



Laodicea: The Self-Reliant Church

Week 8 | October 29th, 2023
Community Group Discussion Guide

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NO Gathering - Sunday, November 12th

Due to our Annual Family Vacation, there will be *NO* Sunday Gathering, on Sunday, November 12th.

REVIEW THE MISSION

Take some time to review who various people are building relationships with and seeking to share the gospel with. **Pray for these individuals - that God would open their eyes to the good news of the gospel.**

PRAYER + SCRIPTURE

Open with a brief word of prayer: "God, we thank you for this time together. We open our hearts to how you might want to meet with us. Come Holy Spirit."

1-2 minutes of silent reflection.

Read Revelation 3:14-22

14 "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: 'The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation.

15 "I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! 16 So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. 17 For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. 18 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. 19 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. 20 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. 21 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. 22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'"

1-2 minutes of silent reflection.

Close with this short prayer: "Lord, we pray for your strength in our lives. In your grace, you have chosen to use us in your Kingdom where you open the door. We pray for eyes to see how you want to use us, hearts that desire to obey, and faith that encourages us to proclaim your Gospel. Amen."

As you reflect on Revelation 3:14-22, what is the Holy Spirit showing or teaching you?

SERMON DISCUSSION

THE LUKEWARM CHURCH

Read Revelation 3:16-17

Jesus says the spiritual state of the church in Laodicea is lukewarm., meaning they are not spiritually beneficial to anyone. They are supposed to be like hot water and provide healing for the spiritually sick. And they are supposed to be like cold water bringing refreshment for the spiritually thirsty and weary. And instead all they're offering is lukewarm water that makes people sick. They have no spiritual life to offer.

The reason for this is their self-reliance. They think they do not need anything or anyone, including God. Their riches and prosperity have convinced them they no longer are reliant upon God.

Self-reliance tempts all of us, and yet it cuts us off from life with God.

Where do you see the idol of self-reliance in your life? How do you see it cutting you off from life with God and turning you spiritually lukewarm?

THE REALITY ABOUT LAODICEA...AND US...

Read Revelation 3:16-18

Although Laodicea thinks, "I am rich, I have prospered, I need nothing," Jesus tells them the reality is they are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. However, He also offers them everything they need.

The thread we see in the passage is this:

- Laodicea thinks they're rich, Jesus says they're poor, but offers the riches of life forever with God.
- Laodicea thinks they've got awesome clothes, but in reality they are naked (stuck in shame and judgment), but Jesus offers them white gowns (his righteousness).
- Laodicea thinks they can see, Jesus says they are blind to their spiritual depravity, but he offers them salve that can help them see themselves and God rightly.

Where is God inviting you to be honest about your weaknesses and shortcomings, and how is he offering himself to you in that brokenness?

OPEN TO THE DISCIPLINE OF JESUS

Read Revelation 3:19-20

All series long we've been wrestling with hard questions from Jesus meant to discipline those He loves and draw us to repentance. But God comes only where He's wanted. The invitation is to open the door of our hearts to the corrective and loving discipline of Christ.

What steps can you take this week to listen and be open to the corrective and loving discipline of Jesus?

Have you considered the practice of Examen before? How is this practice appealing to you for continuing on in a lifestyle of receiving discipline from Christ and repenting into His loving mercy?

SERIES PRACTICES

One of our key discipleship values as a church is that of practice. Moving forward, we are going to begin emphasizing various spiritual practices during each sermon series. These practices are meant to coincide with the theme of the series, and something we invite our church to practice as a part of their spiritual formation.

PRACTICE #1 - FASTING

In its most basic form, Biblical fasting is the intentional abstaining from food for a spiritual purpose. As Christians, we intentionally face the pain of hunger and lack to direct our hearts towards God.

For resources on fasting, check out:

- www.rhythmsandformation.com
- <https://citychurchknox.com/sermons/formation-v-fasting-rethinking-our-relationship-with-food>

For this series, we are encouraging individuals to fast from all food and non-water beverages from dinner Wednesday through dinner Thursday, as a means of focusing our attention on God and asking Him to deepen our love for Him. Although there is freedom to adjust this to fit your various circumstances or season.

PRACTICE #2 - WORSHIP THROUGH SONG

The second practice we are inviting our church family to participate in is that of worship through song. Singing is a great way to help connect what we believe in our minds to what we experience in our hearts.

To that end, our worship team has put together a playlist to help guide this practice for us, that you can sing along with in your car, in your home, on a run, or anywhere else that seems appropriate.

You can find the playlist here:



Take some time now before you close discussing plans for fasting and worship during the next 8 weeks as a group.

CLOSING PRAYER

Pray over what was shared in the discussion, for your group to be united in the gospel, and for help from the Holy Spirit to be shaped to be more like Jesus as we put God's ways into practice.