

The Lukewarm Carnal Christian

by Tim Conway

Jesus is calling us to repent and turn back to Him with a hot and fervent heart, opening the door and letting Him in.

Duration: 1:05:47

Scripture: Genesis 32:26, Matthew 5:3, Mark 13:37, Revelation 3:15-18

Topics: "Spiritual Revival", "Christian Repentance"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the danger of being a lukewarm Christian, highlighting the need for desperation and urgency in seeking Christ. It addresses the tendency towards self-sufficiency and self-complacency, urging believers to repent and return to a fervent love for Jesus. The speaker encourages a deep sense of neediness and vulnerability in prayer, stressing the importance of attacking lukewarmness with a passionate pursuit of God.

Transcript

Brothers and sisters, I want to speak to you this morning about the lukewarm Christian. Look, whether you like that terminology or not, you know, when I was first saved, I guess because in certain circles that I considered had large amounts of error and maybe the true Gospel wasn't being taught, I would hear about backsliding and lukewarm and carnal Christians. And if you're like me, a lot of you probably, we don't like that terminology.

There's something about it that we realize that there's a lot of error that can go behind that kind of terminology. My brethren, listen, is there anything in our Christian life to cause us more shame, deeper confusion, than the cooling of our affections toward the Lord Jesus Christ? I mean, if you think about the true Christian, what is the greatest evil of which we are capable? Is it not right here? Is it not backsliding? Is it not when the Christian becomes carnal, worldly, loses his first love? Is it not that decline of our affections to the living Christ? After we've been converted? I mean, surely it must be. You may not like these terms.

We may have grown to not like them, but whatever you want to call it, there isn't an honest, God-fearing man or woman in this room who's been saved any length of time who cannot testify with embarrassment by his or her own testimony of having at times gone backward. I mean, we've sought. We've reached for Christ.

We've been there. We've enjoyed His presence. Our hearts are warmed.

We're determined. We want to run this race. But then something happens.

Our attention gets distracted. It's just like Mason was talking about. We turn our eyes off.

And there's a thousand reasons why. It can be because we're living on the heat of a conference. And you can say that's great.

And I feel so good. And we can take our eyes off on a thousand things that seem possibly even good. And suddenly, what we find ourselves doing is we've reached this point and as soon as our necks begin to turn, we begin to go backwards.

And now we have to retrace that ground again. Do you remember Pilgrim? He'd gone on his way and here come two people on the path. And they're saying, you need to turn back.

You need to turn back. There's lions in the way. Well, now he's afraid and they've gone by and night is beginning to come on and he's looking for assurance and he reaches in there.

Where is it? Where's the scroll? He begins to curse himself. That arbor back there, he slept. He slept.

He went to sleep. His affections went to sleep. And now he's having to go backwards.

And now he finds his scroll back there and he sat down there and he wept. He's just saying this ground now that I have to walk three times over. I only needed to walk it once.

That's exactly the way it is with the lukewarmness of the Christian. Some little bit of that of John the Baptist of this burning, shining light. And we take our eyes off.

Our heart cools. You're not as you once were. Your soul has lost ground.

Losing ground, losing time, losing temperature. Ground we must then tread all over again. And the thing is, that happens to us when there are words just blazing.

As Mack went through, I'm sure there's so much richness in Isaiah 53, you can't hardly grab it all at once. But that text just jumped out. He poured out His soul unto death.

I mean, you think about Christ pouring out His soul unto death after He has made all total, full satisfaction for our sins and quenching the divine wrath that stood against me, took my sin, nailed it to His cross, and I bear it no more. He's come and allowed His Spirit to take up full possession of me. Now He stands there at the right hand and intercedes for me.

And all of this has happened. There isn't one of us after all this absolutely breathtaking, mind-blowing exercise of this matchless power and grace, and then suddenly what? We're taken up by some thing. Oh, it's okay to take my eyes off Him now.

After all that. And suddenly, next thing we know, we don't even know where we are. Where? When I should be over there, where have I gotten to? Listen.

How many of you can say when you sing, Come Thou Fount of... You sing those lines. Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love.

How many of you say, man, I don't know why that's in that song. I just don't even understand that. The fact is, brethren, we do understand that.

We understand it too well. And this is certainly, in our Christian life, it is the greatest evil, the greatest insult to the Lord of which the true saint of God is capable. And it may be some of you right now, if you're honest, your temperature is not befitting the call to which you have been called.

I mean, you look there. It just isn't. In our spirits, we desire to be hot.

We know Jesus deserves our heat. But we're so prone to wander and we feel it. We feel it, don't we? I mean, I see Jesus there in the garden.

