



Hot or Cold?

Do you like a REALLY COLD shower or bath? How about a REALLY HOT one? You prefer it somewhere between hot and cold, right? Why? Because it is more comfortable.

Today we are going to study the last of the seven churches in Revelation. It's found in Revelation 3. This church is very comfortable. It thinks everything is going well. But let's see what Jesus thinks about this church. You might be surprised by what He says in this letter.

Do you know what makes this letter unique? It was written to the church of Laodicea, which represents the church at the very end of time—the church of our day!

1 What did Jesus say first? **Revelation 3:14-16** "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and _____

_____ the Beginning of the creation of God: I know your works, that you are neither _____ nor _____. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will _____ you out of My mouth."

What is Jesus talking about when He says our works are neither cold nor hot? A "hot" person would be full of love and zeal for Jesus, while a "cold" person wouldn't care at all about Him. So Jesus is saying that these people are somewhere in the middle, and He does not like it.



2 Do our works show the real spiritual condition of our hearts? **Yes / No**

Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). In other words, if we really love Jesus, people will know it by the way we act. Remember, "Faith without works is dead" (James 2:20).

Our works demonstrate our love for and faith in Jesus. But Jesus points out that the people in the Laodicean church don't really love Him, although they say they do.

3 But what does the church think about itself? **Revelation 3:17** "Because you say, 'I am _____, have become _____, and have need of _____—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.'"

Let's think about some of those words that describe this church.

Wretched. The word "wretched" is used in only one other place in the Bible. It's what Paul said his heart was like before Jesus gave him a new heart. (Romans 7:24.) Then Paul wrote about what he was like after Jesus took his naughty heart and exchanged it for His own pure heart.



(Romans 8.) What was the answer to Paul's wretched condition? It was letting Jesus live in his heart.

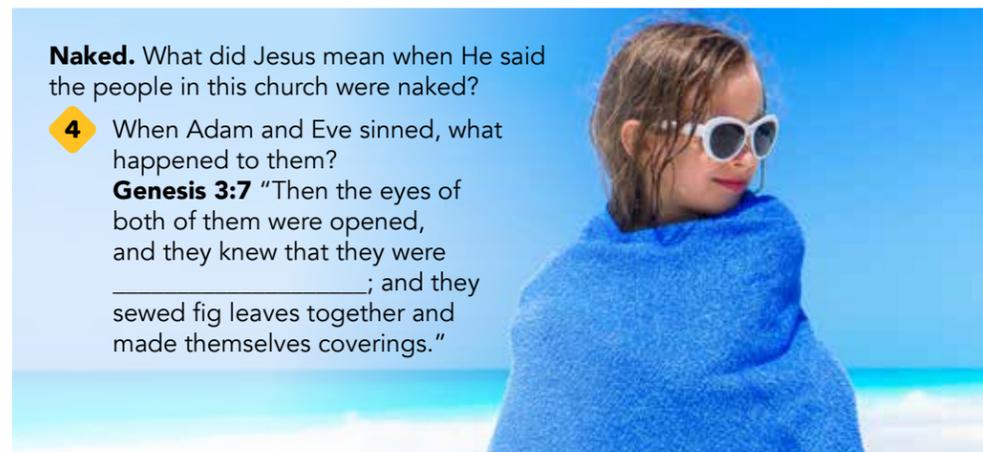
"Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). Jesus' pure heart has His law written in it. So when He gives us His beautiful heart, we become a new person. (2 Corinthians 5:17.) We think and act in a completely new way. Jesus now lives in us, and we delight to do His will.

But as Jesus sadly points out, many of the people in the church of Laodicea have not repented and accepted a new heart, so they are still wretched.

Miserable. What about "miserable?" Paul also said, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable" (1 Corinthians 15:19). "Miserable" can also mean "pitiable." That word reminds us of the look of pity that Jesus gave Peter just after he said he didn't even know Jesus. (Luke 22:61.) Peter thought he was a strong, loyal disciple; but Jesus knew Peter's heart better than Peter did. Likewise, the Laodiceans think they are fine Christians ready for heaven; but actually they are self-deceived. They deny Jesus in their lives.

