

The Cure for Laodiceanism

by Shane Idleman

Shane Idleman addresses the dangers of lukewarmness in faith and offers a call to genuine spiritual fervor in 'The Cure for Laodiceanism'.

Duration: 56:08

Scripture: Psalm 51:10, Matthew 6:16-18, Acts 13:2-3, Ephesians 6:12, James 4:8, Revelation 3:14-22

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Repentance"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the dangers of lukewarmness in one's faith, using the example of the church of Laodicea in the book of Revelation. The speaker highlights the need for repentance, zeal, and spiritual growth through denying self and engaging in prayer and fasting. The importance of seeking God with all one's heart and the power of a life saturated in prayer are emphasized as key elements to overcome lukewarmness and grow spiritually.

Transcript

Where we're at in the book of Revelation is we're at the last church. Jesus has been talking to the churches. Now this is important because He's talking to us today.

Two thousand years ago, it's still relevant today. So the last five or six or seven weeks now with Christmas, we were talking about the different churches. Now we get to the final church.

And let me give you the title to have you kind of take this in for a minute. And I looked that up, that is a word. Laodiceanism.

Laodicea is where the church was. Laodiceans are people who attended or who lived in that community. And Laodiceism is lukewarmness.

Carnality. It's being lukewarm for the things of God. And lukewarm is okay if you're in your bed sleeping.

You don't want it hot. You don't want it cold. You want it lukewarm.

There's something on your wall that you can adjust to 72 degrees and it keeps everything comfortable. Lukewarm. But when it comes to coffee, you like it lukewarm? Some of you do.

I didn't know that. It's not good. What about black tea or tea drinkers? Do you like it lukewarm? No, you either want to put it in the microwave or put some ice in it.

There's this lukewarm state. It's good in some regards, but it's terrible for spirituality. Let me make a statement to you.

I'm hoping you can hear me. Lukewarmness will kill spirituality. Jesus said, if you're lukewarm and I taste that and you're lukewarm, I'm going to throw up.

Jesus said, I'm going to vomit you out of my mouth. This is something we need to pay very close attention to. This is the last sermon of the year.

We've got to hit the ground running going into 2018. At the first service, as you know, there was a survey that went out about 2018 about the church. I actually covered that at the first service.

All you have to do is click the live feed link. Fast forward to 35 minutes and you can hear some of the things that went over in regard to the surveys and the church's direction, how we're doing financially as a church, which is we're doing very good, and everything's going good in that regard. So go listen to the first service.

Fast forward to the 35 minute mark, and that just saved me 8 minutes. How's that? Ok? Instead of trying to repeat everything. Revelation 3.14 And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans, write, these things says, the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of creation of God.

So Jesus is saying, I am the faithful witness. I am the true and living God. I am faithful to the end.

I will not let you down. Here's what I'm saying to you. Everyone in this audience.

He is saying this to us. The beginning of creation of God. I want to clarify this because we would consider a cult.

Some cults teach that Jesus was created. He's not God. He's a created being.

He's the brother of Satan or whatever you want to say. The Bible doesn't say that. The Bible says throughout Scripture, in Colossians for example.

Colossians 1.16 That in Jesus Christ all things were created. All things have been created through him and for him. The disciple Thomas said, My Lord and my God.

It's not a created angel. We don't worship a created being. He is fully God, but he was fully man when he came here to earth.

Try to understand that. You're going to get a headache. We just know that the Scripture clearly teaches it.

That Jesus was not created. Also what's interesting, the beginning of the creation of God. The word beginning there can also mean origin.

In other words, all things originated from Jesus Christ. Everything. So that's a good point to clarify.

That's who's speaking to us. Speaking to the church. And now I'm going to get into the deep stuff.

Are you ready? If you're asleep, wake up. If you're looking at your phone, turn it off. If you're ready to go take a bathroom break, just wait.

Give me 30 minutes. Maybe 45. I'm going to try to go quick.

But just pay attention here. Now, I want to just first encourage you. I don't want anyone to leave here defeated.

Defeated and let down and depressed. Often I've noticed that God will reveal something in order to heal you in that area. But when it's revealed to us, often instead of being healed, we get mad and we leave.

Right? You ever hear something difficult? You're like, well, I'm not going to hear that. I'm out of here. But God does that through His Word.

It hurts in order to help. He reveals something in order to heal a certain area. So hearing about this topic, I will tell you up front that it's not comfortable for many people.

Many people are living in a lukewarm state. That's why the churches are conditioned in. That is why our nation is in the predicament it's in.

That's why many of our lives are in certain predicaments as well. It's because we are living in a state of lukewarmness. And you want to know why? Because it is comfortable.

Isn't it? Don't turn up that thermometer of my heart very high. Right? Don't turn it up. I'm comfortable here, Shane.

Go minister to the homeless? No thanks. I'm comfortable. Go get involved in the hospital ministries? Mm-mm.

I'm comfortable. Go help with the children? Are you kidding me? I'm comfortable. Counsel a family in distress? Or marriage counseling? No way.

I'm comfortable. I'm acting like there's a gauge on my heart. 72 uncomfortable.

I'm not going to do anything that's going to burst my bubble. And God's comfortable, right? It's church on Sunday. Budweiser on Monday.

Church on Sunday. Raiders on Sunday night. I've got church now.