He was nigh unto it. And you look over there at Peter and the sons of Zebedee. What are you guys doing? Why are you sleeping? You see, we've been there.

And some of you are there. Why are they sleeping? I mean, in light of such realities going on around us, and we're sleeping. And we feel this.

Who has not known among the Christians here that dreaded season when it's winter with our soul? And we feel it. We hear Jesus' words. The Spirit is willing, the flesh is weak.

And we feel it. We know that. We know it.

Brethren, there isn't one of us that has to wonder and guess and deliberate why it is that the Scriptures would say be not weary in well-doing. Because we get weary. I've been weary.

I could see it in Saeed. Weary. Be not slothful in zeal, but fervent in spirit.

We know why the Scriptures say things like this. Or lift up your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees. Truly, truly, solemn fact that after all God has done for us, the tenderness He has shown us, unspeakable kindness, rich displays of grace, there still exists within each of us an almost alarming, incomprehensible ability to lukewarmness.

My brothers and sisters, isn't it just like our Savior? He never leaves us alone. He comes with a remedy. I mean, you see it there in v. 20.

The remedy is Him. Isn't that always it? Every malady, every problem, every infirmity, every spiritual sickness, it comes back to this every time. There isn't any problem that develops in the Christian life that can't be traced back right here.

It's Christ. The remedy is Christ. That's what our brother was just trying to tell us in the manna.

If you try to live on the conference, you'll be retracing ground. But if we go home and all anew, I want Christ. What a blessed thing.

The treatment for lukewarmness is Christ at the dinner table. All you and I have to do is open the door, right? Isn't that what it says? Open the door. You all see that? And so I've entitled my message, How Do I Open the Door? How do I get the door open? So let's look at this.

The first thing that I want to tell you is this, there is an urgency in getting the door open. Look with me at v. 15 and 16. I know your works.

You are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot, so because you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. Look, I may not be as skilled at deciphering symbolism as Kevin was over in the Song of Solomon, but when Jesus says I will spit you out of My mouth, I don't get the feeling that that's a good thing, right? Look, you go through and you look at this concept of spitting.

If a man had some kind of issue under the Mosaic law and he spit on somebody, they became unclean. God said of Miriam, if her father had spit in her face, she would have been shamed for what? Seven days? You find that David, when he was before the king of the Philistines, he let spit run down his mouth. It was a picture of insanity.

A picture of insanity. A picture of uncleanness. A picture of shame.

Job said, God made him a byword of the peoples, and I am one before whom men spit. And we remember what was said of Christ by the prophet. I gave my back to those who strike my cheeks, to those who pull out the beard.

I hid my face from disgrace and spitting. Spitting is a very disgraceful thing. It is in our day.

It was in that day. But you know what? This word is even more than that. Some of you have translations that say spew.

Some of you have translations that say vomit. In the Greek Old Testament, Isaiah 19.14, you have the same word. Listen to how it reads in the English.

The Lord has mingled within her a spirit of confusion, and they will make Egypt stagger in all of its deeds as a drunken man staggers in his vomit. Do you know what this word is? It's to reject with extreme disgust. Jesus' indictment against these Laodiceans is that they are half-heated, half-hearted, partially passionate in their relation to Him.

Look, they're not cold as though they've never been warmed by this Gospel heat. It's not that. But when Jesus comes and He examines them for the intensity and the fervency that He wants to find in His people and in His churches, it's missing.

These people aren't the kind that just out and out reject Him. They're just halfway in between. Christ has a moderate influence in their lives.

They're not totally uninfluenced by Christ. But this serious panting after conformity to Christ, this breathing after holiness and striving hard against sin and going hard after God, the pure delights and enjoyment, they're not controlling. It's almost like when it comes to these concepts like going hard after God, they're just kind of like the deer in the headlights.

There's a dazed look. Or, we're religious. We're going to church.

We go to the Bible study. We do this. We're involved.

But what's happened here? Jesus has hid Himself on the other side of the door due to the lukewarmness of heart and the unkind resistance to His love. There's a sickening moderation. It's mixed.

There's distraction. Formality is too real. Listen, I can remember when I was first saved.

I didn't have many friends in high school that professed Christ. In fact, none of my immediate friends. In fact, in all my school, I only knew of one guy in my class that professed to be a Christian.

When the Lord saved me, he was playing on a softball team that my team was playing against. And I was going into the outfield for batting practices, and I walked by him. Of all people that I ever thought that I went to high school with that would understand what had happened to me, I thought it would be him.

And he looked at me and he said, I heard you'd become a Jesus freak. And he said it with all mockery. And I said, Kurt, how are we supposed to be? I remember my father, my stepfather, he was trying to set me up.

