you find in our life. The Holy Spirit was so arranged our life. I often say.

With believers there is no accident. Because our God loves us so much. He will take care of us to the minus degree.

He will discipline us through our circumstances. Everything that happens to our life is according to his arrangement. He will arrange what things you will encounter.

Whether it is good or bad. Because he will use all these circumstances to build his life in us. Brothers and sisters.

Faith has to be tested. It has to go through fire. And then it will be more precious than gold.

And it will be for the praise and glory and honor to God. So you find in the church in Laodicea. They are rich in knowledge.

But they are poor in faith. There is lack of spiritual experience. Lack of daily spiritual exercise.

I notice that people nowadays pay lots of attention to bodily exercise. But we as Christians. We should have spiritual exercise.

We should exercise our spirit. Exercise our conscience. Exercise our intuition.

Exercise our communion with God. And as we exercise. Then you find knowledge will become faith.

Then we will be rich as gold that has gone through fire. And then secondly. And white garments.

That thou mayest be closed. And that the shame of thy nakedness may not be made manifest. Now what do you mean by white garments? We know when God created man.

And put them in the garden of Eden. They did not notice that they were naked. It was only after they ate the forbidden fruit.

Then they discovered they were naked. So I wonder. When God created all these living things.

Even a dog or a cat. God gave them clothing. Can you imagine that God created man without giving them clothing? I believe that when God created man.

God did give them clothing. And that is glory. Glory was their clothing.

But when man sinned. Glory left them. And man became naked.

So they had to be clothed. So brothers and sisters. Spiritually speaking.

After man's fall. Before God. Everyone was naked.

Even Adam and Eve tried to use the leaves of the fig tree to cover them. But unfortunately. The weather changed.

And the wind blew. So they could not cover their nakedness. As Isaiah told us.

Our righteousness could not cover our nakedness. Once we were all naked before God. But thank God.

When the prodigal son came back. You find the father put the best clothes upon him. To cover his nakedness.

And that clothes is Christ our righteousness. We have no righteousness of our own. But when we came to Christ.

God clothes us with Christ. He became our righteousness. And by that we are able to stand before God.

Now this is what had happened to us. But brothers and sisters. You see here is white garments.

And the garment is in plural number. Now what does that mean? And we find that. Not only Christ is our clothes.

Our righteousness. But over it. There should be another white garment.

And the bible calls it. The righteousness of the saints. And the Bible says.

Christ is our righteousness. You find that in Revelation chapter 19. Revelation chapter 19.

Verse 7. Let us rejoice and exult. And give him glory. For the marriage of the lamb is come.

And his wife has made herself ready. Verse 8. Let us rejoice and exult. And give him glory.

For the marriage of the lamb is come. And his wife has made herself ready. And it was given to her.

That he should be clothed in fine linen. Bright and pure. For the fine linen.

Is the righteousness of the saints. In other words. Over against that robe.

Golden robe. That Christ becomes our righteousness. God wants us to be clothed with another white garment.

And that is the wedding garment. Of the bride. And this white linen garment.

Is the righteousness of the saints. The first robe we will close with the word. Christ's righteousness.

But here you find over above it. As a wedding garment. He wants us to be clothed.

With another white garment. And that is the righteousness of the saints. Now what does that mean? It means that.

As you read Psalm 45. It is an embroidered. White garment.

It is the wedding garment. Of the virgin. In other words.

The Holy Spirit. Who works in our lives. He is.

Knitting. A white garment. Into our lives.

Be righteous. As God is righteous. Righteous.

This is what you find in 1 John. It is not the righteousness of our Lord Jesus. Christ becomes our righteousness.

That is the foundation. But over against it. The Holy Spirit is working in our lives.

To make us righteous. As Christ is righteous. And these righteous acts.

Become our wedding garment. So dear brothers and sisters. This is what the Holy Spirit.

Is working today. He is teaching. Needle by needle.

Into a white garment. To be our wedding garment. And that is.

What is included here. And then thirdly. An eye sells.

To anoint thine eyes. That thou mayst see. Brothers and sisters.

What is the eye sell? If you turn to Ephesians chapter 1. And then you find in verse 18. Being enlightened. In the eyes of your heart.