I don't want to get past that. I'm comfortable. Unfortunately for you, the Bible is not about being comfortable.

Unfortunately I should say. Did I say unfortunately? But it's a good thing because when God pulls us out of that comfort zone, things start to happen. Things rarely happen in the comfort zone.

He gets us out of that lukewarm state. So what I'm going to offer is the cure for apathy, complacency, and spiritual laziness. That's what the Laodiceans were going through.

They were apathetic, complacent, and spiritually lazy. Don't raise your hand, but does it apply? Just kind of shake and I'll see you. The person next to you doesn't need to know.

But just so you know, this can creep into my life as well. All of us. Nobody is above lukewarmness and being in this Laodicean state.

You remember that old hymn, Prone to Wander? Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love. Oh, Lord, take and seal it.

Seal me from the courts above. Seal my heart. See, there's something in us that's prone to wander.

And as we wander, when we wander, when we get into that state, we become comfortable and complacent. And we become lukewarm. Lukewarm has its place, as I said earlier, but not in spiritual matters.

And we like to hear that God has a plan for you, right? Best-selling books out there. God has a plan for you. Do you know the devil has a plan for you as well? He has a plan for you.

Hyphen, lukewarmness. That's what his plan is. He wants us to be lukewarm.

He wants us to be not on fire for God. He wants us to be irrelevant. He wants us to be bored and lazy.

That's his plan for us. And there's so many distractions that come in and can take us away from the things of God. So let's read where the rubber meets the road.

Verse 15. Isn't that interesting? That's a pretty big deal. Jesus said, I wish you're hot, I wish you're cold.

But because you're lukewarm, I'm going to vomit you out of my mouth. Now, it would be pretty bad if he left us hanging there, wouldn't it? But he gives a cure for this lukewarmness, for this Laodicean aspect that can rise up in our lives. But this shows me the seriousness of it.

When Jesus says, I will vomit you out of my mouth, I will vomit this life. Basically, it's this lifestyle that makes Christ sick. It's like, have you ever seen that person that just, that is just so disgusting.

Why do you say that but live this way? It reminds me of a story I heard about a young man coming down from the hill country. Right, we can, it makes sense here. He's coming down the hills.

He's going to a party in this town. He heard, oh man, I heard the party life is wonderful. Up all night.

The kegs are flowing. I can't wait to go to this. And the man stopped him and said, okay, well, why are you bringing your Bible? He said, well, if it's as good as people say, I might stay till Sunday.

Now, you're going to get that when you're driving home. The point is, right, well, if this party life is as good as they say, I'm not going to go home Saturday night. I'm going to stay for church on Sunday.

See, you can't have Sunday and then live like hell on Monday. Jesus said, I vomit that lukewarmness out of my mouth. It's a repulsive thing.

Now, I'm going to talk about an aspect here of a theological division where some people are a little bit divided on this. To me, it's not a hill to die on. But personally, again, personally, okay, you don't have to come up and argue.

I believe that hot and cold can be both good traits. Here's why I say that. Jesus said, I wish that you were either hot or cold.

I wish that you were either one of those. But because you're lukewarm, I'm going to spew you out of my mouth. However, one side would say, well, if a person's cold, cold to the things of God, at least we know where they stand.

They're not a hypocrite. They're not saying I'm a Christian. They're living like they're not.

We can deal with cold. You're either hot or cold. But if you're lukewarm, and there's validity to that.

I see what they're saying. But just because looking at the sentence structure, looking at the grammar of it, What Jesus is saying is, I wish, my desire, I desire that you're either hot or you're cold. One or the other.

But lukewarm, it's not productive. Lukewarm coffee, no. But hot coffee, yes.

And now they've got iced coffee? You guys are crazy. Iced coffee, it's cold, ice cold. Or what about a tea? Same thing, right? Hot or cold, the benefits.

Now, I remember many years ago, reading commentaries and different things they talked about in Laodicea. There might have been hot springs, representing people could relate. It's hot, hot springs, refreshing to the body, going sitting there like a sauna.

And then there's cold, cool springs coming down from the valley, going into the valley there. So you can have both of that. And we see that lukewarm is not good.

Have you ever been hiking up in the mountains or anything, and you see this little stream coming down? And what about if it was lukewarm? And you're hot. It's 75 degrees. You're up in the Sierras.

And you want the cool, refreshing. See, this cool has a sense of refreshing and this nourishing element of it. Ice, and you put in ice, and you refresh the drink.

So that's what I believe he's saying here. But we know that fire, hot, describes passion and power. Be hot for Christ.

Or cool represents, cold water represents refreshment and nourishment. Basically, our character is pleasing to God versus nauseating. Now, I want to be careful because sometimes people think, Shane, are you talking about being perfect? No, I'm actually talking about being real and genuine and transparent.

And serving God with all of our heart, with all of our strength. See, there's a difference between somebody who says they love God, they go to church, but then there's no living like that. There's nothing in their life that reflects that.

They're in a lukewarm state. They look like the world. There's not a difference at all.

So Jesus is saying, come out from among them, right? Be separate. Be set apart from me. And the person who struggles, you can struggle and say, but God, you are my focus.

I don't want to be lukewarm. And you're transparent. You're open about it.

You're trying to get back on track. You're loving God. You're making changes.

You're seeking him. Though you fall one step back, two steps forward. And it's this pursuit for God.

