

You Got Mail
“Letter to the Church at Laodicea”
(Turnpike Wesleyan Church – November 1, 2020)

Scripture Text: Revelation 3:14-22

“Write this letter to the angel of the church in Laodicea. This is the message from the one who is the Amen - the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God’s new creation: “I know all the things you do, that you are neither hot nor cold. I wish that you were one or the other! But since you are like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth! You say, ‘I am rich. I have everything I want. I don’t need a thing!’ And you don’t realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. So I advise you to buy gold from me - gold that has been purified by fire. Then you will be rich. Also buy white garments from me so you will not be shamed by your nakedness, and ointment for your eyes so you will be able to see. I correct and discipline everyone I love. So be diligent and turn from your indifference. “Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends. Those who are victorious will sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat with my Father on his throne. “Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches.”

Introduction

If you are or ever was a subscriber to **AOL**, this expression was very common as you log into your account: “You Got **Mail**.”

Well, today’s message is about a church that got **mail** ... a specific letter from the **Lord**. Allow me to recreate the scene for you this morning.

The Church at Laodicea

Of the seven letters to the churches, this is the only one that nothing **good** was said. Even Sardis had a few faithful people in it. But of Laodicea, the Lord can’t find anything **good** to say at all.

Their problem is not open immorality, or false-teaching, or idolatry or anything obvious like that. Their sin is more subtle. Their sin is being **lukewarm**. They have become useless, even offensive to Christ.

The church had completely lost its **Christian** distinctiveness and had adsorbed the character of the Laodicea life around it. And in doing so had become **sickening** to our Lord.

Three Characteristics

First, they thought they were rich because they had lots of **money** and **comfortable**

lives. But spiritually they were poor: they had stored up no treasure in heaven. None of their wealth would **survive** their deaths.

Second, they thought they could **see**. Laodicea was famous for its medical facilities, and particularly its expertise with **eyes**. One of its famous exports was an ointment for eye problems. But spiritually they were **blind**.

Third, they thought they were well **clothed**. Another of Laodicea's distinctive products was garments of glossy black **wool**. Outwardly, they were well dressed, but spiritually they were **naked**.

Results

Superficially then, the church was prosperous, but the spiritual reality of it all was that they were **wretched**, **pitiful**, **poor**, **blind** and **naked**.

The problem was that they relied on **themselves** rather than on **Christ**.

The sad reality is that this was effectively a church of **unbelievers**. They were practical **atheists** who took the name of Christ but had no room for **Jesus** in their hearts.

So, the lesson from Laodicea is that when our faith becomes mere **religion**; when it becomes all about just being a **good** person; when we think we're doing God a **favor** by turning up on Sundays; when we aren't **excited** by the message; when we **lose** any urge to tell people about Jesus; when we only pray in church - well, then it's **Christianity** without Christ.

Wrap Up

In this letter we find a **lukewarm** church but, thankfully, we also find a **loving** Christ. The only redeeming note in this letter to the church in Laodicea is that it is not yet too **late**.

He has come with **harsh** words, but his purpose is not yet to **condemn**, his purpose is to **call** them to come back to him.

And, Jesus says, the way for them to regain Christian distinctiveness is for them to **repent**.

“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.” (Rev. 3:20)