

(Revelation Thoughts From the Book) 4. the Letter to Laodicea

by Roy Hession

The letter to the church in Laodicea emphasizes the importance of being on-fire for Jesus Christ and not being lukewarm.

Duration: 53:10

Topics: "Laodicea"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on a personal experience of creating a soundtrack for a trip to East Africa. The speaker discusses the importance of acknowledging one's spiritual poverty and blindness before God, recognizing that our supposed righteousness is actually filthy in His eyes. The sermon emphasizes that these honest acknowledgments make us candidates for God's grace, which is His undeserved love and favor. The speaker also references the famous verse in Revelation 3:20, where Jesus stands at the door and knocks, inviting anyone who hears His voice to open the door and have fellowship with Him. The sermon concludes by highlighting the danger of being lukewarm and unaware of our true spiritual condition.

Transcript

Now this morning is going to be the last look we're going to take at these Letters to the Seven Churches. It would be nice to have spent a morning on each letter, but we're not able to do that. There are five mornings only available in any case.

And tomorrow I want to move on from these early chapters and take a quick comprehensive sweep right through the rest of the book of Revelation and the course of human history, which it indicates, right on to the great and glorious culmination of the coming of the white horse and his rider, the King of Kings, the Lord Jesus Christ, at long last, to establish his kingdom on the earth. It'll be a sweep only, but we hope, I trust, that we shall be praising him for that day that is fast coming, when the King in all his glory will appear. Meantime, he has something he needs to say to his church before he comes, before those processes operate, which are going to culminate in his coming, and the truth may well be they are already operating.

Meantime, he's concerned with his redeemed, that there shall be revival among his own people. Now this morning, we're going to look at the last of the seven letters in chapter three, and a very, very important one

too, for us. You've got your Bible open at Revelation 3. We'll have to bypass the letter to the church in Sardis, that church of which Jesus says, I know thy work that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

Look all right on the outside, it's thought to be a living Christian, but really, things are going dead on the inside. There's a lot for us to learn from that letter, but we'll have to pass by that one. And we're also going to pass by, verse seven, the letter to the church in Philadelphia.

This is one of the two churches in which the Lord hasn't got a word of correction to say, a word of encouragement, and an urgent word. But in verse eleven, behold, he says to that church, having said some other things too, I come quickly, hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. You're not going to lose your salvation, but you can lose that crown.

The rewards, and there is such a thing, quite consistent with the doctrines of grace, of rewards and losses in the Christian life, it's clearly taught in scripture, we should be saved. Some of us, however, may be saved only as by fire, and we shall suffer loss of those special rewards. He has, well, thank God, grace is going to give me a place in heaven, and if he's going to give me a crown, I think in my case, that'll have to be grace too, because I can't see where in the world I deserve a crown.

All I know is here, hold fast, because otherwise you may lose whatever special reward there is for the child of God. Pressures are going to come upon that church, which will tempt them to let it all go and apostatize. And though they may not lose their salvation, they certainly would lose their crown.

And so even in that word of encouragement, there's a little element of warning, just because of the whole context of this great book of Revelation. And so we come now to the last letter, verse 14. And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.

These are titles of Jesus picked up from the first chapter. I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot.

So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable. More literally, the word miserable is pitiable.

Wretched and pitiable, and poor, and blind, and naked. That's Dave Ames, from Lakenheath, in one of his planes. He's going to be with us next week.

We'll ask him how they're getting on over there. Perhaps he can time those flights a little differently. I don't know.

He's a dear brother of us. There's a great bunch of Christians on the US Air Force Base, I can tell you. Where do we get to? Yes, I counsel thee, verse 18, buy of me gold, tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich.

And white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear. And anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.

Be zealous, therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and sup with him, and he with me.

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne. Even as I also overcame, and am set down with my father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

If you found, in these days, the message that Jesus had for those churches, and for your own heart, searching and deeply convicting, I remind you of what it says in verse 19. As many as I love, I rebuke, or reprove, or convict. It's the same word in the Greek.

As many as I love, I rebuke, and even go further and chasten. Be zealous, therefore, and repent. Be assured, if he has some searching things to say to your heart or mine, it's because he loves us.

It's a mark of his love. A father doesn't take too much trouble about the behaviour of somebody else's child. He doesn't love that child in the same way as he loves his own.