That's not lukewarm. That's welcome to the Christian walk, amen? I mean, come on, 11 a.m. This is Christianity 101. We fall and we get back up.

Okay, you got me, devil, but now I'm coming back. And we go forward. And you take a step back.

You go two steps forward. And you get back on track continually. That's not lukewarm.

Lukewarm is just an apathetic attitude towards God. Here's the definition. It's the death of conviction and the rise of unfaithfulness.

Lukewarmness is the death of conviction. Do you remember when you used to be convicted about things? I've been there before. A conviction, a strong conviction.

But then what happens to that conviction? It starts to wane. It starts to decrease. In spirituality, in Christianity, always remember this.

It's always a fight. You're either fighting to gain ground, or you're fighting the enemy trying to pull you back. It's a fight.

It's a struggle. That's why Paul says it's warfare and contending and fighting. So it's the death of conviction.

Conviction. What is conviction? Well, let me just show you. It's this.

Right? Conviction. I'm living by this. Now it's like, well, I don't really care what this says.

Now I'm living by the flesh. I know what this says, but I'm no longer convicted. Isn't that interesting? People say, Shane, I'm just not convicted about that like you are.

I used to be convicted. Look at the media. Talk about the conviction that is the death of conviction 40 years ago.

Do you think anything that's aired today would have been allowed 40 years ago? Just anything. Well, maybe Fixer Upper. Okay, I'll give you that one.

But anything else. Right? Most of the things would have never been allowed. Why? Conviction.

That's what the enemy does. He's got a big sledgehammer. He just keeps chipping away, chipping away at the foundation.

Let me get this foundation of integrity. That's no longer important. Now you can't even trust the news.

I mean, I remember when journalists, if they didn't like something, they would at least report the accurate facts about something. Now you don't know what's going on. Conviction.

The loss of integrity. The loss of morality. Hello? The loss of morality, of integrity.

That's what lukewarmness is. And America has been rocked to sleep. That's wonderful for a little baby, but it's terrible for a church.

We've drifted into a lukewarm state. Let me just be upfront and honest for a little bit. Of course, I am with this, too.

Maybe I shouldn't have said that. But let me just be upfront about some things. That's why there's not a lot of people that like prayer meetings or worship mornings.

That's why there's not a lot of people that attend church regularly. It's that mentality of, I don't want too much of God. I'm in this lukewarm state.

I'm comfortable. And that's what Jesus is saying here. That's his challenge to us.

Here's another challenge, though. When a person is lukewarm, sometimes when a believer is lukewarm, the same character traits you can see in an unbeliever. And a person who doesn't know the Lord, they almost look the same sometimes.

How do you know the difference? Well, I give you two examples of a person named Tanner and a person named Tommy. I'm just making up names here. Tanner loved the Lord when he was little.

Grew up in a Christian home. Read his Bible. Went to Awana.

How's that? Knew some scriptures. But throughout his teens and 20s, he drifted from God. So he's now lukewarm.

He doesn't have conviction. He's not really going to church. He's doing things he shouldn't be doing.

He's lukewarm. But that looks just like his unbeliever friend, Tommy. But see, Tanner is convicted.

Tanner knows there's something missing. He knows he needs to get back to that relationship he used to have with the Lord. He wants that.

Like a deer that pants after the water broke. He has this desire, I want to go back. I miss that.

I need that. So he's got this internal struggle. Tommy has no struggle.

He's not convicted. He's doing what he needs to do. God is not in his thoughts.

He's not convicted about what he did last night. But Tanner, on the other hand, is. See, that's the difference.

So don't let this sermon beat you up. Well, maybe a little bit, right? But not to where you're beat up and don't do anything. Let it convict you.

Let the hammer of God sometimes fall. Let it come down and crush pride. Let it come down and crush hypocrisy.

Let it come down and crush lukewarm living. So that the fruit of that is vitality and a relationship back to God. It's okay not to like what I'm, not to like to hear what I'm saying.

It's okay. I bet if we could have you fill out a survey, a lot of people would not like what I'm saying. That's why a lot of people often don't come back to church.

Now, the lukewarm church, though, it's interesting. See, the pulpit attracts what the people are hungry for. There's many lukewarm churches.

You will not hear about repentance. You will not hear about sin. You will not hear about hell.

For sure not about hell. Or God's judgment. Or the wrath of God.

Or the blood of Christ. Or holy. You're not going to hear about any of that.

Why? Because lukewarm people do not want to hear that. So the pulpit, if nothing is coming out and the pulpit is lukewarm, the majority of the people will be lukewarm. Because he set the temperature on the bathwater.

And they're all sitting in it. It feels lukewarm. It feels good.

But if you put a little heat into that sermon, you put a little fire, you put a little passion, you put a little Holy Ghost preaching into that, and the people, they either wake up, they either have a breakthrough, or they break out. Right? It's one or the other. I remember, I think it was William Steele.

He was a famous Puritan author. He said when people, for the first time, come under the sound of Holy Ghost preaching, they are mortally offended because they've never been exposed to the white light of the gospel. It's true.

They're like, what? I've never been exposed? What is he saying? Does the Bible really say that? Does the Bible really say that? And they've never been exposed to the white light of the penance. See, the gospel hurts before it helps. You have to say the wages of sin is death.

Ah, but here's the Savior. Point to the cross. Point to the solution.

