

BE ZEALOUS

Text: Revelation 3:16-19

INTRO: In the first & 2nd chapters of Revelation, Jesus dictates letters to 7 congregations of His people in the Roman province of Asia. Two of those congregations, He does not need to rebuke. The best He can say to one of the congregations is, "You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments" (Rev 3:4). But there is one congregation--the church in Laodicea--in which He finds nothing to commend. Largely because they have no zeal or enthusiasm for serving Him. Yet, He still loves them. In fact, that is the only reason He rebukes them. If He didn't love them, He would just leave them alone.

I. THE PROBLEM OF LAODICEA.

- A. No mention of immorality as in some of the churches.
- B. Apparently not plagued with false prophets as some of the other congregations were.
- C. Basic problem: lack of enthusiasm for the cause & the things of God--and the spiritual darkness that eventually settles over the unconcerned & indifferent. They were lukewarm, vs. 15-16.
- D. We get our word zeal from the Greek. In the Greek the words zealous & jealous are the same. Only the context determines which English word should be used. AGL: ZELOS, "in N.T., zeal, ardor in behalf of, ardent affection, JN 2:17; Rom. 10:2. In a bad sense, jealousy, envy, malice, Acts 13:45; Rom 13:13; indignation..., Acts 5:17, et. al." ZELOS comes from ZEO: "to boil, to be hot, in N.T. met. to be fervent, ardent, zealous, Acts 18:25; Rom. 12:11.

II. LUKEWARMNESS IN CHRISTIANS MAKES JESUS SICK, vs 16.

- A. Because the person who is indifferent is the most difficult of all to reach with the truth of the gospel.
 - 1. The fellow who is interested in truth & inclined

toward truth is usually easiest to win.

2. The fellow who is antagonistic, who will search the Scriptures to try to prove you wrong is next easiest.

3. The person who is indifferent, doesn't want to talk about it, doesn't want to hear about it, doesn't want to be involved, is most difficult of all. Often he'll "agree" with you to get you to shut up, but it means nothing to him & he doesn't intend to do anything about it.

B. Because the indifferent person will never do the best he could. He will seldom do anything well because he doesn't half try. Most students who fail do so because they did not half try. Our favorite ball teams frequently disappoint us because good players sometimes do not do their best.

C. Because he sends a false message to the unbelieving world about Christ & His church.

1. Jesus was the most caring person who ever lived. The person who wears His name in an uncaring, indifferent, disinterested manner grossly misrepresents the Lord.

2. To those who know the lukewarm Christian as a church member, the message is: "I know what that church has to offer & it's not worth taking. I'd rather go fishing or shopping or watch TV."

III. CHRIST'S APPEAL TO HALF-HEARTED CHRISTIANS. "BE ZEALOUS AND REPENT." vs. 19. But how???

A. Self examination. See yourself as you really are, vs. 17.

B. Self discipline. See yourself as you could be, vs. 18.

...Exercise yourself toward godliness. (1 Tim 4:7)

C. Let Jesus in, vs. 20-22.

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Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, August 23, 1998