

Delivered from Our Delusion, Part 2

Revelation 3:14-22

In the last message from this text, we learned that Jesus Christ introduced himself to the church at Laodicea in the following way: **“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things says the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God”** (Revelation 3:14). In verse 18, we learn more about this majestic Lord in terms of what He possesses and what He offers: **“I counsel thee to 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 eye salve, that thou mayest see.”** As we learned in the last message, this congregation was deceived and deluded. How could they be delivered from their delusion?

Who Christ Is: Christ is The Answer Our Church Needs

As we studied last time, to say that Jesus is “the faithful and true witness” is to say that His testimony is trustworthy; it is genuine; His testimony perfectly conforms to reality. “Amen” means “certainly, assuredly, verily, or truly.” The word “amen” conveys the idea of faithfulness, stability, remaining in or continuing fidelity.¹ It would be helpful to review a message preached here at Calvary on November 8, 2020. That message, entitled *“And All God’s People Said”* will provide some key insights into the message to the church at Laodicea. In verse 18, we learn that Christ possesses the things that are essential for each church.. Christ called the congregation “lukewarm,” expressing that they made Him want to spit. But they had a very different view of themselves. Thus, they were deceived.

So how would you open the eyes of a self-deceived congregation? How do you help a church that is **“...wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:”** (Revelation 3:17). The Laodiceans were full of themselves, feeling self-sufficient, rather than acting in faith and dependence on the Lord. We all have to ask: is this true of our congregation? Paul, the Apostle, exclaimed, **“O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”** (Romans 7:24). Do we see ourselves as the Apostle Paul saw himself? In God’s sight, the church was pitiful and poor. Like the prodigal son in Luke 15 who “came to himself” (awakened to his condition), the church at Laodicea needed to realize just how pitiful and poor they really were. Like the older brother in Luke 15, they needed to recognize their blindness.

“Critical Race Theory” is much in the news today. One of CRT’s principles is that Caucasian people are deceived by their whiteness. Using the Scriptures, we could agree that people are deceived. But to say that someone “is deceived by his whiteness” is too narrow. The Scriptures teach that all men are deceived by their wickedness. This self-deception does not end when a sinner trusts Christ (as evident by James 1:22). We need more light from God. Congregations that are “wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked” need a fresh vision of the all-sufficient Christ. Consider what we have learned from Revelation chapters 1-3 up to this point.

Meditation on Christ's Glories in Revelation 1-3 (in the order in which they appear)

Jesus, the Christ, of God's great revelation, showing His servants all things that He said

Faithful and true is this God of salvation, Firstborn Creator who rose from the dead

Ruler of all of the kings of the nations, loves us and freed us: His blood for our sins

Made us a kingdom of priests' ordination: Glory, dominion forever, Amen!

Look! He is coming in clouds soon hereafter; all who have mocked Him and pierced Him shall wail

Alpha, Omega, the Heavenly Father, testifies now that His Son will prevail

Alpha, Omega, God's Son and our Savior, this Son of Man is the voice that we hail

Telling us all of God's love and His power; this Revelation, this Christ is unveiled

High Priestly robe is His beautiful clothing. Hair, white like wool, and His eyes like a fire

Feet like the bronze as refined by their flaming: We fall before Him, the Lord we admire

Voice like the waters, the waves in their roaring, His right hand fills all His men with desire

Out from His mouth, the sharp sword made for fighting, telling us all of what God now requires

His face like sunlight in brightness is shining: wisdom and power and justice unite

Fear not! The First and the Last is now ruling: present and future and past in His sight

Living, He died, but He lives by His rising! He holds the keys of old death and hell's might

Pastors and churches our Lord is still holding; Christ fills them all with His brightness and light

Christ has the sevenfold Heavenly Spirit: He grips His pastors who are but mere men

He is the holy and true without limits: Christ holds the key and His Gospel will send

Our faithful Lord calls us all to repentance. Poverty, blindness and shame He can end

God of creation: our churches He visits; True, faithful witness, the Father's Amen

When we see this amazing revelation of Jesus Christ, we know that He has the answers for everything that our church needs. What advice did Christ give to the congregation at Laodicea to give them action steps about what to do next?