See, it has to hurt. I don't see my need for the, what does that mean to me? That means absolutely nothing to me if I don't know why it's there. But if somebody, you read, the wages of sin is death.

I'm lost without God. Christ is my all-sufficient sacrifice. He paid the penalty, propitiation.

He absorbed the wrath of God so I don't have to. Then that becomes a place of adoration, a place of joy and of worship because you understand. You understand the good news because you were given the bad news.

That's why we often say you can't understand or appreciate the good news without the bad news as the backdrop. So it's the same thing here. These things are meant to hurt initially but often to heal.

And to restore and to rebuild our lives. Because doesn't something happen to our, I mean, you sit on a tack, you're not going to stay sitting there. Your kids can put their hand in the door.

They're not going to leave it there. Something hurts so the action takes place. So that's Jesus' heart with this.

Here's why he's so strong, I believe, in these words, because these people are deceived. These people are deceived. Verse 17.

Jesus says, because you say, because you say, I am rich and I have become wealthy and I have need of nothing. Oh, my goodness. This poor church.

These guys are so lost. And I think he's saying here because you say. They are boastful.

They are proud. They are an arrogant church. We are rich.

We are rich. I have pastors tell me this. They say, Shane, that's not true about repentance and lukewarmness.

Look at how big our building is. Look at how many people we have. We have more people than you.

Who are you to tell me we're lukewarm? Boastful, arrogant, proud. We are rich. We don't need anything.

We're clothed. We don't need anything. And Jesus uses these very scathing words.

But you do not know that you are wretched. You are miserable. You are poor.

You are blind. And you are naked. Now, not physically.

Spiritually. Think about what he's saying here. You are wretched.

You're miserable. You're in a miserable state spiritually speaking. You're poor spiritually.

You're blind. You can't even see. And you're naked.

You're not clothed with God's righteousness. And my heart and my passion is for this type of church, too. Because I do believe a lot of unbelievers can sit and enjoy the lukewarmness.

And not realizing that they don't even know the risen Savior. They can come on in. Because in churches that preach all of God's Word, an unbeliever is not going to stay there very long.

They're either going to get convicted and saved. Or they're going to say, bye. See you later.

Try that. It doesn't work. Next on my list.

Because the Word of God will keep convicting and keep convicting. If a person is open to that conviction. And they turn to God.

Verse 18, I counsel you. God says, I counsel you. Which means I'm telling you, buy for me gold that is refined in the fire.

That you may be rich. And white garments that you may be clothed. And the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed.

What a good God. You're naked. You're poor.

You're blind. You're miserable. But come to me.

Let me clothe you. Let me cover. Let me hide that shame, that guilt.

I counsel you. I'm telling you. Come to me.

Maybe that's a word for somebody this morning. I didn't hit on this at the first service. But if you're carrying tremendous amount of shame and guilt because of your past.

Because of where you are now. God can redeem all of that. Set you free.

And clothe you in His righteousness and His love and His grace. And yes, there are consequences. We feel.

We know our past. But our past no longer holds us. There's not the sting of shame and regret because it's been dealt with on the cross.

So yeah, I can think of my past and go, oh boy, I'm glad I'm through that. But the enemy does not have that over my head anymore. So think about that.

If you're dealing with shame and guilt. God says, I counsel you. Turn to me.

And I will put white garments on you of purity and holiness. And anoint your eyes with eye salve that you may see. It's this healing of the eyes that need to take place in order to see what God is doing.

So let's stop here for a minute and just unpack this. Wealth in and of itself is never a mark of blessing. Never a mark of blessing.

In and of itself. They say, we're wealthy. Doesn't that happen a lot? How many times do we think, look, God is blessing me.

Right? God is blessing me. Have you seen my car? Have you seen my bank account? Have you seen my home? Look at this wonderful job God gave me. God is blessing me.

No, the devil can bless you too. Right? Just drive that way 60 miles and there's a big Hollywood sign on a hill. San Francisco, New York, everywhere.

Just because there's abundance doesn't mean that God is in it. The devil can bless. The devil can prosper.

And I hear that a lot. Health in and of itself is never a mark of blessing. And in need of nothing in and of itself is never a mark of blessing.

Now this is a dangerous spot to be. If you're in this spot, I would encourage you, reassess your life, examine your heart. Because I run into people, they say, Shane, I don't need God.

I'm doing fine. I'll retire in a few years. House is paid off.

I got the motor home to take some trips. I'm fine. See, what you're telling me, Shane, doesn't apply to me.

I don't care. I'm not buying what you're selling. It doesn't matter.

I'm in need of nothing. I'm in need of nothing. We have to be careful because that can slip into a Christian's life as well.

That's why I often say our blessings can become our curse. And what I mean by that is any time God would prosper his people, throughout the Old Testament primarily, prosper them, they would become wealthy in abundance. Harvest was coming.

Harvest tons of food, tons of wine, tons of everything. They begin to grow lazy and complacent. He would call the prophet Hosea.

He would call Joel. He would call Amos. Micah.

Nahum. Habakkuk. Isaiah's or the Jeremiah's.

And they would go and they would call that people away from that luxury. Instead of worshiping the luxury, worship God. See, it's a dichotomy of some sorts because you seek God.

God wants to bless you. God blesses you and then that blessing becomes idolatry and you forget God who gave you the blessing. And that's often at the heart of Laodiceanism, lukewarmness.