So that he should know. What is the hope of his calling. And what the riches of the glory.

Of the inheritance in the sins. And the surpassing greatness. Of the power.

Towards us who believe. It is the spirit of wisdom. And revelation.

To the full knowledge of God. In other words. We need revelation.

And vision from God. In a sense. We have all received revelation.

Because with our revelation. We will not be saved. You remember when Peter.

Acknowledge our Lord Jesus. As Christ. As a son of the living God.

The Lord said. This is not something. Human beings.

No. It is my father. Who reveals it to you.

So we have all received revelation. Once in our life. But that does not mean.

That revelation stops there. Throughout our Christian life. God will continue to reveal.

His mind to us. And as he reveals. We obey.

And this is. The eye shell. Because it opens our eyes.

You know. When you read the Bible. You may have read through.

Some passages. Number of times. But they do not have any.

Effect upon your life. But one day. When you are reading it again.

Suddenly God opens your eyes. It is a revelation given to you. And that word.

Written word. Becomes living word. It becomes effective.

In your life. And that is the way. That we grow in Christ.

Jesus. So here you find. Our Lord Jesus.

Suggest to the church. In Laodicea. They need faith.

They need the working. Of the Holy Spirit. In their life.

And they need revelation. From above. And then.

The Lord said. I rebuke. And discipline as many.

As I love. Be zealous. Therefore.

And repent. Brothers and sisters. Modern man.

Does not like discipline. But if you read the word of God. You find that.

God disciplines us. Because he loves us. It is because we are his children.

Therefore he loves us. And he disciplines us. He.

Because only discipline. Can mature a person. If you do not receive discipline.

In this life. In the life to come. You have to be disciplined.

That is why the Bible said. The five foolish virgins. They cannot enter into the marriage feast of the lamb.

And they have to be disciplined in darkness. In order that they may be matured. You know I always thank God.

No matter what we are. Once he has called us. He justifies us.

Once he has justified us. He will glorify us. He will not let us go.

What we are. Once he has. Will not let us go.

Once caught you are forever caught. Thank God for that. He will glorify us.

He will not let us go. The door and knocking. Will not let us go.

Once caught you are forever caught. Thank God for that. And brothers and sisters.

The Lord said. I stand at the door and knocking. I stand at the door and knocking.

What a pitiful sight it is. The Lord is outside the door. The condition of the odyssey.

Has driven the Lord out. He has every right to do that. But something unexpected happened.

They keep the Lord out. What a pitiful. And the Lord is still knocking.

His love suffers more. He will not let us go. He is knocking.

He is knocking at our heart door. And he say open. If you open it.

I will come in. And serve with you. And you with me.

Brothers and sisters. The reward that God has promised. To the church and Lord this year.

Is great. He say. If you overcome.

Him. Will I give to sit with me. In my throne.

As I also have overcome. And have sat down with my father. In his throne.

Even if. The situation. Is the Lord's situation.
That doesn't mean. You cannot be an overcomer. If you open your heart door.
And let the Lord in. You can still be an overcomer. And the promise.
Is great. Because you will sit. On the throne.
With Christ. That of course refers. To the millennium kingdom.
When the kingdom of the heavens. Appear upon this earth. You will rule and reign with Christ.
For a thousand years. So dear brothers and sisters. The Lord has put these two churches before us.
Philadelphia. Is God's thought for us. And.
We should. By the grace of God. Be Philadelphia.
In case. There is. The situation.
Like Laodicea. Do not be despair. Because you still.
Can become an overcomer. What grace. What mercy.
The Lord has showed us. Let us thank God for that. Dear Lord.
I will praise and thank thee. That has revealed to us. The church.
Of thy own heart. And thou hast also warned us. Of what we can.
Make it to be. Do deliver us. From being Laodicean.
By thy grace. Enable us to be Philadelphia. We want to please thee.
We want to be what thou want us to be. That thou mayst be glorified. We ask in thy precious name.
Enable us to be Philadelphia. We want to please thee. We want to be what thou want us to be.
That thou mayst be glorified. We ask in thy precious name. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/24/SID24851.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/stephen-kaung/the-letter-to-the-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