What Christ Counsels, 18-19, 22

¹⁸ I counsel thee to 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 eye salve, that thou mayest see. ¹⁹ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. ²² He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches.

The church needed to take time to carefully contemplate the Lord – with His eyes like a flame of fire – who saw everything about them clearly. They needed to go to the One – whose feet were like burnished bronze – to acquire the gold tried in the fire. The church had clearly grown comfortable. They needed to get out of their comfort zone. Though they might have been believers, moments of ministry were being lost for eternity. This truth is evident in 1 Corinthians chapter 3, verses 1 through 15. What will the fire of God reveal about your works at the Judgment Seat of Christ? Will your labors be like gold, silver and precious stones? Or will they be like wood, hay and stubble – just wisps of smoke when the fire comes?

The church needed the best robe of Christ's righteousness. In Luke 15, the father ran to the repentant son and commanded that the best robe be brought for him. What do your responses look like in the sight of God? Does He see the robes of a Christlike response? Or does He see the rags of resistance and reaction? All of these things call us to a careful time of evaluation. They were blind. What eye salve could heal their blindness? Peter outlined the steps of the specific virtues of Christ to cure the believers' blindness in 2 Peter 1:5-9

"... giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; ⁶ And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; ⁷ And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. ⁸ For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ But he that lacks these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins."

In Revelation 3:19, Jesus said, **"Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent."** If you are truly a child of God, you can expect the Lord to correct you in love. If we really are the Lord's church, we can expect Him to correct us. But the promises of God are just as true today as the day they were written. Proverbs 1:23 puts it this way: **"Turn you at my reproof: Behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you."** If we will repent, the Lord will pour out His Spirit upon us and we will gain a fresh, new appreciation for His words. This is a promise from God, and there are many more precious promises in the Scriptures.

What Christ Promises, 20-21

²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. ²¹ To him that overcomes 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.

Do you hear the voice of Jesus calling you today? Will you open the door for Him?

The humble and meek Jesus, might Savior for all men, had been largely excluded by the church at Laodicea. He was on the outside looking in – offering to come in. Many have used this verse in evangelism, and you can understand why. But in this context, Jesus was speaking to people who had already professed to know Him. Yet what they called “fellowship” had very little to do with a relationship with Christ.

One author wrote, *“The prospect of entering a home and dining with the family in the ancient Near East was the ultimate expression of human friendship, depicting the desire for an intimacy of relationship surpassed only by those relationships existing within an actual family. In this case the relationship involving the Lord may even be thought to exceed familial or filial relationships.”*ⁱⁱ

Is it not true that we have been made brothers and sisters by the blood of Christ? We know a friendship and a fellowship that is deeper than any family relationship. Yet this is based on our close communion with Christ. He humbly stands at the heart door of our congregation this morning and knocks. Will we open the door for a sweeter, more joyous communion with Him? If we will, He has promised that we will enjoy more intimate communion with Him. We will know Him better than we ever have before. Those people who were about to be spewed out of Christ’s mouth were being offered the opportunity to dine with Him. Which would they choose?

That author continued, *“The question to be answered is always the relationship of Christ to the local church. Is he on the inside embraced, loved, honored, enthroned, and followed? Or is he on the outside knocking and calling for entrance to the entity that bears his name?”*ⁱⁱⁱ

²¹ To him that overcomes 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.

The Lord’s promises frequently motivate us to take serious action steps. He promises rewards for our righteous responses. To these who were warned with correction, He promised a coronation of sorts. In Revelation 1:6, the saints of God were announced as a kingdom of priests to God. Overcomers – true Christian believers who would overcome the creeping lethargy of their culture – are promised the privilege of sitting with Christ in His throne. You see, He overcame the temptations to sin and the scorning of men and the Father has exalted Him on high. So the Lord offers this privilege to those who will follow in Christ’s steps.

Let’s take these action steps as our Lord instructed us. Let’s be delivered from our delusions.

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ⁱ William Lee Holladay and Ludwig Köhler, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 20. For a more detailed explanation of the use of “Amen” see “And All God’s People Said” accessed at <https://www.cbfindlay.org/and-all-gods-people-said/> (manuscript, audio and video)

ⁱⁱ Paige Patterson, *Revelation*, ed. E. Ray Clendenen, vol. 39, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2012), 144.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.