

# Reaching Forward to What Lies Ahead

by Zac Poonen

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*This sermon delves into the message to the Church in Laodicea from Revelation 3, focusing on the danger of being lukewarm in faith, lacking a sense of spiritual need, and being satisfied with worldly possessions. It emphasizes the importance of continually purifying oneself to reach the standard of purity like Christ, rather than boasting in material wealth or spiritual accomplishments.*

**Scripture:** Revelation 3:15, 1 John 3:2, Matthew 19:21, 2 Thessalonians 2:10, Matthew 19:23, Genesis 24:35

**Topics:** "Lukewarm Faith", "Spiritual Purity"

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## Description

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## Transcript

I was thinking of this word which Santosh read from the Church in Laodicea, please turn to Revelation chapter 3. What was the greatest lack in the Church in Laodicea? Why did the Lord say, you're not hot, you're not cold, you're lukewarm. What is it that makes a person lukewarm? See, they were not worldly people saying we never go to the church meetings, we have no interest in God. They're atheists and people who are nominal Christians.

They are cold, okay, we understand that. And hot are those who are fervent for the Lord, baptized in the Holy Spirit and fire, a fire that never dies. Who are the lukewarm? Which category do you and I, I include myself, I never preach a word to another which I don't judge myself in.

So which category do I come in? This is the test. The main thing which the Lord says to them, see we can imagine that, you know, when the Lord told the rich and ruler, give up all your money. There are people in the world who've given up their money.

I know a lot of Hindus in India who they call them sannyasis, who've given up everything, go and live in the forest. They don't become spiritual. There are some in the Catholic Church who become monks and nuns who give up everything.

Some of them are not even born again. So if it was, if I could go into heaven just by emptying my bank account, boy, that's an easy way to go there, really. But what was it that made that rich young ruler miss out on the kingdom? What is it? The most serious thing here in the church in Laodicea is, see Revelation 3, he said to them, you say you're rich and you're wealthy.

What is the mark of a man who is wealthy? Here's this expression. You say you have need of nothing. That's an expression I would encourage you to remember all your life.

A lukewarm brother or sister is one who has no sense of spiritual need in his life. I've already come so far. I'm pretty good compared to the others.

I have need of nothing. I'm in a good church. RLCF is not like these other churches.

We can be boasting about these things. I have need of nothing. I've got good brothers.

I've got a good family. My children are growing up well. I have need of nothing.

I know the word. I'm not committing adultery. I'm not stealing.

I'm paying all my taxes. I have need of nothing. Yeah, it's very sad when a person comes to that state.

He's not cold. No, no, no. He's not cold.

He attends all the meetings. Even the Zoom meetings online, he never misses a meeting. But there's no sense of need in his life.

And so he does not grow spiritually. I've seen in my own life that it's a very dangerous thing if I come to the place where I say I have need of nothing. I was born again 61 years ago, nearly 62 in a few months.

But even today, I tell you, I say, Lord, there's so many areas I see I'm not yet like Christ inside. My passion is to become like Jesus totally, particularly in the areas that nobody can see, where even my wife can't see. My inner attitudes, thoughts, motives, and everything, to be totally 100% like Christ.

My hope is not just that I will see Jesus face to face, but like it says in 1 John 3, I have this hope that I shall see him and become like him. That's the first thing. My hope is I will become like him.

Have you noticed that 1 John 3? It says in verse 3, 1 John 3, 3, a lot of Christians, you ask, what is your blessed hope? Almost 99.9% of Christians will say, my blessed hope is that I'm going to see Jesus when he comes again. I used to say that. 1 John 3, 3, everyone who has this hope fixed on him, purifies himself, which is this hope is mentioned in the previous sentence.

We know that when he appears, we will see him. No, that is second. When he appears, number one, we will be like him.

Number two, we will see him. What is the greatest thing? To see him? How many of us would say, oh, I wish I could see Jesus even now. I've had that longing, but I've seen from this verse, that's not the greatest thing.

When Christ comes again, to me, the greatest thing will not be that I will see him. Numerous people saw him on earth when he walked, they touched him, they're in hell today. So my hope is not that I will see Jesus face to face.

My hope is like it says here, when he appears, I will become exactly like him in my inside. That means you could search the inside of me in heaven and every part of me will be like Jesus Christ. Motives, thoughts, attitudes, everything, even the areas I don't know.