It was when I was single. He was trying to set me up with this girl from Michigan State and he gave her my number and she was trying to call me. And I wouldn't answer her calls.

And he came in all furious one day and he said he wanted to know why I wasn't doing it. I said, Dad, I'm going to let the Lord choose my wife. And he said, you know what? Religion is fine, but you've taken it too far.

The world wants moderation. Moderated. No excess.

No zeal. No fervency. None of that.

And the fact is, we can start to become influenced by that. We can start to bring that in a little moderately. We don't want to go overboard.

I mean, after all, you start inviting prostitutes in your house. You don't know what you're going to get. That's crazy.

That's for people over in Louisville. That's not for us. You get in the word.

God-breathed words. Well, it's pretty mediocre. Your dealings with Christ become fewer.

Sin. You know what it's like when your heart is on fire towards Christ and you've sinned? And you can put your head down and weep bitterly like Peter. Because I'll tell you what happened right before Peter wept bitterly like that.

Luke tells us they made eye contact. When you're walking close with Christ, you're making eye contact. And when you sin, He looks at you.

You go weep bitterly. But it's not like that when your heart starts to grow cold. You'll confess sin generally.

You'll get in the Word. You'll pray. Yeah, you'll go to the prayer meeting.

You may pray at the meals. But something begins to get lost. And we can say, well, we would think that if something really disgusted Christ, it would be those people that just out-and-out reject Him and the atheists.

But you know what? We have a picture of Christ. And He takes this cup and it's you. It's your church.

And He puts it to His lips. Well, what? I'm not an atheist. Jesus wants the fervent passion of His people.

He wants it. And it is detestable. Violent reaction of disgust and contempt.

Look, Jesus' threat to Laodicea and to all lukewarm professors of His name is that this vomit, this spit, is them unless they repent. And look, there is no way you can take this imagery of vomiting people out of Christ's mouth to mean somehow that this is just, well, He's going to vomit you out, but after all, in the end, you're going to be saved. I'll tell you something.

There are two places in the Scriptures that I find where Christ stands at the door and nods. One was the text our brother Kevin dealt with the other day. Song of Solomon 5.2. And right here.

And you know what I find very interesting about over there? I heard one preacher say just recently, David had his Psalm 51. His psalm of repentance, of contrition. He said Solomon didn't have his Psalm 51.

Solomon had Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon. You know, the Scriptures tell us the Lord loved Solomon, and yet He went after the gods of His wives. The Song of Solomon, you know how it starts? Kevin, you know how it starts? How does it start? And, it speaks about His kisses, right? He found His kisses to be sweet.

The beauty there is, it seems that Solomon is writing this after concluding that everything else is vain in Ecclesiastes and then coming to this one and saying all the kisses of His lips. This is the picture of a man who's already returned. Whose heart has already come back to heat.

And he's writing. Revelation 3 is different. Because it's dealing with a church that hasn't.

They may go one way or the other. And so there's a warning here that you don't get over there in the Song of Solomon. There's a threatening here that if you are in that state, it is not a safe one.

Look, it's not just God's people may go there at times. We do. But the responsibility is to repent.

It is to get out of there. It is a deadly place. That's the kind of picture that we have.

This vomiting. This spewing. There's no way you can make that imagery into anything else, but this spitting them out.

This is rejection. This is not saving language. This is rejection language.

This is rejection with an exclamation mark. Jesus is clearly meaning to shock us with this kind of disgusting imagery. Can you imagine? We often like to think of Jesus weeping.

Jesus laying His hand on a leper. But think of the imagery of Jesus vomiting. Very, very graphic imagery.

The Son of God in purity and perfection and something so sickening touches His sense of taste, the result, vomit. This is clearly meant to startle us, to shake us. Isn't it true? We get those people who can mistake this lukewarmness as a state of safety.

But it's not that. Brethren, lukewarmness is fatal and must never be mistaken for a safe state. It is not safe.

To every professing believer, Jesus is saying, beware! Beware! This is not safe. Don't go there, and if you happen to be there, get out of there. There needs to be repentance.

The faith that saves is not a lukewarm, half-hearted faith. It may for a season decline, decay into this state and to our shame. But we must not stay there.

And so the living Christ, this One who calls Himself the Amen, He who is true, He warns Laodicea and every other church, if you do not repent as He says there in v. 19 and become zealous or hot and open that door that stands between you and Jesus, then your cool, your declining, mechanical, half-heated Christianity will be your destruction. And you will be vomited. Brethren, there's absolute urgency here.

If you've grieved Jesus into closing the door and allowed that door to shut by lukewarm affections, there's absolute urgency to getting the door open, and keeping it open. But here's this, and I know Brother Kevin hit on this, but it bears repeating. The beauty in all this, Jesus wants us to open the door.