And he does rebuke, and chasten that little boy that he loves so much. So you're loved. And what's more, you're loved, and you and I are loved as we are, with all our needs and lacks.

And when he's got you straight, he's not going to love you any more than he loves you right now. And it's because he loves us. Sometimes the word is not always a word of grace, but of truth.

But the truth always must, and surely does, lead us to that grace that is flowing like a river from Calvary's cross. And so he goes on to say, be zealous, therefore, and repent. Because it's because he loves you, be keen on repenting.

Nothing's going to happen to you, my friend, if you do, except you're going to be forgiven. Any objections? I don't think so. Be zealous, therefore, and repent.

And he'll make good all that's gone wrong, and you'll find yourself embraced in his arms again. But he loved you even before he got you in his arms. So I just mentioned that little word as we look more closely at this letter to the angel, or the leader, of the church of Laodicea.

Now this letter begins, as all the others do, with, I know thy works. But there is no commendation of that church, as is the case in most of the other letters. There might be something to commend, doubtless there was, but he doesn't do it.

He goes straight on to the real issue at stake. I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot.

So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my heart. Will you notice, cold becomes, comes before hot. I have this against thee, that thou art neither cold.

I can't say you're cold, he says. I can't say you're all together without some spiritual life. Because, doubtless, most of that group had been born again.

So, Jesus couldn't say that you're cold. Sometimes in our common speech, one with another, so I've been a bit cold lately. Well, it's all right to use these phrases, but here it's cold, means the coldness of death.

And you aren't, if you've been born again, dead in trespasses and not cold in that sense. But he says, but you aren't hot. You're not hot.

You might have been. Maybe in former days you were, but not now. You're not cold, I grant you, but you're not hot in your spiritual walk and life with me.

You're something in between. Lukewarm, lukewarm, lukewarm. And you know, lukewarm water, I think I'm right, Dr. will correct me, is something of animatic.

Lukewarm water could help a person to be sick, if they needed to be sick, to cough something up. And here we have the most astonishing thing, what Jesus says about these people. Because you're neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm, I will spew it out of my mouth.

In other words, excuse the awful colloquialism. Because you're in that condition, you make me sick. And that's what Jesus himself thinks of this situation, not cold, not hot, but in between, lukewarm.

And alas, that's our condition too often, because there's nothing final. You may have been wonderfully hot and on fire, but latterly you're in this in-between place. And back in our churches, perhaps the great major portion of the congregation, for all we know, don't judge other people, put yourself first in this category.

We may be in this position, which is really nauseating to Jesus Christ. And yet it doesn't seem so reprehensible. But this is what he says as to how it appears to him.

Well, this of course applies to us. We're not cold, as I've said. There may be some who have got the coldness of death.

We're always astonished how God sends to us those who are still spiritually dead, never been quickened from the dead. And the thing that, well, surprises us, but encourages us, so often such dear people come back again and again. And it's only after a year or two, one day, the penny drops.

And so we could well be. Some are indeed cold with the coldness of spiritual death. Nothing's happened in their lives yet.

But for most of us, something has. But alas, we're not warm. There's no glow.

We're not on fire. For the Lord Jesus Christ, we are lukewarm. Can I use another word to describe a lukewarm Christian? We can call him a casual Christian.

I like that phrase. I read it in one of the writers from the Canadian Revival. And their aim is to seek the revival of the casual Christians in their fundamental churches.

That's a revival that has been exclusively amongst fundamental Bible-believing churches who've been intolerant of wrong doctrine and so on. And they're strong, influential, but apparently full of casual Christians. A casual Christian, to put it another way, is a Christian who happens, is a, well what shall we say, what's his job? A doctor, a nurse, a clerk, a teacher, who happens to be a Christian.

Rather than a Christian who just happens to be this, that, and the other. And you must ask yourself, how's it with you? Are you, whatever your job is, a salesman who happens to be a Christian? Who happens to be a doctor? Or who happens to be a parson? Or are, is that the way round? Or are we first to the other thing? Who only happens to be a Christian? My dear friend, if Jesus Christ has laid hold on you, he wants

the other things in our lives to be completely incidental, important, the vehicle through which we're going to serve him. But not the distinguishing mark about us.

