

TO: Whoever has ears,
let them hear...

Letters to the CHURCH

FROM (the):
Book of Revelation

STUDY GUIDE

Week 6

WEEK 6 - LAODICEA

Monday

Read: Revelation 3:14, Isaiah 43:19

Laodicea was a very wealthy city, known for its medical school, thriving banking sector, and booming textile industry. It was known for innovation in all three areas and was so self-sufficient that after a major earthquake in 60 AD, Laodicea refused outside help and rebuilt with its own funds. Living in Laodicea, it may have been easy for people to feel as if they didn't need God - they could get all their physical needs met without leaving the city. That is why Jesus refers to Himself as 'the one who is the Amen, the faithful and true witness'. One meaning of the word 'amen' is 'it is true', meaning that Jesus is the one source of truth. Not society, not the Roman empire, not any one religious leader. Jesus then goes on to call himself 'the beginning of God's new creation'. In a self-sufficient city, where medical advancements were being made, new financial systems developed, and innovations in textiles thriving, it would have been easy to see these earthly advancements as the only ones that mattered. But Jesus reminds the Laodicean church that He is the source of God's new covenant with His people, ushering in a new age. He is the source of new movements, new spiritual freedom, new hope.

What do these scriptures reveal about Jesus?

Ask Holy Spirit to reveal any time, or current areas where you've relied on the world's advancement and security, rather than the Lord's provision and creation? Where do you need to seek Jesus' newness in your life?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you that you are the ultimate source of truth and newness in my life. Please help me to rely on you, rather than myself or the earthly things around me. Amen



This week in your Discipleship Group discuss what new things Jesus is doing in your life and where you find temptation to get your security in the world, not in Jesus.

Tuesday

Read: Revelation 3:15, 2 Timothy 3:5

Throughout this series, we have seen how Jesus uses imagery and metaphor to get his point across. This metaphor of being lukewarm was particularly relevant to the church in Laodicea because, though the city had the illusion of self-sufficiency, it had no water supply. Hot water had to be piped in from hot springs and cold water from cold springs. By the time the water reached the city, both the hot and cold water was lukewarm. Everyone in the city of Laodicea had experienced this lukewarm water and knew that it was not as good as water that was either hot or cold. They could understand not just what Jesus was saying, but why he was saying it. Being lukewarm meant you weren't plugged in to the source, merely getting it second-hand. Lukewarm water isn't hot or cold enough to change the temperature of what's holding it - in fact, what's holding it changes its temperature. Being a lukewarm Christian is not enough to make a real impact in your world - it's might be just enough to keep you going but is easily influenced and doesn't create an environment for flourishing.

What stands out to you about these scriptures?

Is there anywhere in your relationship with God where you are being lukewarm, satisfied with second-hand connection with God rather than being connected to Him at all times? What do you need to do to get back to the source?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you that you communicate with us in a way we can understand. Please point out to

me where I have been lukewarm, so I can come back to the source and make a greater impact on the world around me. Amen.

Wednesday

Read: Revelation 3:17

Yet again, Jesus meets the Laodicean church where they are at. He says that the wealth they think they have is not what they should be seeking. Jesus chooses his words very deliberately when He calls them 'poor and blind and naked'. When He calls them poor, He is saying that Laodicea's strong financial and banking system is not the value they think it is. When he calls them 'blind', He is saying that the city's medical school, particularly their advancements in eye ointments, does not make the members of the church see any better. When he calls them 'naked', he is saying that the city's strong textiles industry does not clothe them in a way that is important. Jesus is telling the church that all these earthly ways they are rich and see clearly and are clothed are worthless, as they are signs of physical wealth, not spiritual wealth.

What stands out to you about these scriptures?

Are there earthly kinds of wealth that you are putting above spiritual wealth? Academic achievement, career success, a romantic relationship, financial status? How is God trying to challenge what you think of those things?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you that the things you value are not the same as the things the world values. Please point out where I am putting earthly values on a pedestal, and show me what I need to do to prioritise things you value. Amen.

Thursday

Read: Revelation 3:18, Philippians 4:19, Philippians 4:6

After showing the Laodicean church their skewed perspective of earthly values, Jesus tells them what they should value instead. The 'gold from me' refers to the spiritual wealth of relationship with Jesus - 'purified by fire' because He had to die in the process. If we have a relationship with Jesus, we have more wealth and value than anything money could buy. The 'white garments' speak to any number of things about God that make us feel sure and confident - His love, His boldness, His power, His plan, the intrinsic value He sees in us. These garments make us feel better about ourselves than any expensive item of clothing ever could. They take away our shame, make us feel sure about ourselves and the way we walk through the world. Finally 'ointment for your eyes' refers to both the clarity and the spiritual and physical healing Jesus can provide. Overall, the message that Jesus is trying to get across is that the church needs to seek Him for their needs, not the world.

What stands out to you about these scriptures?

Do you have any spiritual needs that have fallen by the wayside in favour of meeting your earthly needs?

How can you put more focus on seeking God to meet your needs rather than earthly things?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for showing us that you are all we need. Thank you for giving me the wealth of a relationship with you, the clothing of Your righteousness, confidence and love, and the ointment of Your clarity. Please help me to seek you to meet my needs instead of looking for what the world offers. Amen.

Friday

Read: Revelation 3:19, Proverbs 3:12, Hebrews 12:5-13

In this verse, Jesus reminds the Laodicean church and us that His corrections and discipline are not a sign of hatred or dislike but of His overwhelming love for us. He points out our misdeeds, gives us natural consequences and provides an opportunity to apologise and course correct. He is the ultimate Father (Hebrews 12:5-13), and it is impossible to be a good parent without teaching your child about their mistakes and showing them how to do better. And just as a good parent, He tells us the why behind the what. He does not finish his letter to the church in Laodicea without making sure they understand where they have gone wrong, what they need to change, and why He is telling them these things.

What stands out to you about these scriptures?

In what ways has Jesus been brought correction to you? Have you resisted it, or do you take it as guidance from a loving parent who only wants the best for you?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for being a loving Father. Thank you that you want to help me be the best version of myself for your glory, and other's good. Please remind me of Your love when I resist your correction and help me to remember that you are correcting me as an act of love and care. Amen.

Saturday

Read: Revelation 3:20-21, Revelation 3:12

The last thing that Jesus says to the church in Laodicea is to remind them that He is a personal, loving God. Just like He reminded the church in Philadelphia, He reminds the Laodicean church that He is not a mythical, fickle, angry god like the ones the Roman empire worshipped. When Jesus says that 'we will share a meal together as friends', He is telling the church that He wants to spend time with them, share conversation. When He says that 'those who are victorious will sit with me on my throne', He is telling the church that He wants them to share His victories. Jesus is showing them what a life on fire, not lukewarm, really means. A life connected to the source means a life with constant access to the most powerful being in the universe, a life of easy conversation, shared burden, and shared pain. A life that, once over, would mean eternal joy in His temple, where they would never be exiled, never be condemned, never be alone.

What stands out to you about these scriptures?

What does a life on fire for Jesus mean to you? What does it mean to have a personal relationship with the Most High God?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you that you are a personal, loving God. Thank you that your greatest wish is to have a relationship with me. I'm sorry for the times I've lost sight of that, and I ask for Your help reminding me when I need it. I want to live for you and with you, all the rest of my days. Amen.