

Text: Revelation 3:14-22 (Pew Bible, pg.1217)

Title: “No Complacency”

INTRODUCTION

Next Sunday is an historic day in the life of our church. We will celebrate our 100th anniversary. Greater things are yet to come; greater things are still to be done in this city. I was so excited last Wednesday night as the church voted to press forward with the final planning for the new West Building and the Community Ministries Building. Next Sunday is also Harvest Day. We don't have a dollar goal, but whatever comes in the Harvest Day Offering envelopes will go almost entirely to Lasting Legacy, our building fund. So pray for a spirit of grace and generosity throughout our church.

Let me also remind you that if you have friends or loved ones that don't know Christ, bring them with you to hear Ronnie Hill on Nov.20. I promise you that your guests will not be embarrassed. They will simply hear the Gospel, and have an opportunity to respond.

Open your Bibles to Revelation 3:14. I am overwhelmed with the desire for every one of you to be so full of Christ that He becomes the all-consuming passion and factor in your life. I see genuine evidence of God doing a great work in the lives of so many of you. We must not let up. “Greater Things” has helped us to focus, but God has so much more that He wants to do. Pray more earnestly than ever. We cannot just go back to our old way of living. God wants to do something among us that will forever change the trajectory of our church. This is so important if we are to see the mission before us as a church.

READ TEXT ... LOOKING UP (v.14) ... LOOKING INWARD (vv.15-20) ... LOOKING FORWARD (vv.21-22)

Oh how we need to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches ... to our church ... to me.

Once again, it's the vision of Christ that has to be foremost in every church. Everything starts here.

Revelation 3:14 - These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation.

“Amen” = We say “amen” at the end of a prayer. It's our way of saying, “May it be so.” Well Jesus doesn't say “amen.” He *is* the Amen. Jesus Christ is the fulfillment, the “amen,” to every promise God ever made. It all comes in Jesus.

2 Corinthians 1:20 - For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ.

“faithful and true witness...” = What He says is true and it is truth. We can cling to and count on every word He says.

“ruler of God’s creation” = Your translation by say “first-born of creation.” Don’t misunderstand that. Jesus was never created. He is as eternal as God the Father. That phrase means that Jesus is the one whom the Father has given preeminence in everything and in all creation.

This is the glorious Savior who has His gaze fixed on one of His churches ... some of His followers ... who have grown complacent and indifferent toward Him.

Revelation 3:15-16 - I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other ... You are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold.

Now this is a fascinating image that Jesus uses here to describe the spiritual condition of these believers. How are we to understand this? It seems to have something to do with the drinking water of Laodicea which was really awful. It actually made people sick.

ILLUSTRATION – We lived in Artesia, New Mexico for six years. It was a wonderful place to live, but the water was awful. The water was “hard” because of the intense mineral content. We got use to it over time, but when our friends came to visit us it actually made some of them sick. We had to buy filtered water for them to drink.

Well the water in Laodicea was a problem, as well. The waters in the neighboring city of Hierapolis were uniquely therapeutic ... hot and medicinally healing. They served a helpful purpose. (Mineral Wells was known for this years ago.) Another neighboring city, the familiar city of Colossae, was known for its cool refreshing waters. (Like water from a cool mountain stream.) The water in Laodicea was neither hot for healing purposes, nor cold for drinking purposes ... they were lukewarm ... nauseating to drink it.

So the picture that Jesus is painting here is a church that has lost its usefulness in the world. It provides neither healing for the hurting, nor living water for the spiritually thirsty. They had grown complacent and were totally ineffective as far as the business of the Lord Jesus was concerned.

What a tragedy to get to a place where the Savior of our soul would have to say, “I’m sick of your complacency.” Complacency leads to compromise which leads to corruption which ultimately leads to collapse.