All of us are susceptible, right? The money's coming. See, it's interesting. When we have prayer mornings or worship mornings, it's usually people that are going through something.

Or they're interceding for family members. They're going through something. I just got the call.

I lost my job. 30 years at Lockheed. What am I going to do, Shane? I bet you're right here.

I bet you're right here the next worship morning. Why? Because you're in need. Shane, my spouse just left.

That's why I'm at church every week, at worship every week. Do you have midnight services? Do you have midweek services? I need God. Isn't it interesting? When we're not in want, when we're not in need, we have this DNA in us.

Maybe it's a chromosome or I'm not sure, but it's like, okay, thank you, God. Instead of thanking him, we allow this abundance to become idolatry. That's interesting.

God says, I counsel you. I tell you to buy from me gold that has been refined in the fire. He's not talking about real gold, right? Here's an ounce.

It's 1,600 bucks an ounce, whatever it is now. He's not saying that. Gold refined in the fire.

All the impurities come out when gold is refined. All the things that have come into the gold and maybe melted with the gold when it was first formed, it begins to come out. So God's saying, come to me.

Buy from me gold refined in the fire. This purity, this holiness. But how do you buy from God? Think about that.

God says, buy from me. How are you going to buy from God? It's very simple. You invest into the relationship.

You invest into that relationship. You turn your affections away from gold, riches, comfort, and ease. You turn your affections away from those and your affections towards God.

You buy from God this, not working for your salvation things, but you buy from God what he's offering by turning to him. How many things in the Bible are conditional? If you seek me, you will find me. There's a sign right out front that says, if my people humble themselves, pray, and seek my face, and turn from your wicked ways, I will heal their land.

If you seek, if you do this, if you, if you buy from me. Now these things in and of themselves are not bad, of course, right? We need comfort of some sort. I'm glad I'm not always going to always have a tack in my shoe.

I'm serving God. Oh, there's another. I got one.

I'm just, there's no ease. There's no, thank God for a thermostat. Right? Put that thing on 72.

You know, and just, you know my temperature is 72 now, right? Based on the sermon. But, you know, because the kids want 80. And, you know, and it's just, it's interesting.

I'm getting off point here. But it's okay to want comfort, you know, sometimes to relax. Who doesn't want to sit down on the couch and take off your shoes and just relax? And God has created us for that.

Money, we talk about money a lot, or gold, or riches. If God blesses a person with that, and there's people he gives you abundance, then you'd be a blessing to others. You know, you use that wisely, but it's when these things begin to control and they have our affections.

How do we know we have our affections? Because we'll put them before church. Do you know why most people are not at church? It's because they have higher priorities. They've got to play with the toys in the garage, right? And we'll get to church when it's convenient.

That's why I often say when God's the priority, when God is the priority, then everything else comes around him. And that, he's the priority. Yes, enjoy life.

Have your vacation. Do things. But where are your affections lying? So that's what he's saying here.

Buy gold from me. I'm counseling you. Buy these things from me.

God counsels, but he doesn't force. God counsels, but he doesn't force. He counsels us.

He tells us to do things. And that's one thing I think that's kind of hard for me, is I wish God spoke a little louder than the world. But it's often that still, small voice.

God will not compete for our time or our attention, right? We turn up the television, God doesn't turn up his volume. Hey, hey, I'm up here. It's that still, small voice.

It's that still, small voice. You need a quiet place, a quiet hour, and a quiet heart to hear from God. You get your heart.

Robert McIntyre wrote that in his book, *The Hidden Life of Prayer*. I highly recommend that book. You've got to foster these things.

And you can read God's Word. You can read God's Word to somebody. And it's penetrating.

It's life-changing that they need God. And then you hear the next day, they just died in an automobile accident. Lord, why can you have been louder, louder, louder? But it is, it's a conviction of the Holy Spirit.

And what's sometimes more, more motivating? Your father yelling at you, or your father lovingly lowering his voice and encouraging, Son, I love you. I love you. I love you so much.

You cannot go that way. Turn back to me. Turn back to me.

It's that still, small voice. It was funny, Elijah was running and hiding. And he said, God, just kill me.

The prophets of Baal, I killed them, and now Jezebel's going to kill me. Lord, it's just me. It's just me that's left.

Kill me. Take me. And God said, don't worry.

I have 7,000 who have not bowed their knee to Baal, nor they've kissed his image. He wasn't in the fire. He wasn't in the earthquake.

He wasn't in the storm. He was in the still, small voice. That's how you're going to hear from God, folks.

Get rid of the clutter. Get rid of the junk. Get rid of the things that are distracting you.

God's not going to talk over Facebook. He's going to tell you to turn off Facebook. Turn off the media.

Put me first. Seek me. And you'll hear that still, small voice of a loving father.

Because the world is loud and confused and impatient. God is calming and reassuring and not in a hurry. That's the way you hear when he says, listen, seek my counsel.

And then verse 19, as many as I love. Jesus is saying this to you. Everyone in this room, listen.

Jesus is saying, as many as I love. I can tell you by the authority of God's Word, I can stand here and know that a lightning bolt is not going to hit me. Okay? God says, Jesus says, as many as I love.

He loves every single person in this room, every single person that is hearing this message later. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes shall not perish but have everlasting life. He loves all of you.