Jesus, yes. Oh, brethren, are those not the most grievous times in our Christian life? I mean, I have never read about a Christian who has been face to face with the smile of Christ who hasn't been able to endure the most difficult trials in this life. I don't read Job saying, my children, my children, my children.

I find him saying, I look over to the right hand, I can't find Him. I can't find Him. That smile that used to abide over my tent, it's gone.

I can't find it. And I'm not attributing to Job lukewarmness. But the truth is, there are times when because of lukewarmness, Christ goes and He hides Himself, grieved by our coolness and our responses to His love.

And He goes and He hides Himself behind the door. But the beauty in all this is this, behold, I stand at the door and knock. What wondrous love is this? We're the ones that have grieved Him.

We're the ones that have wronged Him. And He stands behind the door and He knocks. We're the ones in the wrong.

Brethren, as I was contemplating this whole thing, I look over this last half year and I ask myself in this weariness, has a lukewarmness crept in? And I kind of see myself, there's the door. Christ stands at the door and knocks. And it's like I almost envision a row of witnesses on both sides.

A row here and a row here of witnesses to my lukewarmness. Think of the witnesses. There's your prayer closet or wherever it is you go.

And it knows. If you're in lukewarmness, it knows. It's testifying.

Oh, isn't the television a witness? Maybe your bed. How long you stay there. Your computer certainly is a witness.

Your checkbook. That becomes a witness. You can walk through this row of witnesses.

And the thing is, if there's any witness above all the witnesses that knows of our lukewarmness, isn't it Christ Himself? If there's anybody that can bear testimony when we get to a place in our life where coolness has set in, where there's a backsliding of heart, the greatest witness of all, the one most wounded by it, the one whose spirit is most grieved, is Him. And yet for all that, brethren, brethren, He knocks. He knocks.

Listen, I'll tell you this. You may find yourself like Christian where you're cursing yourself. Man, I'm able to walk this same ground three times.

But let me tell you this, He was able to walk it three times. He was able to retrace those steps. And that man got to glory.

There is no ground you've lost that cannot be retracked and retraced. Not a step. Whatever you've lost, He stands there knocking and He's calling you to retrace your steps.

Go back through that row of witnesses and go to that door. It's there. The fact is, He stands behind that door not knocking like this.

He's standing. He's ready. He's ready for you to lift that latch.

He's ready to come in and embrace you and give you a kiss and to restore you and put you back on that track. And He's facing. I mean, you think about it.

I see this imagery of Him standing at the door behind which He has hid His face because of our resistance to His love. And yet all the time, He is still standing behind that door facing us. Standing.

And ready. Tremendous hope after the cooling of our affections, whatever departure that may look like, wherever the child of God is backslidden to. We are recoverable.

We can go back and find the scroll and we can retrace. And even though here we are, we're on the same ground. Yesterday, coming down the road, my wife says, I saw a sign for Camp Copas.

I said, which way did it say? What did it say? She didn't know. So, I said, now we have to turn around and we have to go back. And we're retracing this ground.

Then we look at Camp Copas and it just said two miles or whatever. And so we turn around and we went back, retracing what we got here. And it's the same kind of thing.

We can go back. Christian went back. He made it to the house of Interpreter.

He made it through all the trials that laid ahead. And he got there to the gate and he was welcomed in and he got there. And Jesus is knocking for the same reason.

Whatever your lukewarmness and where you've gotten to, that step you've lost, that decay that has crept in, whatever is gone, it is not unrecoverable. These steps absolutely may be retraced. There is no grace.

Look, you look at your life and say, I don't have the joy I used to have. Jesus is knocking. You can retrace.

What grace in your life has somehow diminished, has somehow decayed? It's not where it was. You know. Some of you, you know in this place, I am not where I used to be.

My prayer life is not where it was. That heat in my heart, that excitement for Christ, I know it's not there. I know a lukewarmness has crept in.

And with Jesus knocking, that knock is just testifying to this glorious reality. Christian, you can retrace these things. God says to us in Joel 2.25, I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten.

Nothing eaten by the locust that may not be restored, brethren. None. Christian, have you lost something? Jesus is knocking specifically to open so that you might get it back.

Lost love? Lost peace? Lost joy? Lost excitement? Lost tears? Lost sensitive conscience? Not one of these things has fled from you that can't be gotten back. Not one. Do you not hear? Jesus is knocking.

It's just tremendous. He actually desires to be admitted to our fellowship. Isn't this the kind of thing that we see? Jesus sending His apostles, ambassadors for Christ, and they're going out and they're saying to the Corinthians, be reconciled! We come as ambassadors.