And secondly, I will see him. Of course, I'd love to see him. I'd love to hug him, kiss his hands and feet for that second.

And if that is your hope, how do you know whether that's your hope? Well, now you understood the answer. Now, if you get a question answer paper, what is your hope? You'll get the right answer now because you heard it today. Does it mean you understood it? No, not at all.

The test is, verse three, you will purify yourself every day until you reach his standard of purity. Then you got the right answer, not just thinking, I'll be like him is number one. That's head knowledge.

The test of whether you have this blessed hope is not picking the right answer that I shall be like him, but in your life, every single day, you seek to purify yourself as he is pure. And that is not possible if you say, I have need of nothing. God is using me.

God is blessing me. God is doing so many things for me. He answers my prayer.

Wonderful. Praise the Lord. So, you have need of nothing? I feel sorry for you.

Never let us say, I have need of nothing. You know, it's a sad thing that we tell the people in the world. You must open your heart to Jesus.

But we read in the church earlier this year, it is to a church the Lord is saying, I stand at the door and knock. So, it's exactly like Santosh said earlier. You can let the Lord inside your heart just like you allow somebody to come inside your home.

For example, a guest comes and lives in your house. You don't let him into your bedroom. He's got his guest room and he stays there.

You feed him, you clothe him, you make a grand meal for him, but he dare not come into your bedroom. He dare not open up your account books and check your finances. He'll say, mind your own business.

We'll treat you like a good respected guest, but don't interfere in all these things. So, do you receive Christ as a guest or as head of your home? If he's head of your home, there should not be a single door where he has to say, I stand at the door and knock. I said, Lord Jesus, don't ever say to me, there's some door you're still standing outside and knocking.

Please show me. It's open to you. Anything.

And I tell you, I've agonized and prayed and struggled in this area because I know the heart is deceitful above all things. The Bible says the flesh is deceitful. The Bible says Satan is a deceiver.

With all these deceptions, my only hope is if I love the truth. Second Thessalonians 2 verse 10 and 11 says, if I love the truth about myself, God will not deceive me. That's a great comfort to me.

Second Thessalonians 2 verse 10 and 11. If I love the truth, God will not deceive me. I will know whether there's a door in my heart that Jesus is still standing and knocking.

And I tell you, this is an area, even though I've been a believer, as I said, 62 years and I still seek the Lord. Is there any area, is there a small little corner perhaps where you're not Lord of my life? I don't want to be. I will purify myself.

When do I stop? On John 3, 3, as he is pure. Until that day, I will never say I have need of nothing more. Well, the other thing is Matthew 19.

We were also looking at the rich and ruler. I just want to share something briefly from there. He felt the need of nothing.

What am I still lacking? He says in Matthew 19 verse 20. I've done all this. Such a sense of satisfaction.

Woe unto us if we have that sense of satisfaction. Yeah, I'm satisfied in the Lord. I don't want anything outside the Lord.

But true Christianity, I've discovered, is what I call an attitude of dissatisfied satisfaction. If you can understand that. That's called a paradox.

And the Christian life is a paradox. I'm dissatisfied with not yet fully like Christ. But I'm perfectly satisfied in the Lord.

Perfectly satisfied. My sins are forgiven. Perfectly satisfied.

I'm declared righteous by God. Perfectly satisfied that God's working everything for my good. No complaints against a single human being in the world.

Not a single person I'm not forgiven. Not a single person whom I've hurt. Whom I've not asked forgiveness from.

My account is clean. Absolutely clean in every area that I know of. No bitterness against anybody.

I think God has worked a thing in my heart that it is now, by the grace of God, I can say it is impossible for me to hate anyone. Actually impossible. It's impossible for me to be bitter against anyone.

It's not something I struggled with for years, but God's done a work in my heart. The Holy Spirit does a work in your heart. There are many other areas I've got to work on.

But bitterness, complaining, murmuring, gone. And grumbling and discouragement, condemnation, all gone. But there are still many, many other areas, you know.

The land I've come in is huge. Many giants and little children of giants and corners that we've got to kill. I'm discovering them little by little.

But, so, I will not go to the Lord and say, what am I still lacking? I say, Lord, show me. I know I'm lacking in things. But what I want to say here is, listen to this.

