

**HARRINGAY UNITED CHURCH-BAPTIST**  
**SUNDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2009.**  
**WHAT KIND OF CHURCH ARE WE, LUKEWARM?**

**TEXT: Revelation 3:14-22**

**Theme: Do not be Lukewarm?**

*Summary of the six Churches*

The loveless Church of Ephesus

The persecuted Church of Smyrna

The Compromising Church of Pergamos

The Corrupt Church of Thyatira

The Faithful Church of Philadelphia

Today, we are looking at the lukewarm Church of Laodicea which is the last in this series.

Laodicea:

**Location:** This City lies 45 miles southeast of Philadelphia and about 100 miles east of Ephesus.

**Commerce/Industry:**

Laodicea was noted for woollen garments because they breed special sheep that produce special wool. These wool garments they export all over the world. Hence the city was very rich and she was the banking centre of Asia Minor

**Religion:**

They serve the god of Men which was a god of healing which was named Asklepios. From this a famous medical school was established and it specialised in two kinds of medicine. The first is an ointment made from Nard to treat sore ears and the second was an eye powder called Tephra Phrygia. It was exported in tablet form which is grinded into powder again and this made the city famous all over the world.

**The Name of Christ**

Christ described himself as Amen which means 'so be it', the faithful and true witness is a repetition of 1:5 and 3:7, the ruler of God's creation meaning the kingship of Christ and that he existed before God's creation and is sovereign over it. Col 1:15-17 "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."

This description of himself was in preparation of the stern rebuke he was going to give them. He gently affirmed his omniscient nature into all things seen and unseen.

**The state of the Church**

This is the only Church that did not receive a commendation from Christ and looking at that it is a serious case. This Church must have been in great spiritual trouble but they do not appear to know their problem.

Jesus said that the Church is neither cold nor hot and he wished the church to be one or the other. There is something here that I want to emphasise about Christ and the freedom he gives to people to make a choice. He did not say to the Church, I wished you are hot rather he wanted them to make a choice because he has given them the free will. What does it mean to be lukewarm, neither cold nor hot? The word used for hot is Zestos which is not just hot but at a boiling point. This may mean that there is no true religion without enthusiasm. This like what Nigel Wright said 'where ever there is the presence of God, there is a considerable noise'. In other words a true religion must burn with fire in our bones.

Lukewarm means tepid. There are hot spring surrounding Laodicea and they are used for healing. Hence anyone who wants to be healed will have to take the awful taste of the hot spring. When they do the water churns their stomach and wanting to vomit.

**Rebuke:**

Against the basis of what was going on in Laodicea Jesus who sees the heart rebuked the Church.

- i. **Vomit you out:** Jesus said that because of their lukewarmness He was about to vomit it out because she tastes horrible and disgusting just like the warm springs around them taste disgusting.

- ii. **Poverty in richness:** Although the church was rich financially, stock wise and other wealth they have acquired which can be seen by everyone but to Christ this Church is very poor. Though the Church needs nothing from people and God, Christ told them that they did not realise that they are wretched, pitiful, poor and naked. Although they have worldly wealth but they are heavenly bankrupt. Although they feel confident about themselves but spiritually they are pitiful. Although they have the financial seat in Asia Minor, spiritually their account is nil. Although they deal with the best of wool materials which made them to feel properly clothed and warm but concerning Christ they are naked.

#### Exhortation:

Invest Wisely:

- i. **Refined Gold:** Rather than relying on their own created by themselves and which would not last, Christ counselled the Church to buy refined gold from Him which is precious, expensive and last because it has been subjected to intense heat and totally purified and this will make them to be truly rich. All earthly riches and wealth are temporal and can and will be destroyed in a moment as we see all shares and bonds collapsed, reputable banks and companies went into administration and many people have lost everything they had worked for. However, Jesus is saying to the Church, invest with me, the true treasure that cannot fail.

