**Revelation 3:14-22**

I. Background on Laodicea

 A. The city was well-known for three things

 1. Its stable and solvent banks

2. Its clothing industry which exported clothes to all the empire

3. Its medical school and its famous eye salve that was believed to heal weak and failing eyes

 B. The city lacked a direct water source

1. Hierapolis (6 miles north) was known for its hot mineral springs

 2. Colossae (5 miles east) had cold refreshing spring water

 3. Laodicea had neither: water had to be brought in, by time it was lukewarm

II. Jesus’ description of himself (v. 14)

A. The Amen

= something that is trustworthy, solid, valid and binding

B. Faithful and true witness

= Jesus’ testimony to truth and to God is utterly reliable and conforms perfectly with reality

C. The ruler of God’s creation

 See Colossians 1: 15-20

III. The presenting problem with this church (v. 15-16)

= Lukewarm

1. They still believe but they are apathetic and half-hearted. They lack passion, zeal, hunger for the Lord

 2. “I wish you were hot or cold”

Both the hot water of Hierapolis and the cold water of Colossae would represent a faith that is vibrant, passionate, and alive. But the Laodiceans had lost their passion

IV. The Root Problem (v. 17)

 A. “I am rich”

 Their wealth gave them a sense of self-sufficiency

 B. “I have acquired wealth”

Their wealth gave them a sense of pride and self-importance: they felt they were responsible for their wealth

b. Reliance on self: I have acquired wealth

C. “I don’t need a thing”

Their wealth and self-sufficiency gave them a sense that they had all their needs met on their own. So they didn’t have a sense of their desperate need for God. So they had lost their passion for him and had become lukewarm.

D. The 3 S’s

 1. = Security, Satisfaction, Significance

2. These are the core values that drive human behavior. Wealth so easily becomes an idol because it makes promises to bring fulfillment on all three levels. It, therefore, easily becomes a rival god in our lives that we look to in order to feel secure, significant, and satisfied.

E. Jesus’ warnings about wealth (see Mt 6:24 and Mt 19:23-24)

1. It’s not that wealth itself is bad or even having wealth is bad, but wealth can easily become a rival god that prevents us from embracing God’s kingdom as children who recognize their fundamental neediness.

F. Wealth and us

1. Everyone thinks they’re the exception to the rule. We think we can pursue wealth as a fundamental goal of life and it won’t affect our spiritual lives. But when we spend our time and energy pursuing a certain standard of living, the result is almost always a spiritual temperature that is lukewarm.

2. See v. 20: In our sense of self-reliance and wealth-reliance, it is easy to slowly push Jesus farther and farther to the sidelines of our lives

G. The deceptiveness of self-reliance (v. 17)

The Laodiceans were completely deceived about their fundamental situation in life

V. The Solution

A. Notice Jesus’ love for them even as he says strong things to them (v. 19)

B. Repent

 C. Buy from me the things you most need (v. 18)

1. Rather than going to the world’s resources for treasure, clothing, and insight, they are to come to him for those things

 2. What might this look like for us, practically speaking?

a. Clothing: When lonely, discouraged, or insecure, rather than going shopping to cover those feelings, go to Jesus and let him clothe you with his righteousness, forgiveness, etc.

b. Gold: When insecure about your financial future (retirement, etc.), rather than focusing on a bank account as your source of security, go to Jesus and remember that your future is secure because he promises: “I will never leave you or forsake you.”

c. Insight: When seeking guidance on practical issues (anxiety, depression, child-rearing, etc.), rather than go to the self-help books, go to God’s Word to provide perspective and insight.

D. Let me back in to the center (v. 20)

 1. Jesus was outside his own church!

2. In tender words he graciously asks to be let back in to the center of this church’s life and promises fellowship and closeness to all who open the door

3. Practically speaking, are there any areas of your life where you have wanted to keep Jesus outside and where he is wanting you to let him into the center (e.g. finances, etc.)

**Discussion Questions**

1. Throughout these seven messages to the churches in Revelation 2-3, we have seen a tender side of Jesus (expressed in statements such as “I stand at the door and knock”) and a severe side of Jesus (expressed in statements such as “I am about to spit you out of my mouth”). How does the Jesus presented in these chapters conform to or confront your own view of Jesus?

2. On Sunday it was argued that the Laodiceans’ symptom of spiritual lukewarm-ness (v. 15-16) was rooted in a deeper issue that involved a posture of self-sufficiency that came from their reliance on wealth (v. 17). As you consider your own life and the lives around you, to what extent do you see that connection playing out?

3. On Sunday we discussed some of the inherent challenges wealth presents to our spiritual lives. Consider Jesus’ words in Matthew 6:24 and 19:23-24. If Jesus were to step into our churches in Orange County today, what do you think his words would be to us regarding our relationship with money and wealth? What specific ideas would he want to impress on us?

4. Jesus counsels the Laodicean church to “buy” from him the things they need rather than go to the world (read v. 18), and some practical examples were given on Sunday of what that might look like for us today. Can you identify any specific ways you want to go to Jesus for your needs rather than go to worldly resources?

5. Consider the image of Jesus outside his own church, knocking, and asking to be brought back in to the center. How does that image connect (or not connect) with your own life at this time? Are there any specific areas in your life where you sense the need to invite him back into the center, and what might that look like practically?