See the attitude of the disciples in contrast to the rich young ruler. In Matthew 19, Matthew 19 we read, when the young, you know, he said, you've got to give everything to the poor and that's not what I'm thinking of right now. Then Jesus said to his disciples, this guy had gone.

And I have a feeling the disciples said, well, thank God, we are not leaving. We are starting with Jesus. He said, it is hard for a rich man, Matthew 19, 23, it's hard, in one place he said, impossible, for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

You know, those disciples were, maybe they had some amount of money as fishermen, but, you know, fishermen are not, I mean, I've seen fishermen on the coast of India. They are some really pretty poor people. I mean, they have enough to earn their living.

And they had given up even that to follow Jesus. Would you call those disciples at that time rich or poor? I mean, financially, they were definitely poor. They were already not such wealthy people.

They were poor fishermen earning their living and now they've given up even that. So when he said it's hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven, they could have said, oh, thank God, we're not rich. But that's not what they said.

That's what some of you may say. That's what some of us may say. Oh, thank God, I'm not rich.

But you know what they said? When Jesus said, it's easier for a camel, verse 24, to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. He should have said, thank God, we're not rich, that's why we followed you. They said, Lord, what about us? Would we be saved? That's their question.

Their question was, Lord, you know, I'm not a pauper. I'm not a homeless man begging for money. Peter, John and Paul and James and John and all the others were saying, we're not homeless people.

We've still got some amount of money. I've got a house back home and I've got a family and I've got a certain amount, little amount of money in my bank account. I'm not poor.

That honesty. We are rich. I've seen a lot of believers who act poor.

They're much wealthier than these disciples. It's that attitude, Lord. I'm not a homeless man.

I'm not a beggar going out looking for a handout. I am pretty rich. I eat three meals a day.

I can feed my children. Can I be saved? You said a rich man can't enter God's kingdom. How do you react when you hear that word? It's impossible for men for a camel to go through the eye of a needle is impossible.

It's impossible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. What is your reaction to that statement? Is it? Oh, thank God. I'm not rich.

I'm going to enter God's kingdom. No, we are rich. My brothers and sisters.

I would say that even to our brothers in India, in the villages. Don't think you're poor. You're rich.

You've got more than that homeless man. You've got a roof over your head. You're rich.

Then how to enter God's kingdom? Because it's not a question of all this money. You know, let me just show you one example from the Old Testament. Genesis chapter 24.

The time when Abraham sent his servant Eliezer to Mesopotamia to find a bride for his son Isaac and his son came Eliezer went to the house of Rebekah and he said in verse 35 in Genesis 24-35 Genesis 24-35

The Lord has greatly blessed my master Abraham. He has become very rich. God has given him flocks and herds and silver and gold and servants.

He had 318 servants by the way. 318 servants and maids and camels and donkeys. Boy! But you know, there was a day in Abraham's life when he became really poor and he remained poor thereafter.

And that was the day he put Isaac on the altar and was ready to kill him. So wealth is not your bank account whether you have one house or two houses whether you have two cars or three cars it's got nothing to do with wealth. Or whether you don't have some who are poor can you know, think well I'm not like that rich guy over there.

I'm more in God's kingdom. You're deceiving yourself. I've seen a lot of people financially poor in India who are extremely rich and that's why they haven't gotten to God's kingdom.

Abraham was very rich in all these things but he became poor when he said Lord the most precious thing in my life I lay it on the altar and I'll kill it to prove that I love you more than anything else. The man who is really poor is the man who values nothing in his life more than Jesus Christ and who is willing any day for the Lord to try to give up anything if you love father or mother or brother or sister or wife or children more than me, you're not worthy of me. If there's anything you possess hang on to.

You cannot be my disciple. If you open your palm and say Lord it's in my hand. You can take it if you like I don't possess it.

I have it. We must possess nothing even though we may have many things. You can have 318 servants and be a disciple of Jesus but if you possess that hang on to it.

Then you become like that church in Laodicea. I have need of nothing. So let's be honest and say Lord I thank you that you will continue to speak to me that I can be purifying myself till I reach that standard of purity I press toward the mark and Paul said forgetting the things that are behind is not just our past sins that we can forget it is our past successes how much we have grown spiritually forgetting it there must be a curtain right behind my back I look back I can see nothing my past must be like that I can't see my successes, I can't see my failures forgetting the things that are behind I press towards the future for the prize of becoming like Jesus that is the high calling of God in Christ Jesus

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