Jesus said in Matthew 6:19-21 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. "

Friends, let me tell you that the credit crunch will come again because people never learnt. Someone has said it right that the only thing we learn from history is that we never learnt anything. Greed will always rule people and they will always take advantage of other people. But only in the kingdom of God are true justice, equity and reward. Therefore, invest your lives in God's economy, you cannot go wrong, you will always gain.

- ii. **White Robe:** People of Laodicea placed high value on what they wear and are proud of it. They manufactured high quality wool materials, their city was the cashmere of today but it failed the test of God hence He declared that they were naked. Although their regalia are beautiful and expensive according to world's standard but it could not cover their shame and nakedness.

Only the white robe from Christ is secure, protective and perfect. The whiteness of the gown is symbolic to the righteousness of God which has been imputed on us because of our faith in Christ Jesus. Why do you want to any other clothe that condemns?

He also encouraged them to buy white clothes instead of the black and dark expensive woollen garments on which they place premium. His own white robe symbolises purity and righteousness of God and this will cover their shameful nakedness.

- iii. **Eye salve:** Laodicea's achievement in two areas of medicine gave her the reputation. She was famous for eye and ear ointments and these are exported throughout the world. Yet Jesus told her that she was blind and could not see clearly. But Jesus offered her a better remedy which can help her see better both physical but spiritual.

It is interesting to note that in one's strength lies his weakness and in one's vision lies the blind spot. This is why Paul advised that 'he who thinks he stands must watch or else he falls.

Therefore, we must watch out for the areas of our expertise and strength because our failure and fall could come from there.

**Promises:**

***Discipline:***

Jesus told the Church that discipline is a sign of love hence he was telling them off because of their unacceptable condition.

I want to talk to 'the all knowing people'. You have answer for everything, no one is better than you, hence you are repulsive at the correction of your mistakes, you rationalise everything you do and never accepted any criticism/correction genuinely made to you, watch out! You are heading for danger. The Son of God who sees and knows you better than yourself is warning you because he loves you and do not want you to lose your reward. This is not about I am saved, this is about growth and is about am I being like Christ in my daily life.

***Dining:***

Jesus offers the Church an invitation to open the door of her heart to him so that he could come and share meal with her. The bread of life is offering us his invitation too to open our hearts to him so that he could share the living bread and living water with us so that we will be truly filled with what is necessary and which will last forever. Would you open the doors of your heart to him? Please I encourage you to do so, today is the best day, and tomorrow may be too late.

If you do you will be energised from inside so that the coldness of your life will give way and you will be fire for God and Christ.

***Reigning and ruling***

Jesus promised anyone who overcomes his stubborn habits of closing the doors of his heart to the penetrating Word of God and allows the Holy Spirit to come and shape him or her; the one who gets anointing to his or her eyes to see the will and purpose of God in his or her life and the one who feed constantly from the bread of life and drinks from the living water He will give the right to sit with him on his throne to reign and rule with him.

Friends, this is not an empty promise, the promise is backed up with evidence. Just as he overcame powers and principalities, over sins, Satan and death by his resurrection and he is seated at the right hand of God on His throne, so that anyone who overcomes his pride, submit his life daily to be shaped by the greatest refiners, who invest wisely by buying his precious refined gold and opens his heart to feed daily and regularly from his meals will be give the right to sit with him on his throne and he/she will reign and rule with. Hallelujah!

**Conclusion:**

What kind of Church is Harringay United Church-Baptist? What kind of a person am I as a member of this congregation and his universal Church? Are you loveless like the Church of Ephesus? Are you persecuted like Church of Smyrna? Are you like Compromising Church of Pergamos? Are you Corrupt like Church of Thyatira? Are you Faithful like the Church of Philadelphia and are you lukewarm like the Church of Laodicea?

Wake up friends, today is the day of reparation, today is the day to change, submit to the refiner's hands and let him show you the way he wants you to be not the way you want to be because his purpose and plan for you is better than the ones you have for yourself and God will help you accomplish much more than your imagination. What kind of a Christian are you?