The distinguishing mark is we're the Lord's. And there's no place, as he sees it, for someone who's half and half. First and foremost for Jesus.

And on fire for him. Even in his daily occupation by which he earns his bread and butter. He's not there firstly to do that.

He's firstly there as the representative of Jesus Christ. And he's to be aglow with that love of Christ there. Hot for the Lord Jesus Christ.

But alas, it isn't always so. And we only happen to be Christians. Casual Christians.

Doesn't that help us? A casual Christian. And when we're like that, I hate to say it, we make him sick. You've got to be one thing or the other.

We've got to be one thing or the other. If you're going to be cold, then be cold. But if you know the Lord then, be one of those who've got no reservations.

On fire, hot, living. First and foremost for him. And everything else brought into subservience to his blessed rule.

And he says, I'd much prefer you to be one or the other. It's this in-between lot that I find, well, it's not my expression. Nauseating is what it means.

Let's take that to heart. And it could be, you know, none of us are in one place for keeps. You may have got back to that place lately.

Or maybe you never really, perhaps ever moved out of being a mere casual Christian. And this spewing you out of my mouth could mean something much more definite than the fact that he finds such a condition distasteful. By the way, he doesn't find you distasteful.

He loves you. Loves me. It's our condition which he finds distasteful.

Now this spewing out of his mouth might mean for them something quite specific. It might mean a chastening. It might mean a putting them on the shelf.

I don't know. It could mean something quite clear. And I believe it could mean that for us.

Because we're in this condition, he may well have to put us on the shelf. That doesn't mean to say he deprives us of our place in the family of God, but he could deprive us of that possible sphere of usefulness and blessing to others. We're aiming at nothing and hitting it every time.

Are you content, am I content to be a mere casual Christian with nothing for others? And not fitting into our place in the body of Christ, that place in which we're to function for him along with others, each in their particular different allotted sphere of service. Now that brings us to ask the question, what makes a person a lukewarm Christian? What really happens on the inside to us when we're like that? Well, this letter explains how we become, get into that position. It is when, verse 17, we say, I am rich and increased with nothing, sorry, and increased with goods and have need of nothing and do not know that we are wretched,

pitiable, poor, blind and naked.

It's when we have great needs, and when we're completely unaware of them, and we think we're just okay, rich spiritually, increased with goods, getting somewhere, doing something for God, something in the church, something in the Christian union, and we're utterly unaware of the fact of our need, our current need, and that always makes a man lukewarm. Nothing more, just not to know how poor and blind and naked we really are, but rather to think the very reverse of ourselves. This is the basis of this sad condition in which we can get.

And please notice the three, the five things which describe the true state of these people, but which they didn't know. First of all, you don't know you're wretched, miserable, that is pitiable. And as somebody who thinks they're just fine, they have been converted for so long, getting on just fine, and really, as he sees you, we're wretched.

We're in rags and tatters. We're a pitiable sight. Even as we do our little job in the church, or try and preach a sermon, we can be wretched and pitiable.

I remember my first wife saying to me, you know, it was your pitiful sight this evening, to see you up there on that platform, struggling in your own strength, to try and get people to decide for Christ. Pitiable, pitiable sight, and yet we're completely or largely unaware of it. And then three more words are used, which the first two are general, these are more specific.

You don't know you're poor. We don't know how really, how poor we are. Everybody speaks well of us, no need to bother, but you and I haven't always got what it takes for the daily life for Christ.

We're falling flat on our faces, we're so poor we haven't got what it takes. And we're poor because we haven't anything really for other people, and yet we may be largely unaware of how poor we really are. And then, we may not always know how blind we are.

Usually, the one person who knows he's blind is the blind man. But there are various degrees of blindness, as you know. And it could be the partially sighted won't know how partially sighted they really are until they meet other people who've got their full sight.

Their partial sight, they can see vaguely where they are and get along quite well. And then they meet a bunch of people have got normal sight, and they hear them speaking, saying what they see. And he turns his poor eyes in that direction, he says, I can't see it.

It's only then he realizes, because he can't see what others see, he's only partially sighted. And you know, there's nothing like a place like this to convince us how partially sighted we really are. We hear people enthusing about the things of God, praising the Lord, full of joy, and we turn our eyes to where they're looking.