And like a loving father warning a child to come out from the street, I can see the semi going at 60 miles an hour. You need to get out of that street. He says, I love you.

I love you. Here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to rebuke you.

I was hoping for something a little bit different, God. I'm going to rebuke you and I'm going to chasten you. If we had time to unpack that word, it's not real pleasant.

But there's something in us that's at war with God. And I don't know about you, but people often don't change until they're rebuked. Me and my wife were just talking just yesterday.

The big lesson we've learned in this church, we planted the church seven years ago with ten people, and this year we've learned it the most, is communication. You've got to have hard talks with people from time to time. Because if you're not confrontational, you know exactly what I'm talking about, right? Oh, just fix itself.

I'll come back next week, it'll be all fixed. No, it won't. Loving rebukes.

When you love someone, you go to them, hey, I want to help you in this area. And you can also gauge their heart. Are they sincere? Because if a person is sincere and humble, they'll listen, they'll learn, and they'll grow.

So it's the same thing here. God says, I love you, and I'm going to rebuke you, and I'm going to chasten you. Therefore, be zealous and repent.

There's that word again, repent. I cannot get away from that word. How about you? Is there any other word chain, any other word we can start referring to? I mean, repentance in Genesis.

Repentance in Revelation. Repentance in the Gospels. What is going on? The word repentance means renewal and revival.

You're changing your mind about sin, and you're changing your position to focus on God. There's no other word that's going to describe that, folks. So he says, be zealous.

The same way you're zealous for the things of the world, the same way you're zealous and excited about sin, start being zealous about repentance. Can you imagine that we are just as excited about sports or Disneyland as we are about repentance? This altar's not big enough, if that was the case. We'd have to blow out the back wall and build a bigger altar if we were as zealous about getting back to God as we are about everything else.

How many people will go to a crazy mall and try to return things? Those pair of pants don't fit. I'm going to the mall and get me a deal. I'm going to park where I want.

I'm going to do this. I'm going to get in there. If we're just as zealous to seek the things of God, we'll watch a three-hour Star Wars movie.

We'll wait in line. We'll watch all these things. If we're just as zealous for the things of God, we'll pursue the things of the world, right? We'll pursue our work.

I've got to own more. I've got to buy more. I've got to get up for it.

If we're just as zealous for the things of God as we are for the things of the world, the change would be incredible. So he says, I love you. I rebuke you.

I'm chasing you. What's he doing? How did Jesus rebuke these people? Hello. Twenty minutes ago he said, you're lukewarm.

I'm going to vomit you out of my mouth. Some translations are a little nicer. They'll say a spew.

Just spew. The word is a regurgitation. There's something inside of me that's making me sick.

I mean, that's almost enough to bring me to tears right now. Jesus says, there's something inside of you. I love you.

I love you so much. There's something inside of you that's killing you. Listen, be hot or cold, but this lukewarm, it's making me sick to name the name of Christ and go and do what you're doing.

To come to church and act, act as if you've got it all together, and you know your life's falling apart. I'm sick. Have you ever eaten bad food? Bad tuna? Oh, goodness.

It's just, I've got to throw up. I've got to throw this up. So that's his rebuke.

I love you, and I'm rebuking you. You've got to turn from that. The wonderful thing is when you turn from that, then you're filled with the Spirit, and you're full of joy and peace and love.

You say, why in the world did I allow that? But while you're in it, you're saying, I don't want all that other stuff. This is too hard. I like my comfortable state.

I like the temperature at this certain temperature. It keeps me warm. I don't want to do too much for God.

Many of you were here maybe a few weeks ago when I read that poem, \$3 worth of God, right? I just want to buy just \$3 worth of God, please. Not enough to explode my soul. I want the warmth of the womb, not the new birth.

I just want \$3 worth of God, please. So he's saying, I love you, I'm rebuking you. So if a sermon rebukes you, don't run from the heat, run to it.

If you're zealous for everything else, be zealous for me. And then we're going to close here in a minute. Verse 20, Behold, I stand at the door and knock.

If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him and dine with him and he with me. To him who overcomes, I will grant to sit with me on my throne. And I also overcame and sat down with my father on his throne.

Jesus is saying, I overcame. I know your struggles. I know what you're going through.

Christ was tempted in all points, like as we are, but he was without sin. So he says, I know. I'm feeling like preaching a little bit.

This might not be the last point, okay? I saw the time. I got some time. Now you're in trouble.

So he said here, the context supports a call to a lukewarm believer. See, many people use this when they're offering salvation to people. Right? God stands at the door and knocks at your heart.

Repent and believe to an unbeliever. Which I don't have a problem with that, but the context of this Scripture, the context is he's talking to the church, who's now lukewarm, and he's calling them back to them. So he says, I'm knocking at your door.

I'm on the porch. You ever leave people on the porch, look through the thing and say, oh, it's a guy with a white shirt and the name badge. I'm not opening that door.

Right? Or whatever. No, I'm not opening that door. That's the image he's giving there.

I'm knocking. I'm knocking at the door. Let me in.

I want to dine with you. That just is deeper fellowship. It's a deeper, more intimate relationship.

When you say hi to somebody in the lobby as you're passing by, are you going to get to know them as well as going out and having a two or three hour meal and sitting and fellowshiping? So Jesus says, I'm knocking the door. I'm knocking. Open the door of your heart.