Be reconciled. Come back. The apostle goes to the Galatians and he's calling them back.

Calling them back. Constantly. This is the voice of Christ coming through these men.

Calling these churches back. Come back. And where is the issue? Where is always the issue? To the Galatians, He says, listen, Christ who was publicly portrayed before you is crucified.

Come back. You're falling away. You've fallen from grace.

Those of you that would put your trust over here, you get your eyes off Christ and you're going to lose. You're going to lose ground. You're going to lose heat.

You're going to lose passion. You're going to lose joy. You're going to lose love.

You're going to lose when you get your eyes off. But there's this constant calling back. I mean, think of Peter.

He wasn't damned in his denial. There's Jesus restoring, restoring. Simon, son of John.

Do you love Me? Do you hear the knock? That's what's being said. Put your own name in there. Do you love Me? Do you love Me? This is what He wants.

This is what He wants from His people. That's what that knock communicates. Do you love Me? I mean, listen, you find things like this.

When you read through the Old Testament, don't let verses like this just go by. What a communication of the heart of God. Jeremiah 31.20, Is Ephraim My dear son? Is he My darling child? For as often as I speak against him, I do remember him still.

Therefore, My heart yearns for him. I will surely have mercy on him, declares the Lord. Can you discern a yearning heart behind that door as Jesus knocks? You know what the devil comes along and tells you? Look at you.

You're back there at the arbor. You slept. Jesus doesn't want anything to do with you.

And what do you think you're doing? But since when does a knock mean Jesus doesn't want anything to do with me? Doesn't a knock tell you that He wants everything to do with you? The devil's going to come and slander. The devil's going to come and tell you everything that you've gotten into this place and Christ doesn't want to see your face and you better do penance. Go do penance.

You better go beat yourself up enough before you dare come back to His throne. And Jesus is saying, come, open. He's knocking.

Brethren, He knocks. Since when does knocking mean please don't come to the door? Look, talk that way to yourself. Talk that way to the devil.

He's knocking. The knock of Jesus is pure invitation. It's a trumpet call of His desire to be admitted by you that He might come and sop intimacy.

Wrap His arms. I mean, the intimacy of the Song of Solomon is just tremendous. But, the question of the hour.

How do I get the door open? How do we escape this cursed lukewarmness? Well, apparently, by opening the door. That's why Jesus is knocking. But how do I get the blasted thing open? Well, notice how Revelation 3.20 reads.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. But then He does not say if anyone hears My knock and opens, I will come in to them. He says rather this, I stand at the door and knock if anyone hears My voice and opens.

He's knocking, yes, but you know what? He's also behind that door and He's speaking. He's saying something. What's He saying? Because listen, if we listen to what He's saying, He might be telling us exactly how to get the door open.

What's He saying? Well, I can see three things He's telling us. One, in v. 14, He's certainly telling us who's at the door, right? He's the Amen. He is the Yes of God.

He is God's great confirmation to truth. Amen. He is the One who's faithful and true.

Brethren, I'll tell you what, that's good for us. The mighty Amen of God is on the other side of the door and that contrasts against our often wavering, prone to wandering ways. He's solid.

He's steadfast. He's firm. That's the first thing He tells us.

Who's on the other side of the door? The second thing He says is He tells us about the crime. He's certainly speaking about that lukewarm, neither hot nor cold. He says more than just that, however.

He doesn't just say lukewarm. You can see that He wants to give us the very essence of what lukewarmness is. Look at v. 17.

You say, I am rich. I have prospered. And I need nothing.

Isn't that exactly the essence of lukewarmness? Lord, I don't need You. Someone might say, hey, wait a second. Can a true Christian really be called wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, naked? You know what I find in Scripture? When the true Christian acts like a lost man, lost language is often thrown out there.

Can you remember when Christ comes down off the Mount of Transfiguration? Matthew's account of that? Matthew 17? His disciples were trying to cast out that demon that was in that young man to throw him in the fire, throw him in the water. And when Jesus comes there and He finds that they weren't able to throw it out, you know what He calls His disciples? Perverted. Twisted.

This is the same way the Apostle speaks to the Galatians. Similar language. He says, fallen from grace.

You did run well. He uses this kind of terminology. You see, when a saved person, even if they're saved, now it may be true, listen, at Laodicea, I don't doubt whether there were tares in there.

But, when the believer begins to act lost, he begins to get this kind of language. And I'll tell you this, whether you're outside of Christ, if you're outside of Christ, you are poor. And you are pitiable.

And you are all these descriptive terms. But I'll tell you this, even if you're a Christian and you stop taking your sustenance and your sufficiency from Christ and turn aside to take it from other places, you become just that wretched. Because without Christ, we're nothing.

