

Lukewarmness

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon on lukewarmness challenges believers to examine their spiritual fervor and the necessity of fervent love for others in their walk with Christ.

Scripture: Leviticus 6:13, Matthew 21:31, Luke 11:24, John 13:35, Colossians 1:17, Revelation 3:14

Topics: "Spiritual Revival", "Discipleship"

Description

Zac Poonen preaches on the message to the church in Laodicea, where Jesus reveals Himself as the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, and the Beginning of the creation of God. The church was rebuked for being lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, and for being self-sufficient in their wealth while spiritually poor and blind. Zac emphasizes the importance of having hearts aflame with fervent love for God and others, rather than being lukewarm or spiritually dead, as this is the normal state expected of true disciples of Jesus.

Transcript

"And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write : The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this : "I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eyesalve to anoint your eyes, that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore and repent. Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me. He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (Rev.3:14-22).

The Lord calls Himself here the Amen - the One whose word will certainly be fulfilled. He is also the faithful and true Witness who tells the truth exactly as it is. He is also the Beginning (or the Author) of the creation of God. He is the One who created the first creation and He is the One Who began the new creation, through His death and resurrection. "He is BEFORE all things" (Col.1:17) - the Author of everything visible and invisible, the Beginning and the End.

Here is a church that did not have any Jezebels or false teachings in it. They were neither immoral nor evil. But they were not on fire for God either. They were just plain "lukewarm" (v.16). 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" (v.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.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/lukewarmness/>

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