But we can't see what in the world it is they're getting so excited about. And then we begin to realize there's something terribly lacking. We're blind.

We're not seeing sinners. They're repenting away like anything. I can't see that.

It isn't there's nothing to repent of, dear one, it's probably you are blind. Others are seeing in themselves what we don't. Then they see Jesus, and they're so released.

I've never had that experience. Oh yes, we haven't known how blind we are. And then naked, we thought ourselves well-clothed, respectable, accepted by others, and because we're doing pretty well, therefore okay with God.

And we don't know, as it says in the words of scripture, that all our righteousness is. And even our supposed service and position in the community or in the church is nothing but filthy rags in his sight, and so often motivated by self and self-glory. And so it is that situation of need, which we're unaware of, that lies at the basis of a man, a Christian, when he's lukewarm.

Okay then, if that's what makes a man a lukewarm Christian, a casual Christian, what makes him an on-fire Christian, hot for Jesus Christ? Well, it's as paradoxous. That which does his work of grace in his soul is first, is basically the awareness of these needs, and the honest confession of them to God. It isn't trying to struggle up a ladder of attainment, it's just seeing how poor and blind and naked we really are, how utterly lacking, wrong on this point, wrong in that relationship, and the honest confession of it to God.

Usually when we're conscious of lack, especially amongst other Christians, we feel a bit ashamed. Christians aren't supposed to have any lacks, we feel. And then we try and strive to meet them ourselves, and tidy ourselves up.

And sometimes we're even jealous of other Christians who seem to have what we haven't. Now the word of God is this, if any man lack, I'm quoting a bit from James 1.5, if any man lack, let him not feel ashamed of that lack, and try and hide it. And let him not strive to meet that lack himself, and there's no need in the world for him to be jealous of other Christians, but let him simply go to God and confess that lack, and do it restfully.

I might almost say, confidently. For the God, it says, to whom he's making that confession of lack in James 5, is the God that giveth to all men liberally, and doesn't upbraid them. Others might upbraid you for being such a poor type, but a God of grace doesn't.

The blame has been put upon his son. And so you begin, Lord, I'm in bad shape these days. I'm in a state of spiritual poverty, and I'm blind.

I can't see what others blind, and I can just realize that all my supposed righteousness is only filthy rags. Yes, says the Lord, and what else? Well, isn't that enough for you? Do you want any more? Oh yes, he said, come on, have some more. You've told me about certain relationships.

What about the other relationships? Please turn the cassette over now. Do not fast wind it in either direction. Well, I can say the same sort of things in those relationships.

Any more? Well, isn't that enough? The more the better, says Carl. You can't be too low to be blessed. All these things, if honestly acknowledged, only make us candidates for the grace of God.

For grace is the undeserved love and favor of God. If you're okay, you're no candidate. This is the extraordinary paradox, and it is this which defeats the devil, and gives you liberty.

He tells you how wrong you are. Well, agree with your adversary quickly, because that wrong, when fully confessed, is what he wants to hear. And the way to a warm, loving, enthusiastic relationship with Jesus Christ, comes in the awareness of need, and the confession of it in real confidence, that you now are a candidate for that grace that flows from the cross in a way you weren't before.

And then Jesus says, and now buy of me what you confess you lack. You confess you lack riches, you confess you lack eye salve, sight, you confess you lack raiment. Nothing in which you can feel presentable.

Now, he says, you confess those things, now buy of me those very things. Buy of me, it is, there it is, in verse 18, gold tied in the father, thou mayest be rich. Oh, you're not going to be left as you are.

Oh, don't get the idea, you just go to the cross and just confess all these negatives and you stay negative. Oh no, it's in order that you might have the positive, that thou mayest be rich, that you might be clad with a new experience, a new consciousness of that blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, which makes even the biggest flop utterly acceptable to God, in which he can walk into the holy of holies as if the place belongs to him. Which it does, by the way, by the blood of Jesus, it is for you, dear one, that place of intimacy.

In the holy of holies, clad in such a righteousness, even you can be bold. And as you confess the negative, ye then, you then get the positive. And eyes begin to be opened.

But he says, buy of me, now this is a strange phrase to use, because he's just told us that we're poor, we're bankrupt, we owe debts to God and to other people. We've offended him and them, and they have a claim, so to speak, on us for reparation, and we have nothing to pay. How in the world are we going to buy gold, and buy raiment, and buy eye salve? Well, now what happens when you buy something? Well, you simply exchange one thing for another.