Let me back in. Get away from that comfortable, lukewarm state. So what is the cure for Laodiceanism? You have to remove the lukewarmness.

It begins, he said here, with repentance. This is so funny. I'm like, God, can you give me another angle here? Come on.

Another truth down there somewhere? Come on. Something else? No, it's always the same. Always the same.

It begins with repentance. Admitting, God, I need help. I need help.

Don't raise your hands. But is lukewarmness crept into your soul, into your heart? Oh, lots of yeses. Okay, that's good.

Because this message is for you. God loves you and me enough to tell us how he feels according to his word. Not that we leave here mad, but that we leave here now refreshed.

Because when a person turns from the error of their way, they begin to rejoice. They begin to see the light. They begin to be in fellowship with God again.

Now, I'm going to talk about two things I always talk about, but I want to tie them in because this will cure. This will cure. If you have this problem, this will cure you big time.

If Jesus said to do something, we better do it, right? If Jesus said, I want to do a quick series on this someday, hopefully soon. When Jesus says, when you do something, when you pray, when you give, when you fast, you would assume that he's thinking we're going to do it, right? So when he says to do something and you do it, you will grow spiritually. You can take that equation to the bank every day.

God's not going to go, oh, not this week. I'm too busy. Your spiritual growth is going to have to be on hold.

We've got too much going on in heaven. It's an end of the year budget and things. No, it's whatever.

He just says, if you do these things, when you do these things, you will grow spiritually and progress. One of the things he says, I'm not going to talk a lot about it, but when you fast, when you fast, if you put fasting on the website, all these things will come up when you fast. Jesus needed it.

We needed it. Isn't it interesting? We talked about last week, Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit, right? He was baptized. He was filled with the Holy Spirit.

And then he went into ministry. No, he didn't. The Holy Spirit led him into the wilderness for 40 days to starve the flesh.

Then he began his ministry. Then he came out full of the Spirit of God. Fasting basically puts handcuffs on the flesh.

It restrains it. See, the Spirit of God is omnipresent. You know what that means? It's just a big theological term that means that God is everywhere.

He's everywhere. But it's a word I made up, omniconditional, meaning that the power of the Holy Spirit in your life, this all-consuming, passionate fire of presence of the Holy God is conditioned upon what you do with God, what you do with the Holy Spirit. Everything we're talking about, it's conditioned.

If you do this, I will do this. God says, if you pray, if you fast, if you seek me with all your heart, I will do this. We got it on the sign out front.

If my people will seek my face, they'll pray, they'll turn from their wicked ways, they'll humble themselves, then I will do this. See, it's conditional. So the same thing applies here.

When you fast, fasting puts handcuffs on the flesh. It's no surprise that we don't fast often because we don't teach self-denial. It's another not popular topic.

If I put how to deny yourself on YouTube, not going to go anywhere. That's why we've got to trick people with sermon titles, to get them to listen. Right? You need to hear this sermon.

Okay, oh goodness, I don't need to hear that one. What's the next one? But this is so true, self-denial. What are you doing? You're denying self.

See, myself wants to sleep in. Myself wants to be rude. Myself wants to do things that aren't godly.

Myself wants to govern me. Myself wants to control me. Myself wants to rule and reign.

Myself likes to be on the throne. So self-denial is denying self, and it loses its power. That's why people think, oh, fasting, that's hard, that's old school, that's for Roman Catholics, that's for Muslims.

No, that's Bible. Just put in how many times it's mentioned throughout the Bible. It's a denying of self.

And that is a Christian walk. I hate to drop a bombshell on you this morning, but it's not always your best life now and how much God can give us. It's about denying ourself.

But see, here's the interesting thing about this. When I say it, we're like, oh, man, that stinks. But when you do it, you're so filled with the Spirit that the reward far outweighs the challenge.

Does that make sense? We're like, self-denial, no way, fasting, I can't do that. And then when you do it, you're so full of God's Spirit, like, why didn't I do that before? The pain of discipline or the pain of regret? That's something that the Bible says, do this, and here's why I think it is. Seek me with all of your heart, you will find me.

The seeking has to be difficult to show you how valuable it is to you. If I could seek God, right, by sitting down at Krispy Kreme and drinking a half pot of coffee and six donuts. I would eat six donuts, I'm telling you right now.

If you seek me, just do this, be lazy, be a glutton, watch NFL all day, and then I'll find him. That wouldn't cost me anything. But it's when you seek him, when you put away those things, you say, Lord, you are so important to me.

You are so important to me, I'm going to miss a meal, or two, or three. I'm going to seek you, and you show the value of that relationship. You tell your spouse that, will you marry me? Yes, I will, I'm going to forsake all other relationships until the day I die.

Everything else, I'm forsaking it for you. See, we show the value in that. What spouse is going to say, you know what, I'll consider it, but you might be wife number three, four, five, or six.

Right, there's no value in that. So it shows the value. Remember what we read many months ago in Acts, and as they prayed and fasted, the Holy Spirit said.

As they prayed and fasted, the Holy Spirit said. Does anyone need to hear from God today? And you're tired of not hearing from God, you're tired of not having direction, pray and fast. Pray and fast, you starve the flesh, you pray and you're filled with the Spirit.

God begins to direct an empty vessel, who is humble and set before him. Alan Redpath, he should have a warning label on some of his sermons, boy oh boy. He said, there is no movement forward in the realm of the spiritual, unless there is a denying of something in the physical.