We're all those things. And the true child of God, when He turns away and He resorts to the very things that the lost around us resort to... Listen, I believe that there definitely were Christians in this mix. I believe it because over in Colossians, there were brothers and Paul addresses them.

Now, I realize Revelation 3 came later than Colossians 4. But there were brothers at that time. And what I find over in Revelation is that this is still one of the Lord's candlesticks among whom He walks. I find that the angel of that church is still a star that's held in His right hand.

And I find there in v. 19 that He says, those whom I love. Yeah, maybe there were a good deal of lost folks there, but there were some real ones. And when you start acting that way, brethren, isn't this the very heart of it? You see, this is where the lukewarmness comes.

Because what happens is, just like Mason was talking about, you walk out of here and you say, oh, isn't this great? We're all pumped up. But you see, as soon as your gaze comes off Christ and you say, I'm going to live on the high that I got there, the man of molders, and it becomes something detestable to Christ. Christ isn't pleased if you go out of here and your mind is set on one of the preachers or one of the sermons or on the conference as a whole.

But if you go out with your eyes set on Christ, if the joy there is in Him and you go out and you're determined, I'm going to wake up tomorrow not to live and feast off of that old stuff, but I'm going to go out and I'm going to find Christ. Listen, when we get dependent, when we get satisfied, and this is what happens. This is what happens, brethren.

This horrible self-sufficiency. It's the fatal danger in the lukewarm state. Brethren, we get very strong language here.

He's calling them to hear their voice. We get to the place where we live our life like we don't need Him. We become self-confident.

We become forgetful of the way that we really are. Satisfied in that. Spiritual self-satisfaction is always the poison behind lukewarmness.

So there you have, He tells us who He is. He tells us about the crime committed. And He tells us what to do.

Verse 18 is all about the cure. He says, buy from Me. Buy from Me.

Come to Me for your needs. I have riches. I have righteousness.

I have wisdom. Come to Me. I'll give you eyes to see.

I'll give you the true riches. I'll clothe you in such a way that you can't clothe yourself. You need what I have to give you to become what you need to become.

Come to Me. He's saying repent. Brethren, how quick we become forgetful of our perfect weakness.

If it were not for weakness. Brethren, we are weakness. We are all weakness.

We are nothing but weakness. Listen, if that were not true, Jesus would have never said without Me you can do nothing. Self-confidence is the natural product of our cursed apostate race.

It's that desire to live and think and act independently of God. And in Christians, brethren, how is it? It becomes this cool slowdown. It's just like the missionary was talking about.

We get to the place where we want to just prop up our feet. You get to the place where no! I don't want to have the prostitute come live in my house. Because it brings baggage.

And I'm worn out. And I want a place of oasis. And yes, I see Jesus.

And I see when He was worn out, He still had time for the Samaritans. When He would go out into the wilderness and then the crowds would come. He'd heal all.

He'd cast out demons. And then He'd make bread to feed them all. And when He was worn out, He kept going.

And He kept drawing from His Father. And we get to where we're wearied and we feel just justified. Lord, I need to step out of the race for a little bit.

And you know how it becomes. You can start to live on the past. And you can become very satisfied.

And I'll tell you, you start living on the victories of the past. You start living on the conversions of yesterday. The blessings of God yesterday.

Well, see, that's really becoming very self-satisfied. Self-sufficient. We're living on the past glories.

And we don't have to look to Christ right now. You know, brethren, when we live all the time where we're just dependent and we're needy and we're needing to go to Him, and we're having to live by faith and we're always on that edge, we just don't know. He's telling us to step and we can't see any ground there.

And you step and it's like, okay, I did that now. Lord, let me go to sleep. We have a life to live, a race to run.

Can you imagine these Laodiceans looking down their nose at churches like Smyrna? Oh, look at them. They're poor. We've got a lot more than they do.

And yet, Jesus looks at them and says they're rich. Or looking down their nose at those at Philadelphia. He basically speaks about their weakness.

They're not having much power. And yet, there was this effectual door that was opened. When we become dependent, though our numbers be small, though our gifts be few, when we're looking to Christ,

God of the impossible.

Hearing about that last night. The God of the impossible. Ninety-year-old women give birth when we start looking to Christ.

We need that. We need that in our churches. We need 90-year-old women giving birth.

And whatever that looks like in our context. Tozer, listen to what he says. Religious history shows two phases.

The dynamic and the static. The dynamic periods were those heroic times when God's people stirred themselves to do the Lord's bidding, went out fearlessly to carry His witness to the world. They exchanged the safety of inaction for the hazards of God-inspired progress.

