

# Is Your Heart on Fire for the Lord?

by Zac Poonen

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*The Lord desires our hearts to be on fire with a fervent love for Him and for others, and warns against the dangers of lukewarmness.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 21:31, Luke 11:24, Revelation 3:15, Revelation 3:19-20

**Topics:** "Spiritual Revival", "Fervent Love"

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## Description

Zac Poonen preaches on the church in Laodicea, emphasizing the danger of being lukewarm in our faith - spiritually dead despite being morally respectable. He highlights the importance of having hearts aflame with fervent love for God and others, as symbolized by the burning fire on the altar in Leviticus. Poonen stresses that true disciples must have fervent love for fellow believers, not just the absence of evil attitudes. He warns against being lukewarm, as it is more damaging to the cause of Christ than being cold or worldly.

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## Transcript

In Revelation 3:14-22, we read about the church in Laodicea that was not on fire for God. They were just plain "lukewarm". They were dead right in their doctrines - but they were both dead and right! They were morally respectable - and spiritually dead! The Lord wants our hearts to be on fire at all times - aflame with a fervent love for Him and for other believers. "Fire shall be kept burning continually on the altar; it is not to go out", was the old-covenant Law (Lev.6:13). Symbolically we see here what God expects the normal state of the true disciple of Jesus to be. Anything less than this is sub-standard. When the burning bush was aflame with the fire of the Lord, no insects or germs could survive within it. And when our hearts are aflame with the fire of the Spirit, no unloving attitudes can survive therein either. This is one way by which we can test whether we are hot, cold or lukewarm : To be "hot" is to love others fervently. To be "cold" is to be bitter and unforgiving towards others. To be "lukewarm" is to have neither bitterness nor love towards others.

When a believer says, "I have nothing in my heart against anyone", he is lukewarm. Did Jesus say, "All men will know that you are my disciples when you have nothing in your hearts against each other"? No. The absence of evil attitudes towards each other is NOT the identifying mark of the disciples of Jesus (cf. Jn.13:35). We must have something in our hearts. We must have fervent love for all our fellow-believers. Love is a positive virtue and not just the absence of evil.

To cast out the spirit of bitterness from our heart and then to leave it cleansed and empty is the surest way to be lukewarm and to finally end up in a worse state than at the beginning (Lk.11:24-26). The world says, "Something is better than nothing". If so, then one would think that it is better to be lukewarm than cold. But that is not what the Lord says. He says, "I would that you were cold" (Rev 3:15). He would rather see us totally worldly than half-hearted. The lukewarm, compromising Christian does a lot more damage to the cause of Christ on earth than the worldly unbeliever. The unbeliever does not take the name of Christ, and so his worldliness cannot be a hindrance to the gospel. But a compromising, half-hearted Christian takes the name of Christ and disgraces that Name among the heathen by his worldliness. The cold, worldly unbeliever is also far more likely to come to an awareness of his spiritual need than the lukewarm, self-righteous Pharisee (See Mt.21:31). It is for these reasons that the Lord says that He would rather see us cold than lukewarm. In practical terms this means that if you have no longing to be free from the love of money or from anger and impure thoughts (to take just three areas of sin), it would be better if you remained an unbeliever than one claiming to be a disciple of Jesus. There is more hope for you if you are cold than if you are lukewarm. This is amazing, but true.

The Lord exhorts the messenger and the church at Laodicea to "burn with zeal and repent" (Rev 3:19). Even our repentance can be sluggish. We must be zealous and wholehearted about our repentance too. The Lord is now standing outside the church, knocking, trying to get in (Rev 3:20). In the meetings of the church however, it is "Business As Usual" with praise and prayer and preaching going on with monotonous regularity. But the congregation is blissfully ignorant of the fact that the Lord Himself is on the outside! Don't ever belong to a church where the Lord Himself is outside the door. For if He is on the outside, you have no business to be inside yourself!! You should be outside too. If the bridegroom is standing outside, the bride should be with her bridegroom.

The Lord now calls individuals in the church to open their hearts to Him. How can they do that? The context makes it clear that it is by burning with zeal and repenting that they can open the door. The door is not the door of our intellect or the door of our emotions. It is the door of our will. When the will is yielded, then the Lord enters in and fellowships (dines) with us in our spirit.

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