Laodicea is the picture of the self-satisfied, self-deceived, self-sufficient, self-righteous believer and church. But Jesus loves us still. And He showed them, as He shows us today, how to confront spiritual complacency in your life:

1. LET JESUS GAUGE YOUR TEMPERATURE (v.15).

ILLUSTRATION – The temperature of the human body is one of the most critical factors in the health of that body. You go to the doctor or to the emergency room and one of the first things they’ll do is to take your temperature. And Christ is concerned about your spiritual temperature.

Let the One who truly knows you the best and loves you the most show you your spiritual temperature. The psalmist said, “Search me O God and know my heart...”

Let me just ask you some questions: Have you grown complacent about the things of God? How you grown indifferent to the people around you who do not know Christ? Have you grown complacent about the importance of living a holy life as a witness for Christ? Have you grown complacent about spending time with God in His Word and in prayer every day? Have you grown complacent about using your money to honor God, giving sacrificially to His Kingdom's work? Have you grown complacent about serving in the church and in the community?

2. RECOGNIZE THE CONSEQUENCES ARE SERIOUS (vv.15-16).

It's hard to imagine Jesus so disappointed and displeased with a church or a believer that He says ...

Revelation 3:16 - So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

We don't know exactly what this means. Is it like you taking a sip of room-temperature coffee and it's so distasteful that you spit it out? Is it like chewing on a sunflower seed? You spit out the part that is useless and tasteless ... the hull. We don't know exactly what this means, but we know this ... Jesus is about to act. He cannot tolerate complacency in our lives. There will be consequences. He knows where it leads, and He will do something to get our attention if we don't act.

3. QUIT DECEIVING YOURSELF (v.17).

Notice the discrepancy:

Revelation 3:17 - 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.

They are self-deceived. They say everything is fine, but in reality it isn't.

“wretched” = distressed and miserable.

“pitiful” = pathetic

“poor” = literally dirt poor

“blind” = unable to see clearly

“naked” = You know, in our day we have lost all sense of modesty. We have grown accustomed to seeing people wear far too little clothing than is decent. In ancient days to be naked was a shameful thing. If you wanted to really humiliate an enemy, you might strip them of all their clothes and parade them around in that way.

It all boils down to this: they were complacent and indifferent. They were in a state of denial and self-deception when it came to their spiritual condition. Times of revival are times to get honest with God. “Lord, show me what I've grown blind to in my life.”

4. COMPLETELY DEPEND ON CHRIST (vv.17-18).

Now just look at that first sentence in v.17:

Revelation 3:17 - 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.

If ever there was an accurate assessment of the average American “Christian” (as commonly defined), this is it. Materialism and self-sufficiency are killing us spiritually. We grow complacent when we forget that we need Christ for everything.

Note: This happens when a church isn't repeatedly reminded of the Gospel that tells us that, no matter how well-off we are materially speaking, in God's eyes, apart from Christ we are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.

The Gospel teaches us that we depend on Christ alone to get us out of hell and into heaven. Our righteousness won't do it; His will. But the Gospel also teaches us that we depend on Christ to live the life God has called us to live every day. We can't do it on our own.

John 15:5 - “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Our only hope is to acquire the riches that come only from God. God has everything we need. We think we can make our own lives successful, but we can't. We have to depend on Christ.

Revelation 3:18 - I counsel you ...

“Buy from me gold refined in the fire...” – Laodicea was a banking center known for its incredible wealth. But the riches they needed more than anything were the pure, spiritual riches that come from Christ. Jesus says to us, “Church, all the money on Wall Street cannot pay the price for your sin. Let Me pay that debt for you. Depend on Me.”

Question: How do you “buy” these spiritual riches if you are really poor? You do it by faith. Faith is the currency for every transaction with God.

“Buy from me ... white clothes to wear, so you can cover your nakedness” – Laodicea was also known for the production of a lavish, black wool that made Laodicea a fashion capital for the region. Jesus is saying, “Quit trusting in your fashion to give your life meaning. Start trusting in the spiritual clothing Christ provides ... the white clothes of His righteousness. All the fashionable clothes at Neiman Marcus can't cover your spiritual shame. Let My righteousness cover you.”