Invariably, the power of God followed such action. The miracle of God went when and where His people went. It stayed when His people stopped.

The static periods were those times when the people of God tired of the struggle and sought a life of peace and security. Then they busied themselves trying to conserve the gains made in those more daring times when the power of God moved among them. God works as long as His people live daringly.

He ceases when they no longer need His aid. You see it? They no longer need Him. Not desperate.

That's what we need, brethren. We need a restoration of desperation. Look around today, Tozer says, and see where the miracles of power are taking place.

Never in the religious institution where tradition and habit have long ago made faith unnecessary. Never in the old church where memorial tablets plastered over the furniture bear silent testimony to a glory that once was. Invariably, where daring faith is struggling to advance against hopeless odds, there is God sending down help from the sanctuary.

The power of God has always hovered over our frontiers. Miracles have accompanied our advances and have ceased when and where we allowed ourselves to become satisfied. Satisfied will kill us, brethren.

It kills us when we're desperate. Lord, come in. When we're desperate to go over and throw off that latch.

Lord, we need You. We begin to see ourselves. Without You, we're poor.

Without You, we're wretched. Without You, we can't do anything. Without You, we're going to die.

Without You, it's all going to grow old and moldy and stale. And we're just going to coast through the rest of our days. Not like the Apostle Paul who as he's getting into the end said, I fought the good fight, and he ran hard all the way to the end.

Christ precious to him. Just overwhelmed right up to the end. That He loved me and He gave Himself for me.

Not running out of gas halfway through the race. Brethren, when we don't need Him any longer, we're in trouble. We desperately, desperately need Him.

Desperation. Brethren, there's something in that Canaanite woman of old who said, Lord, my daughter... Silence. She's desperate.

I've got to have Him. If I don't get through to Him, then there's the disciples. Tell her to go away.

There's silence now. The followers of Christ are saying... And then He's saying my mission isn't even to you. And then He calls her a dog.

Brethren, there's a woman that knows what she needed. She needed Christ. What she needed was in Him.

Brethren, lukewarmness sets in. And suddenly, we go to sleep. We don't see our need of Him.

All of a sudden, we're not so desperate anymore. Suddenly, we're not so aware that if we go to the prayer meeting tonight and God doesn't come and He doesn't help and if Christ isn't there, we're not going to be heard. If we come with these cold hearts, if we come unbroken, if we come where there's this sin, we haven't confessed it.

If you think that's fiction, listen, Peter says that your relationship, men, with your wives ought to be a certain way that your prayers be not hindered. But we begin to lose that. Lord, help me to live right with my wife.

No prayers hindered here. We're just desperate. But we become cold.

We become ready to relax. But we had to trust Him like that yesterday. And God's increased the church size or He's brought some salvation into our midst.

And we've become content with that. When the world is still perishing out there, the devil is just as real. He's against us.

And if there's anything that you can tell about the devil, he doesn't care if you have all the doctrines of grace and you're the great Calvinists and they have all this reformed stuff. All he cares about is you go to sleep. Have whatever doctrine you want, just fall asleep and don't need Christ.

And he will seek to distract and turn your gaze off of Him. You're too weary. It's good.

You need a rest. And then what happens is you wake up like Christian and you realize, wait, I was only supposed to rest here a second. And I've lost all this time and also lost other things that I didn't even realize I lost.

He lost his skull. And not only did he lose the time, now he's got to retrace all his paths and he loses that much more time. Brethren, desperation.

Look, I'm wrapping this up, but I want to come down to this. You can pretty much lay it down. You can take your spiritual temperature as to whether you have a desperation in your heart for Christ right here.

I mean, if there is anything that will reveal lukewarmness, it's your prayer life. If there is anything. If anything is a dead giveaway to self-complacency, self-confidence, self-sufficiency, it's right here.

True prayer. Brethren, in prayer, there's desperation. There's pleading like this woman.

You remember the two blind men? Son of David! People are saying, you guys are just annoyance! Be quiet! And they need Him. They're going to get to Him no matter what. Brethren, I don't care what it costs us, what other people think of us, we need to be desperate.

We need to be going there. Be done with the moderation. The world's going to tell you that's what's needed.

Your lost parents, family members, they're going to tell you that's what's needed. That is not what's needed. Brethren, look at your prayer life.

True prayer is right here. True prayer is all about just breathing after God and total dependency on Him. Lord, help me.

Can't you look at your lost children and say, all you've got to do is have children and realize you're helpless. Absolutely helpless. Or pastor a church.

It's like a hundredfold. You've got all these children now. You realize I can't change these people.

I can't make them grow. I can't protect them from sin. I can't save my children.

You begin to look at the enemy that we are up against. You're trying to take the Gospel out. You're trying to plant churches.

