**1. Motivate**

What do you hate to eat or drink lukewarm?

* coffee
* tea – piping hot or ice cold

A Video Introduction is available. View it at <https://watch.liberty.edu/media/t/1_dhk9nni6>

If you have no Wi-Fi where you teach best to download to your computer from <https://tinyurl.com/xyvxc3bm>

* pizza
* a juicy steak
* soup
* Mexican food
* Chinese food

**2. Transition**

Today we see God’s view of lukewarm Christians.

* We don’t have to live a tepid Christian experience.
* God provides all we need to be on fire for Jesus.

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 Don’t Fool Yourself

Listen for Christ’s condemnation.

Revelation 3:14-17 (NIV) "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. 15 I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! 16 So, because you are lukewarm--neither hot nor cold--I am about to spit you out of my mouth. 17 You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.

With what terms did the Lord identify Himself to the church at Laodicea and what does each descriptor say about Him?

* this message is from the “Amen” – the one who has the power to carry out what He says He will do
* the faithful and true witness – tells it like it is
* the ruler of God’s creation – the sustainer of all that is

Now what issue does He have with the church there? What analogy did the Lord use to illustrate His initial complaint against the Laodicean Christians?

* your deeds are neither hot nor cold
* like a lukewarm beverage – it is repulsive
* you think you are rich – maybe you are financially, but …
* you are spiritually wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked!!!

Note the background of the city.

* their water supply was neither cool streams nor hot springs (like neighboring cities)
* it was piped in from a hot springs some miles away and arrived lukewarm
* they had a lucrative trade in black wool cloth (from local sheep)
* they were also a center for eye medicine
* Jesus makes a spiritual point about each of these economic issues to speak to their spiritual needs

How much stock do we tend to put in our own resources (especially money and things)?

* we often are quick to buy the latest gadget or newest version of iPhone
* got to have the newest fashion
* nicest car
* coolest boat
* watching the stock market for how our portfolio is doing

What are some things or situations that may lead a person or a church to become self-sufficient, convinced he/she/it has everything needed to succeed?

* experiencing success
* things are going well
* for a church … numerical growth, building program, numerous baptisms
* for an individual or family … financial gain, advancements in employment
* for a student … good grades, lots of friends, athletic success

Why do these things cause us to feel self-sufficient?

* when things go well, we are not motivated to trust God
* seems we only go to God when we are having problems
* we forget Who it is that blessed us in so many different ways

Missionaries to China have been told by Christians there *not* to pray that persecution in China would end … *they are afraid they will become lukewarm, like the church in America.*

⇨ *Why* would Chinese Christians be afraid of becoming lukewarm without persecution?

* it forces believers to be sure of what they believe
* they know church is more than just a religious club
* if you are willing to endure persecution, you know you have something of worth
* you must daily focus on Jesus in order to survive – we sometimes act like we handle things on our own with occasional or optional help from God
* with persecution, believers are forced to trust the Lord for the essentials of life … we wouldn’t have time for arguing about color of carpet, the pastor’s tie, the style of music, the Bible translation used, etc.

3.2 Do What the Lord Requires

Listen for Jesus’ admonition to the church.

Revelation 3:18-19 (NIV) I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. 19 Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent.

What three commercial ventures mentioned here did the Lord draw upon to communicate His message to the Laodiceans?

* mining and refining of gold
* clothing production
* medicine for the eyes

How do these apply to each of their spiritual problems we saw in the previous passage?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Spiritual Problem | Spiritual Recommendation |
| wretched, pitiful, poor | * buy gold, refined in the fire,
* allow God to remove the impurities in your lives
* become spiritually rich
 |
| blind | * buy salve, put on your eyes
* so you can see spiritually
 |
| naked | * buy *white* clothes to wear
* cover your sinfulness
 |

What key requirement for being in right relationship with God does Jesus mention here?

* repentance
* turning away from our sinful attitudes and actions
* turning to God … for forgiveness, for the empowerment to live a life which honors God

How does God use discipline to refine our faith?

* allows us to experience the results of our poor choices
* gets our attention
* both negative and positive reinforcement
* steps away when we rebel, allows us to flounder on our own
* steps in to rescue us when we return to Him in confession, repentance, and faith
* blesses and empowers us when we allow Him to guide and direct our paths
* recall the concept of “tough love”
* promotion of a person's welfare, by enforcing certain constraints on them, or requiring them to take responsibility for their actions.

3.3 Open the Door to Christ

Listen for an invitation.

Revelation 3:20-22 (NIV) Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. 21 To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. 22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

What is the promise given to the victors in Christ?

* the right to sit with Jesus on His throne
* we will be overcomers
* we have a close and personal relationship with the very God of the Universe

In what sense was Jesus Himself a model of one who overcame?

* was executed shamefully, even though innocent
* was buried
* but was raised up in victory over death
* overcame opposition

What imagery is used in verse 20 to communicate the Lord’s desire to be in relationship with any person?

* Jesus knocking at your heart’s door
* He does not force Himself on us
* He is always ready to bring His wisdom and provision and power into play in our lives

What must be our response to see the fulfillment of His desire for us?

* invite Him in
* be in communication with Jesus
* allow the relationship to grow
* allow Him to exercise His direction in our lives
* surrender to His authority
* submit to Jesus as “boss” in your life

We often use verse 20 in a salvation presentation … how does this actually apply to a believer?

* Jesus is speaking to a specific congregation of *believers*
* He wants to have ongoing fellowship with His children
* when we run our own lives, we push Him aside – *in* our lives but *out* of fellowship – resulting in disarray of the issues of our life
* when we invite Him in, He will shape and guide our lives
* He displays the Fruit of the Spirit through our lives – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

Application

Confess.

* Pray and ask God to reveal those areas where you have been relying on yourself instead of relying on Him.
* Confess the sin of self-reliance and commit to letting Him be Lord of all your life.

Refocus.

* Refocus your priorities.
* Work to eliminate the activities and people in your life that take you away from having an intimate relationship with Christ.
* Determine not to let anything come between you or your walk with God.

Share.

* Share with someone how you plan to make Christ first in your life.
* Tell them of the specific steps you are planning to take to get you there.



Double Puzzle



Piping hot or icy cold … that’s how I like my tea. NOT lukewarm. Jesus referred to the Laodicean Church as lukewarm. Unscramble the clue words from our Bible Study passage and use the numbers to match letters to the message below. Our thanks to an article by Aaron Cline Hanbury in Relevant Magazine. If you get stuck, go to <https://tinyurl.com/xyvxc3bm> . There are other hot items you’ll enjoy also.