Think about that, you will not move forward in the spiritual. You will not grow spiritually, unless you deny yourself physically in certain areas. Think about that, if a young adult comes to know the Lord.

Okay Lord, I want to grow with you spiritually, but I'm going to keep getting drunk, I'm going to keep smoking weed. I'm going to keep hanging around with these people, I'm going to keep watching ungodly entertainment, I'm going to go to church when I can make it. You think you're going to grow? You're going to be stuck on stupid for the rest of your life.

Pardon my, whatever. I'm stuck in this, that's why I don't think I'm going to go to my class reunion again. I can't handle people stuck in high school mode when they're almost 50.

They're in their 40's, and it's like, that's what you did 25 years ago. You're drunk again, I don't even understand what you're saying. And you're talking about the same things.

Rewind, rewind, come out of that. Spiritual growth is vital to the Christian. And the way you grow spiritually is you starve the flesh, and you remove the things that are pulling you back.

There's this constant pull, you feel this pull. I want to get closer to God, but then, let's do it this way. I want to get closer to God, right? I feel I'm growing and then, what wants to pull you back this way? It's pulling you back into that battle.

Instead of starving to go forward spiritually, you have to deny things in the physical. The Bible says, make no provision for the flesh. Don't plan ahead to fulfill those things.

And this is often why people don't pray with their spouse. This is why we'd rather watch grass grow than go to church. Because lukewarmness has set in.

And zeal is gone, and passion is gone. Then he said, when you pray, when you pray. An old saint said many years, the price of prayerlessness far exceeds the price of prayer.

What he meant by that is, prayer will cost you something. Prayer has a price. But the price of prayerlessness will cost you far more.

Yes, it's hard to get up and pray. It's hard to put God first. But that cost is less significant than the cost of not praying at all.

In David MacIntyre's book, *The Hidden Life of Prayer*, he made the following point. You need a quiet place, a quiet hour, and a quiet heart. I'm going to double dog dare all of you.

I don't even know what that means. I don't know what a single dog is or a double dog. It's from a movie, right? But I'm going to double dog dare all of you.

I hope that's a good thing to say. But I'm opening this church at 6 a.m. next Sunday. I'm putting on worship for an hour and 15 minutes.

I want to see. Come and see how uncomfortable you get. You have to grab your phone.

You have to get out of here. That is a sure sign that lukewarmness is set in. For those who can make it, 6 a.m. next Sunday, just worship for an hour and 15 minutes.

No band, just worship. Trust me, you'll either have a breakthrough or you'll break out. You'll come to the altar and be broken before the Lord.

You'll say, I'm out of here. Give me a coffee and donuts. But see, that's the struggle.

I double dog dare you. Try it. Try it.

Just see, are you antsy? Because there's a heart problem. There's a worship problem that's not happening. We wrestle not against flesh and blood.

This wrestling has no rules. You know that? The enemy, remember this, the devil is not sympathetic. The devil is not sympathetic.

He will crush you if he gets the opportunity. He will not only kick you when you're down, he will bury you when you're down. You've got to have prayer and fasting.

He knows that an hour of heart-wrenching prayer can pull down plants he's been making for months. An hour of heart-wrenching prayer. Before God, you can pull down the fortress that the enemy is building upon your life.

Many years ago, I gave some examples on prayer, and I'm going to leave you with this. E.M. Bounds, who was born in 1835, began his three-hour prayer routine at 4 a.m. Edward Payson, who ministered during the Second Great Awakening, wore grooves into his hardwood floor as a result of prayer. John Hyde, who left for the mission field in the 1800s, I believe, wouldn't even go until he heard from God in prayer.

William Bramwell, a powerful Methodist circus writer, often spent hours in prayer. Adoniah Judson, Hudson Taylor attributed all their success as missionaries to a life of prayer. Wait for this one.

Amy Carmichael, you hear the name? Did you know she spent 55 years on the mission field without a furlough? 55 years without a furlough, without a break. They said, how did you do that? A life of prayer, saturated in prayer, because when you have a life of prayer, you won't have a nervous breakdown. How come? Because prayer is holding me up.

I don't need a break because prayer is sustaining me. That's the heartbeat of the Christian, is that life of prayer. You have to return to that.

George Mueller never asked God for one dime, and he funded millions and millions of dollars to house orphans through prayer. That's it. John Fletcher, I love reading John Fletcher's stuff.

He was part of the Methodist movement. In the journals and different things, it said he stained the rooms of his prayer closet with the breath of his prayers. It just saturated everything.

The weakest saint on his knees is stronger than hell's best soldier. Did you catch that? The weakest person in this room, I'll include you too, the weakest person in this room, spiritually speaking, you are more powerful than Satan's greatest general when you're on your knees and you're faced before God, praying and calling down Almighty. Because when you call on that name, that name begins to come inside of you, and you begin to call on the name of Christ.

The enemy must flee. The enemy must stand back. I can't do anything to a child of God who is on his knees before God, who is praying to the Father.

I can't touch them. Yea, though they walk through the valley of shadow of death, God will hold you. Though you walk through deep waters, He will sustain you.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/31/SID31991.mp3>

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/rpaLNhrjWtg.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/shane-idleman/the-cure-for-laodiceanism/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net