You're trying to answer the missionary call and you're thinking about... This has really struck me. We just came off a week of prayer and fasting. One of our missionaries over in northeast India, John Seitzman, he wrote back and he was saying in the past, they've been somewhat reserved in their operations.

And John said, no reserve. He said, we're going to go all out over here. They've had death threats.

I told the church, that's great. We need to pray for them. Listen, we are men and women doing battle with angels.

Is there not reason to pray? You go out and look at some of these hard people. You bring a prostitute into your house and you just see the hardness. Brethren, we are in desperation here.

We can't do any of this. We've been called to a commission. If we don't have Him, the lukewarm guy, yeah, He may pray at meals.

He may play around. He might go to prayer meeting once in a while. Brethren, we need to have a deep burning and a desire in our hearts for God, for Christ, for His power, for more.

Live in the power of the cross. Don't overcome sin. Brethren, do you remember the days when you could go and confess sin? And you could weep bitterly like Peter? When's the last time that's happened? Coolness has settled in.

Brethren, good, honest, desperate dealings. I want to get to the place again where we go over to that door, we fling it wide open, we welcome Him into the innermost places of our emotions. Brethren, you know what opens that door? Desperation.

You know what caused Christ to remove Himself behind it? Self-sufficiency. Brethren, remember who you are without Christ. What we are.

Any gains that we've had in the back. Any of our children that have been converted. Any of the people we prayed for that God did a work in their life.

Any of the Christians we've seen grow. Any of the victories you've had in your own life. Any advances.

Isn't Tozer exactly right? God works. I mean, He's in the midst working there. Where there's faith, brethren.

Where there's faith. Where we need Him. There's a way lukewarm people pray.

Keep them just outside the door. Do their business with Him in lukewarm style. Brethren, this is precisely where we need to fling that door open.

Desperation will cause a man to attack that door. Brethren, you need to remember, we are absolutely spiritual beggars. Brethren, our Father, every good and perfect gift comes from Him.

He wants us to beg. He wants us to supplicate. He wants us to come.

He wants us to ask. Does He not tell us over and over and over and over again? I mean, He is just the perfect Christ for needy people like us. We've grown self-complacent, brethren.

Repent of it! That's what He says. Repent. He's calling to His people.

He's saying He's looking out among a church that the characteristic over and above everything else from the Christ, who's got these burning eyes, who walks through His candlestick, as He looks over at that candlestick, and He says, there's lukewarmness. And He calls to those that He loves and He says, repent. You're self-satisfied.

Come find in Me and buy in Me and find in Me your everything. Attack that door. Learn the true eloquence of prayer, petition Me as a beggar.

Blessed, brethren, He says, are the poor in spirit. We need a desperate sense of destitution, of vulnerability, of absolute want. That's what puts the strength in our hand to lift that latch.

Look, you know, just in proportion as a man becomes acquainted with that reality, his own weakness, utter destitution, will he come to that door. You remember Jacob. I'm not letting go.

Can you imagine him? You talk about desperation. Here comes his brother, 400 men. God put us in that place.

Sometimes that's what it takes to wake us up, right? We need 400 men coming after us, heavily armed. That's exactly it. You know what? That's all the reason to bring the prostitute into your house.

That'll be like 400 men heavily armed. Truthfully, you pray different on your way home when you have certain people living there than you do if they're not living there, right? You can become kind of forgetful of Christ. Forgetful of your needs.

Right? Brethren, I'll tell you this. You can't open the door in your bedroom spending four hours on Facebook. Nobody ever opens the door glued to the television.

There are so many things in this world that people just hear me. There are lots of things in this world that by design are meant to kill your passion. You have an enemy who is at work, who controls Hollywood, controls the news, the media, the schools, designed to kill your passion.

It's with purpose. It's with design to kill your passion, to kill your urgency for Christ. Brethren, desperation.

Desperation. And you can hear Luther. You know the story.

He says to Melancthon, I've got so many things that I need to do today. I need to pray an extra hour. That's where we need to be.

Desperation. Don't go away and live on the spiritual high. Go away in desperation.

Pray. Renew in urgency. Brethren, the truth is our time is short.

The last thing we want to do is have lukewarmness. Stir up one another. Stir up one another to love and good works.

Brethren, to our knees. Prayer life, brethren. Pray, pray, pray.

If you've fallen asleep there, pray to your knees. Don't give up. Jesus said watch, watch, watch.

Certainly to people whose flesh was weak and He's saying watch. What I say to you, I say to all. They need to watch.

We need to watch. Brethren, don't cool off. The race isn't done yet.

And as I said, this message I've preached to me. May God help us all, brethren. Amen.

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