

RELIGION WITH A BAD TASTE
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Text: Revelation 3:14-22

What does it mean to be lukewarm? We are aquatinted with the word in the academic sense. We know that it is to be "moderately warm; tepid; not zealous; indifferent. (Webster's Dictionary) We pretty much have the general idea of what the word means. We've heard the sermons. We can quote the text. So what's the problem?

The problem is that most people do not understand the spiritual meaning. Evidently, many do not see being lukewarm as a sin; but only as a problem to be overcome. Even worse, many feel that it is "something that we can live with." Of course, it is not something that we can live with spiritually.

We should see being lukewarm as the sin that it is. We need to realize that it will only worsen with time if not dealt with quickly. It's like the problem a German tourist tried to ignore.

In March 1994 a German tourist checked into a hotel near Miami International Airport. That night in his room he noticed a foul odor. But travelers must put up with discomforts, so he slept in the bed that night without a complaint to the front desk.

The next morning when he awoke, the odor was only worse. So as he checked out of the hotel, he reported the problem. On Friday, March 11, a maid cleaning the room discovered the source of the odor. Under the bed she found a corpse.

Life is filled with problems, and often it seems the best thing to do is just ignore them. But if we realized how serious and close the problems really are, we would take action. (Larson, 32)

Do we understand that Jesus is saying that He would prefer we be hot with zeal or that we cared nothing at all about Him rather than that we should be lukewarm?

What are the characteristics of a lukewarm individual.

I. CONCERNED BUT NOT COMMITTED.

A. To be concerned is to be "uneasy" or "watchful" concerning something.

B. To be committed is to be "involved" in something.

It would appear that some think God wants only those who have great talents to commit themselves to the work of the Lord.

But as someone has said, "God does not ask about our ability or our inability, but about our availability."

A lukewarm person is...

II. FAITHFUL BUT NOT FULL OF FAITH.

A. To be faithful to the cause of Christ and the church is admirable.

B. To fail to live out one's faith is tragic.

Bob Pierce writes, "My single greatest concern is the growing inertia I see, inertia born out of our luxury and materialism. People are fooling themselves when they say the job is done.... The vast body of people in the world today have never been given enough information to know if they accept or reject Jesus.... Most people think what the gospel needs is more clever, skilled people, when what it needs is more people who are willing to bleed, suffer, and die in a passion to see people come to Christ." (Hewett, 98)

A lukewarm person is...

III. HAPPY BUT NOT JOYFUL.

A postgraduate student, studying cello under Pablo Casals, played his number in a way that seemed to us excellent, but the great maestro said, "You are playing the notes but not the music!" The Church today numbers one category of Christians whose spiritual experience is wild music without the notes of sound doctrine, a lot of noise that needs a tune. On the other hand, there are thousands who have the notes correct theologically, but there is no melody, no joyous praise, no hallelujah. These two extremes ought to get together, join mandate with melody, and find in God's lawbook a songbook. Then our delight would be in the law of the Lord, service with not merely a smile but a song. (VHDT, 80)

A. Some people are contented with the predictability of life.

They see only the notes.

B. Other people are excited about what God is going to do next.

They see the notes but they also hear the music!

George Buttrick explains, "Faith must never be counter to reason; yet it must always go beyond reason, for the nature of man is more than rationalism. Faith is emotion as well as reason." (Rowell, 59)

A living faith will excite the soul! An excited soul will be full of joy!

CONCLUSION

If we are not careful, the enemy will lead us to believe that everything is right in our life when if we would listen to the Spirit we would see that it is not. The enemy wants us to believe that no one should really expect "joy unspeakable and full of glory." After all, getting by is all we can ask for in life.

In his book *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, Erik Erikson tells a story he heard from a physician about an old man with a peculiar problem. The old man vomited every morning but had never felt the inclination to consult a doctor. Finally the man's family convinced him to get a checkup.

The doctor asked, "How are you?"

"I'm fine," the man responded. "Couldn't be better."

The doctor examined him and found he was in good shape for his age. Finally the physician grew impatient and asked, "I hear that you vomit every morning." The old man looked surprised and said, "Sure. Doesn't everybody?"

Like the old man, we may not realize that the problems we bear daily are abnormal. We've live with the problems for so long we can't imagine how life could be better.

(Larson, 33)

Have you lived with the characteristics of a lukewarm life so long that you cannot imagine how you could have a greater walk with Christ? Can you imagine God doing greater things in your life? If so, why not seek them?

References

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