And that money, that note you give in exchange for those goods, is worth something. It represents very sick work you've done and so on. And you give that and get the other in exchange.

And so buying simply means exchange. If you like, barter. That was the earliest form of trade, barter.

Now do a little bit of bartering with God. What in the world can I give in exchange? I tell you what you can give in exchange for his fullness, your emptiness. I tell you what you can give in exchange for your resentment and hatred for other people, his love for them.

I tell you what you can give in exchange for peace of heart, your worry. And so we can go down the line. It's exchanging one thing for another.

And the wonderful thing is the only thing I have to exchange are these things. And that's what he wants. He doesn't expect you to exchange great prayer for great blessing.

You know there are times when I feel I'm going to have a big pray. I've got a big meeting on, I've got to have a big pray. Because in that big meeting I want a big blessing.

And I'm trying to give a big pray for that big blessing. And you know when it comes to it, I never seem able to have that big pray. It all dries up on me when I have that sort of thing in mind.

God's not in favor of that sort of thing. He says, I tell you what you can bring me. Tell me that you haven't in you to have the big pray.

Confess the negative. And sometimes I tell you, I'm too weak to pray. But I tell you what I do, I say, Lord, I'm in bad shape.

I just haven't got it in me. Just find us what I wanted in exchange. And in exchange something else comes in.

And so we have here this lovely truth. I must tell you it's the way in which I live my Christian life. I enter right into positive, but by confessing the negative.

He wants brought to him as in exchange a letter of the very thing that we need. Take time over it. Don't hurry.

Lord, I'm not in good shape today. I'm not this and I'm not the other. In fact, you'll say, well, I've only got so long for my quiet time.

I must get on to my big list of intercessions. What's the use of doing so? You've got a cold heart. Just take time out to tell him how cold you are, how lacking you are.

And at the foot of the cross where all the culpability of those things was anticipated and settled, grace loves to give that which you confess you haven't got. But you must confess you haven't got it. And this saves us from struggling and striving.

Confess you haven't got it, but do so in faith, nothing doubting, says James. Whenever you have that word faith, you've got to ask yourself faith in what? Well, it could be either faith in his power or faith in his grace. Most of us think of faith in Jesus, faith in his power.

You may have plenty of faith in his power. The leper did. If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

He had no doubt about the ability of Jesus, but he did have some doubts about his willingness. Well, why are you doubting his willingness? Well, look at my state. Man, you don't know it.

It's your very state that draws his heart to you. You'd much better not cover up your sores, open them. And grace is such, it flows right out to a man like that.

And this is God's easy, heartless, unencumbered plan for living not under the law, but under grace. This is something which the weakest saint can bring. And he gives you the very opposite.

I don't know that we need to itemize and spiritualize each of these three things. You could if you had time. If you were preaching on it, you could take it by itself, but there's the principle.

Be aware of that need, confess that need, and bring that emptiness, those lacks, to a Jesus who delights to give. What is that wonderful song? His love has no measure. His grace has no boundary known unto men.

For out of his infinite fullness in Jesus, he giveth, he giveth, he giveth again. There's one verse which says, when I come to the end of my hoarded resources, my Father's full giving has only begun. For out of his infinite riches in Jesus, he giveth, and giveth, and giveth again.

This is the way in which the become hot, hot with love, to submit them again. He that's forgiven much, loves much. He that's come emptiness and finds what he needs in Jesus, that fullness, why, I tell you, it isn't an attainment, he got it all at the foot of the cross.

And such a man, there's no holding him. This is that now for which he lives. Because one of the things he's repented of was some living for other things, and other things taking first place.

That was one of the things he had to say was wrong. Well, if that's so for you, confess you've only been a casual Christian. And it isn't a matter of deciding I'm going to be a better Christian.

Come this way, with need, to a Jesus who giveth to all men liberally and doesn't abrade them for being so lamentably lacking. And on that level, there isn't a fig to choose between the lot of us. We're all on the same ground.

And now we come, lastly, to the famous verse, verse 20. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come into him and will sup with him and he with me.