Naked. What did Jesus mean when He said the people in this church were naked?

4 When Adam and Eve sinned, what happened to them? **Genesis 3:7** "Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were _____; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings."



Sin brings nakedness. Adam and Eve knew they were naked. They realized that they had sinned and felt shame. However, Jesus says that the people in the Laodicean church do not know they are naked. They are sinning when they think they are doing right! Maybe they own a Bible, but they don't know what it says because they aren't studying it. Maybe they know what it says, but think it's not important to obey. Or maybe they believe you can just "follow your heart," or that "truth is whatever you say it is."

Have you noticed that some people who go to church and call themselves Christians don't really love Jesus, obey what He says, or act like Him?

Sadly, this is the excuse many people use to let go of Jesus' hand and quit following Him. Seeing weak, half-hearted hypocrites in church is discouraging to many people.

5 Should we expect to find this problem in our day? **Yes / No**

Jesus warned us that this problem would happen, so we should not be surprised. It would make Satan very happy if we turned away from Jesus because other people made mistakes. But why would we turn away from Jesus just because some of His professed people are in a terrible condition? Instead of leaving the church because of it, shouldn't we do all we can to help them learn to love and obey Jesus?



Tares: Another name for weeds

6 What other illustration did Jesus use to help us know what the church will be like at the end of time?

Matthew 13:24-30 "Another parable He put forth to them, saying: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good _____ in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed _____ among the wheat and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let _____ grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, 'First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.'''"

It is a sad fact that many people who claim to be Christians aren't really Christians at all. But should we be looking at other people and noticing their mistakes and trying to figure out who is a "weed"? No. We don't need to worry about that. Jesus' story tells us that in the judgment, He will show who are really His followers (wheat) and those who not (tares). That's not our job.

But here is a question we really should be thinking about: "Am I a real Christian? Or am I just pretending?" It's easy to think that Jesus' words in this letter to Laodicea are for other people. But we need to seriously consider that Jesus may be pointing out the sad condition of our own hearts.



If this is our problem, we don't need to give up. Jesus is ready to help us.

7 What does Jesus say we need to do to change this terrible condition? **Revelation 3:18, 19** "I counsel you to buy from Me _____ refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and _____ garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and _____ your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I _____, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and _____."

8 In this letter, why does Jesus say, "Buy from Me"? Isn't salvation free? **Isaiah 55:1** "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk _____ money and without price."

Yes, salvation is free. The richest man in the world, or all the rich men together, could never pay enough money to buy it.

At the same time, salvation will cost us everything.

9 If we want to be saved, what do we need to give up? **Isaiah 55:7** "Let the wicked _____ his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."

We "buy" salvation by giving our wicked, lawless hearts to Jesus. Of course, that doesn't pay our way to heaven, but it does make it possible for Jesus to save us.

10 When we do this, what does Jesus promise to do? **Ezekiel 36:26, 27** "I will give you a _____ heart and put a _____ spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them."



Evil Heart



Godly Heart

Jesus tells the church of Laodicea, "Be zealous and repent." Peter told the Jews the same thing when they realized they had done wrong. He said, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

Repentance is turning away from sin. Baptism symbolizes this. Going under the water in baptism represents dying and burying our old wicked heart of stone. No one can live without a heart! Then, being raised out of the water represents a resurrection. But we are not resurrected with our old, sinful heart. No, no! That remains buried. Jesus gives us a new heart filled with His Holy Spirit.

11 Do you think it would be hard to bury a dead person by just sprinkling a little dirt on him? How was Jesus baptized? **Matthew 3:16** "When He had been baptized, Jesus _____ immediately from the water."



Notice that Jesus **came up from** the water. Also, John the Baptist was baptizing people in that place "because there was **much water** there" (John 3:23). If John had just sprinkled Jesus, he would have needed only a small cup of water. And the symbol of baptism wouldn't have any meaning, because sprinkling doesn't represent a dying to self and rising to new life in Christ.