“Buy from me ... salve to put on your eyes, so you can see” – Laodicea was also the location of a famous medical school as well as the place where a very popular eye ointment was produced. People from everywhere would come to get the famous eye salve from Laodicea. Jesus is saying, “You can

see everything but what is most important. Your spiritual blindness can only be corrected by the vision that I give you.”

5. EARNESTLY REPENT (v.19).

Revelation 3:19 - Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent.

The sure sign that we are in a love relationship with Christ is that He disciplines us. He loves us as we are, but He loves us too much to leave us as we are. The godly sorrow that God’s rebuke and discipline produce in our lives is intended to lead us to repentance.

So Jesus says, “Be earnest, and repent.” “Come on; get serious!” The wording here means continuous action ... remain earnest ... don’t lose your focus. It’s the opposite of complacency.

This tells me that you and I have control over our spiritual zeal. If you’re complacent today you can’t blame it on anything or anyone else. Take responsibility.

And then repent. Here we are again at repentance. Jesus says it repeatedly in these letters to the churches. Repent means quit sinning and start obeying.

The fact that you are loved tells you that whenever God gets in your face about something *the relationship is never at stake*. You are completely loved and accepted in Christ. That will never change. When Christ puts his finger on something in our lives and says, “That must go,” He’s saying, “I love you so much. I see how this is hurting you and hurting our relationship. Let go of it.” Do you see the difference?

6. OPEN YOUR LIFE TO INTIMACY WITH CHRIST (v.20).

Jesus is saying to this church, “You’ve been complacent and self-sufficient. You act like you don’t need Me; you’ve locked Me out of my church. I want back in.”

Revelation 3:20 - 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.

Imagine what it would have been like for a church to say, “Jesus, come take Your rightful place in our church. Come you’re your rightful place in my life.”

“I stand at the door” = waiting in love, mercy and patience.

“knock” = Christ knocks, but does not break open the door. He draws, not drags.

“if anyone hears my voice” = Oh how important it is that we long for to hear the voice of God in our lives.

“I will come in and eat with him, and he with me” –

ILLUSTRATION – We’re into fast food in our culture. It’s rare to spend more than a half-hour to 45 minutes eating a meal. Ancient cultures were different. The evening meal for most ancients was an unhurried occasion.

Note: When is the last time you have unhurried, intimate time alone with the Lord? Some of you are asking, “What in the world do you mean?”

Do you hear the knocking of the Savior on the door of your soul? **KNOCK, KNOCK.** Invite Christ into your decisions, into your purchases, into your relationships, into your conversations, into your thoughts. Regrettably Jesus is standing at the door knocking to get into the place that is rightfully His. By God’s grace, He has put the doorknob on the inside. You must open the door.

CONCLUSION

If you’ve ever studied the Song of Solomon in the OT you know that it is a love story ... but not just a human love story. It’s a divine love story. On the pages of that mysterious book you see the love of King Solomon for his bride, and the love of the bride for Solomon. But you also see the love of Christ for his church, and the love of the church toward her Lord. There’s a sad scene in Song of Solomon 5, however, when the bride had gone to sleep one night. She hears a knock on the door; it’s her lover. He says, “Open to the door for me, my love. I’ve walked through the dampness of the night to see you.” The young lady replies, “Oh, I’ve already put on my pajamas and washed my feet. If I get out of bed and walk to the door, my feet will get dirty.” She loves her man, and wants to see him, but she’s too comfortable to get up and open the door. All the while the man keeps knocking and knocking and knocking. After a while, she finally forces herself to get out of bed to answer the door, and what she finds breaks her heart. He’s no longer at the door. She can still smell his cologne on the door knob. He had slipped away in the night, spurned by the one he loved.

Jesus is knocking at the door. He wants to take His rightful place in our lives. Will you open the door, or leave Him standing on the front porch?