Now this is a verse which has been much used, and not inappropriately, for evangelistic purposes. That is, to give the invitation to those that as yet are not the Lord's. It was through this verse, on the seafront of this very little town of Southwold, in 1926, that this word came to me.

And walking up and down that seafront, after the little meeting in the little house party that Dr. Joe Church was running, 19 of us, every one of the 19 got saved, back in 26. And the day it happened to me, I got away from the rest. Somebody had been talking along this line.

And I said, Lord Jesus, if you've never come in before, come right on in now. And it's rightly and properly used in that way. But its first use, this first application, is not to those that are on the point of deciding for Christ, but it's used here with regard to a church in need of revival.

Notice, this church is apparently a church from which Jesus has been excluded. He's standing outside its door. And that may be the condition of your church, perhaps of ourselves.

In effect, I mean, you may be saved, but really when it comes to day-by-day living, he's been excluded. You're in control. You're running, doing things your way.

And I want to say that's true of our churches. Churches with the name of Jesus Christ on the outside on the board, but from which, when it comes to practical affairs, he is excluded. And, according to the context, this church from which Jesus was excluded was perfectly satisfied with itself.

Rich, increased with goods, good collections, everything going fine. Need of nothing! And altogether unaware of its true need. And inasmuch as the church is composed of people, we're involved in this too.

Don't think of the others only. And then thirdly, it was a church to which Jesus was seeking readmission. I can't think of a better definition of revival.

Jesus seeking readmission into a church, into a work, into an individual life from which he had been virtually excluded because self's been on the throne. Readmission. Like anything about re, because re is the Latin prefix for regain, and that word is built into the word revival.

Revival comes from Jesus being readmitted. Seeing where he has been excluded. The relationships from which he's been excluded.

Jesus being readmitted. I stand then. The one who's been virtually excluded.

Because I've been irrelevant to you. The man who doesn't see himself to be a sinner and wrong on this point and wrong on that, sees no relevance in my blood, in what I came to do. Therefore I'm excluded.

Although you don't know that need. But he says, I am seeking readmission. How gracious.

Knocking at the door of the prayer meeting. Because you can have a prayer meeting. And the Lord has today sometimes say of our prayer meetings, the Lord hearkens and hears.

This is in from Jeremiah. And no man spake a right. No man repented himself, saying, what have I done? But Jesus is all the time wanting to be readmitted.

Oh, what a lovely difference when he is. In my affairs, I know there are times when I have to realize I've been doing my own thing, even in the Lord's work. And I'm poor and wretched and hardly realize it.

And I thank God for the many occasions when he's knocked and asked to be readmitted. And with him comes life. And revival.

Everything lives. And will you notice what he says? Behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice. Frankly he's not sure.

The whole church is going to hear his knock at the door. There's this if, if, if. And I would suggest, in your praying for revival, don't get a picture of the whole church being suddenly moved in the day on.

There have been occasions when God has swept on the whole congregation. But don't feed yourself with those pictures, even those stories. If.

It's not sure that he's going to be heard by the whole church. But he says there is a possibility of one man, if any man. And dear ones, revival begins with one man.

If any man, maybe there's only one man, heck it is if he's the vicar or the minister. Or it may be someone of no consequent, who does hear his voice, sees their need, and allows Jesus to come back again into the first place. Revival begins with one man.

And if it's a gun in your heart, then your vision is to look for one man. You won't be thwarted, you won't be frustrated if that's the vision. Years ago, back in 47, a year that meant much to some of us in England, Dr. Joe and a team of missionaries and Africans came back to England to share with us here what they'd been learning in revival there.

And they went to a dear old saint, an African saint in Kampala, Simeone Sabambi, for a last time of fellowship before they went. And he said, and Joe will correct me if I'm wrong, when you go to England, look for one man. Because if one man hears his voice, and in this deeper sense, conscious of his ghastly state, opens the door to this one in whom all fullness dwells, you can come back and say, revival has come to England.

Because it's got a beginning, revival's got to begin somewhere. One man. It won't end with one man, but there must be one man.

And so these brothers came to England looking for one man. Didn't matter whether the meeting was big or small. It was only one man they were after.

How restful. Well, God gave them more than one man. Not an awful lot, but a little bunch of us, and perhaps others we never knew, we discovered them even years later, they heard that voice.