Now here is a little secret: Even after baptism, Satan will still tempt us to sin. He will try to resurrect our selfish wills. Every day, every moment, we will still need to choose to surrender to Jesus.

12 How did Paul describe this daily surrender? **1 Corinthians 15:31** "I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die _____."

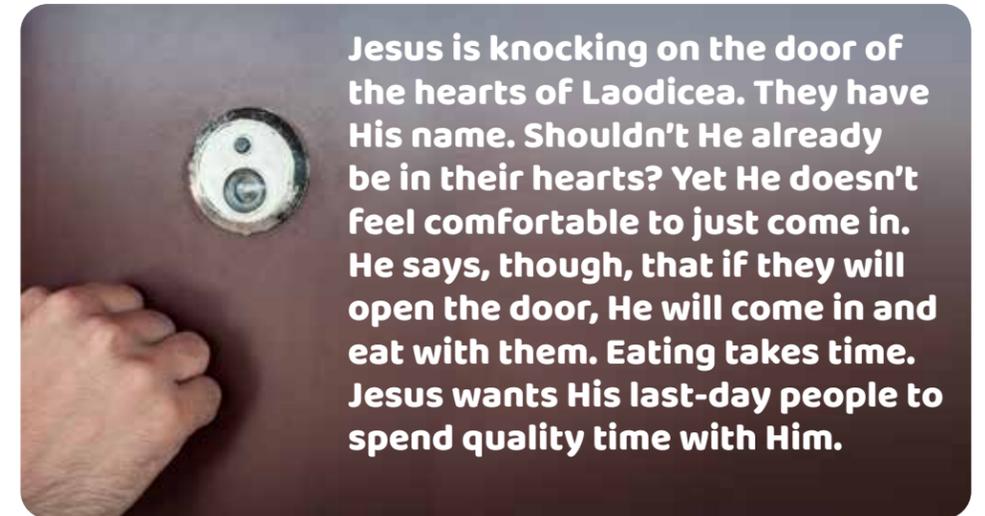
Every morning when you first wake up, get down on your knees and give your heart to Jesus. Then talk to Him all day long.



13 How does Jesus end His letter to Laodicea? **Revelation 3:20, 21** "Behold, I stand at the door and _____. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My _____, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."

When you are tempted to do something wrong, pray and ask Jesus for strength to choose to do the right thing. If you sin, immediately confess and ask Jesus to forgive you and help you do right the next time. (1 John 2:1.)

14 Do you knock when you want to enter your own house? **Yes / No**



Jesus is knocking on the door of the hearts of Laodicea. They have His name. Shouldn't He already be in their hearts? Yet He doesn't feel comfortable to just come in. He says, though, that if they will open the door, He will come in and eat with them. Eating takes time. Jesus wants His last-day people to spend quality time with Him.

Since our lives are so busy, how do we spend quality time with Jesus? Let's look at the example Jesus gave in His own life. He was busier than any of us will ever be. And yet, He spent quality time with His Father every day.

15 How did He do it? **Mark 1:35** "Now in the morning, having risen a _____ while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed."

If it was important for Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God, to get up early to spend time with God, how important do you think it is for us?

16 What habit did King David have? **Psalms 5:3** "My voice You shall hear in the morning, O Lord; in the _____ I will direct it to You, and I will look up."

17 Will you commit to spending regular, quality time with Jesus every morning? _____



Regular prayer and Bible study with Jesus helps our love for Him to grow and stay alive.

If you haven't been baptized yet and would like to be baptized, ask your pastor how you can prepare for this beautiful, symbolic service.

Answers

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 1. True Witness / cold / hot / vomit | 4. naked | 8. without | 12. daily |
| 2. Yes | 5. Yes | 9. forsake | 13. knock / throne |
| 3. rich / wealthy / nothing | 6. seed / tares / both | 10. new / new | 14. no |
| | 7. gold / white / anoint / love / | 11. came up | 15. long |
| | | | 16. morning |