

Weekly Reflection – “The Key that Opens the Door”

2 Chronicles 16:7-10

“For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him...” (2 Chronicles 16:9 ESV) This gives us a picture of God’s intense attentiveness and eagerness to show Himself strong toward a certain kind of person. In other words, God is looking for opportunities to use His strength, to show how strong He is. Who is God looking for? “Those whose heart is blameless (or whole) toward Him.” God is not looking for sinless or perfect people, He is looking for people who are wholly dependent and surrendered to Him. We see this in the verses right before this. In verse 7 king Asa “does not rely on the Lord” and in verse 8 king Asa had “relied on the Lord.” God is looking for people who want to live lives wholly relying on Him.

Revelation 3:14-22

Lukewarm

What is the meaning of hot and cold? Laodicea was one of three “sister cities” located in the valley of the Lycus River. Hierapolis was located six miles away across the river, and Colossae was located 10 miles up the river. The imagery is of water: “hot” = a reference to the hot springs in the city of Hierapolis, 6 miles north of Laodicea; “cold” = a reference to the cool, refreshing waters of Colossae. Jesus is saying, “I wish that you were one or the other. I wish that you were either like the hot waters of Hierapolis that bring healing to the sick, or like the cool refreshing waters of Colossae that renew the weary. But you are neither. Instead, you are lukewarm, you are of no good to anyone.”

How does lukewarmness set in to our lives? The answer that we see from this passage is that lukewarmness sets in when self-sufficiency sets in. Verse 17 - **“For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing...”** “I have need of nothing.” Laodicea was a city known for its banks and incredible wealth, its linen and wool industry, and its medical school (their production of an eye salve). The Laodiceans highly valued their independence, and they refused the offer of Rome to help rebuild following an earthquake. Many of the rebuilt structures included the inscription “out of our own resources.”

But Jesus has a different description of them, **“For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.”** (Revelation 3:17) (ESV) What should really get our attention here is not just the Lord’s statement about their condition as wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked; but the words that preceded this indictment, “not realizing that you are...” Are we willing to listen? Are we willing to ask the Holy Spirit to search us and reveal to us who we really are?

The counsel of Jesus.

“I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see.” (Revelation 3:18 ESV) To a church proud of its wealth, Jesus says, “You are in poverty! Come to me for gold.” To a church proud of its textile industry, Jesus says, “You are naked! Come to me for clothes of righteousness to cover your shame.” And to a church proud of its medicine, Jesus says, “Come to me for eye salve so that the eyes of your heart may truly see.” Darrell Johnson writes, “The risen Lord is saying to the Laodiceans, and to us: If you will just recognize your poverty, I will

enrich you with my riches. If you will just recognize your nakedness, I will clothe you with my garments. If you will just recognize your blindness, I will make you see with my eyes."

These are not angry words. ***"Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline..."*** (Revelation 3:19 ESV) They are words of compassion. He is getting after them, and maybe us, because of His love for His church. He is being bluntly honest, and yes, He is angry with sin, but that is because of His love and desire to be with and for His church, His bride. Jesus loves them and us too much to sit back and let us settle for less than all that He is. Jesus wants to be with us in an intimate relationship.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me." Revelation 3:20 ESV

We asked earlier what causes lukewarmness and we saw that self-sufficiency leads to lukewarmness. Another way to say that is lukewarmness is caused by excluding Jesus. Jesus is outside and wants to come in. Jesus is saying, "Look, I'm right here, and I have all you need."

Jesus is speaking these words to the church, to Christians. Jesus is telling them that they have excluded Him. And remember they didn't realize that they had excluded Jesus. Jesus is knocking and calling out, open the door and let Me in. Jesus makes a promise that if anyone opens the door and lets Him in, He will come in and eat with them. In that culture that meant more than just having someone over for dinner, it was an intimate relationship.

Along with this invitation to intimacy Jesus offers more. ***"The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne."***

(Revelation 3:21 ESV) Those who overcome the battle against indifference, compromise, and self-reliance are granted to sit with Jesus on His throne. They enjoy a place with the enthroned Jesus. Some of what this must mean is we have access to all that Jesus is, His power and authority.

So how do we open the door and let Jesus in? How do we overcome or conquer lukewarmness and self-sufficiency? How do we restore intimacy with Jesus?

Repent

I believe the way to open the door is repentance. The way to overcome is repentance. The way to restored intimacy with Jesus is repentance. The way to living in His strength is repentance. The way to be blameless before His searching eyes is repentance. ***"Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent."*** (Revelation 3:19 ESV) "Be zealous" is a present imperative which commands a continual state. "Repent" is an aorist imperative which means don't delay, do it now. In other words, repent now and keep on repenting. If we want lives of intimacy with Jesus, lives full of the power and strength of God we must live lives wholly dependent on God, lives of repentance, lives that continually turn away from self and turn to God.