They opened the door in this deeper way. And when later, four of us went for the first time to America, Dr. Joe, William Negenda, my first wife and myself. I remember Joe was always saying, Lord, we've come to America, we've come for just one man.

And if you give us one man, we'll go home saying revival has come to America. And very often, the one man was a minister. Of course, we hoped it might be.

And he was at all the meetings. Even the smaller meetings. It was so restful.

Only one man. And God gave us more than one man. And a team has sprung up in that great land of deep brothers.

Some of them come over to here. Some of them will be coming next year, next week one of them's coming. But he doesn't stay with one man, but he's got to begin with one man.

And you could be the one man. If any man, any man, any man hearing me? And alas, he's not heard. But oh, thank God for the one men.

The one women. Perhaps of no great consequence of the church, but revival's begun in that church because one has found their needs met in Jesus and has learnt, as I trust we shall go on learning, how to walk in this new life. And it doesn't stop with one man.

And a bridgehead. A deepening bridgehead. A growing bridgehead.

Sometimes growing rather slowly, but growing nonetheless. It's established here and there. And it began with one man.

And so, dear one, in your vision, that's a restful way of looking at it. But let's all be sure that I'm the one man. I'm the if any man.

And my last thing is this, to say that what does the one man then have to do to be revived? Well, open the door and readmit him. But that needs a little amplification. There's a from Norway.

I think he's dead now. Published by the IVF called On Prayer. And I read it with interest.

And what was my surprise to discover this great volume, On Prayer, is based entirely almost on Revelation 320. And he says, prayer is opening the door for Jesus to enter your knowledge, weakness, and helplessness. That's prayer.

That's everything else. Not coming in to help you to be better, but you saying, Lord, it's all, it's all wrong. Come in, O come.

The door stands open now. I knew thy voice, Lord Jesus. It was thou.

It's the great hymn in our book. There's one beautiful line. How God's blessed it.

I seek no more to alter things or mend. Before the coming of so great a friend, all were at best unseemly and were ill above all else. To keep thee waiting still.

Opening the door is opening the door for Jesus to enter into your and acknowledge emptiness, weakness, and failure. Not asking him to help me, but to take over. And this is the way in which the lukewarm become hot.

Hot with love, hot with gratitude, hot with devotion, and with love for other people. So he is seeking readmission. Where he's been excluded.

He'll show you what's done it, how it's all happened. Back he comes, and blessings abound where'er he reigns. The prisoner leaps to loose his chains.

The weary find eternal rest, and all the sons of want are blessed where'er he reigns. Well, I've been on this as much as you. There are times when I have, I'm on the carpet before the Lord, is that I'm somewhat against you.

I'm outside this thing you're on. Quite easy. Bill Butler and his wife Nancy, Pam and I, were doing a soundtrack for one of our sound slides on our trip to East Africa years ago.

We've got it ready to show you when there's an appropriate moment. We had the microphone in my room, and we said, shall we script it? Well, I said, well, I think I'd prefer a little script. Bill said, no, I think I'll ad-lib it, that's fine.

And away we went, we had more or less the line we're going to go on. And we stumbled and ummed and ah'd, so we tried again, put the tape recorder back. We're no better.

I said, brethren, you know, we haven't brought Jesus in. We haven't even confessed our helplessness in the matter, and hadn't prayed. And we stopped.

And do you know what we did? We didn't start praying first, in an ordinary sense, asking. We repented that we had left him outside. And then we said, come on in, we can't do this.

And we opened the door into our acknowledged helplessness, and he came in. And did he help us with that soundtrack? One day you'll hear it. It's so spontaneous, it's so free, it's bang on.

It wasn't our work, it was his. And it came that way, because we repented having left him outside. And in he came.

So it will be with us. Bless your heart. And remember, he doesn't come in as guest.

He might consent to do it for a moment. He'll up with you, but he wants to come in as host. He does the providing.

Let us pray. Lord Jesus, we can only say thank you for being this sort of savior for people like us. We confess we have been neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm.

We have been unaware of our need, but you're being faithful to us and showing it to us. And thank you for the gracious opportunity that has given us to open the door into that acknowledged state of need, which we tell you of. Thank you for the blood that wipes the past out, and that grace that makes all things good again.

Thank you, Jesus, for being our revival. And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen.

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