



The Church That Makes God Sick

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There actually is a church that makes God sick.

The word WE is mentioned frequently throughout this message. I have chosen this word as a general analogy. It may or may not reflect your personal relationship with the Lord. You will need to decide.

Something is wrong with the church. We need to be on fire for the Lord.

- We sing "Sweet Hour of Prayer" and are content with 5-10 minutes a day.
- We sing "Onward Christian Soldiers," but are unwilling to accept a church office.
- We sing "O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing" and our neighbors don't even know that we are Seventh-day Adventist Christians.
- We sing "Blest Be the Tie That Binds" and the slightest little thing, somebody steps on our toes and we don't even come to church anymore. We just drop out.
- We sing "I Love To Tell the Story" and never mention it at all.
- We sing "Cast Thy Burden Upon the Lord" and worry ourselves into a nervous breakdown.

Do you know what the problem is? God tells us what the problem is. We have become lukewarm. We aren't on fire for the Lord anymore. We attend church and we even sing within our hearts:

"Praise God from who all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below!"
Oh, loud my hymns of praise I bring, Because It doesn't cost to sing!"

We don't pay tithe, we don't give offerings, we don't give our time. We're lukewarm, some of us. There's something wrong. We need to be genuine Christians. We need to be on fire for Jesus Christ. A real Christian has the assurance of salvation in his or her heart. The Christian knows Jesus because He is his/her best friend. However, a lot of people are not on fire for the Lord. They're lukewarm. The fire has gone out. All that we have left are the smoldering embers of what used to be of our Christian experience (Is this the remnant people?). We need the fire of and for Jesus Christ. Still others are even cold. They are among the frozen chosen. I pray you will not be found in this group.

Revelation presents a picture of such a condition. These three classes here in Revelation, speaking of the Laodicean Church, which happens to be the last church. Three conditions are mentioned here in **Revelation 3:14-16**, "***And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; 15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. 16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.***" **RED HOT:** those who are all steamed up about Jesus and for Jesus. True Blue, They know Jesus as their Saviour. **COLD:** These people are solid Ice. **LUKEWARM:** The halfhearted. They're like corn flakes that have been sitting in the milk in your cereal bowl for an hour. They become soggy, half-warm. The corn flakes become mush. And then we want that to be appetizing. Lukewarm is a combination of hot and cold. These are Christians in name only. Their spiritual life is in neutral. They still attend church, they sit in the pews, but the only office they hold is to keep the pew warm, or to hold it down in case gravity fails. They do not really know Jesus. This Lukewarm condition makes God sick. It makes Him want to throw up, according to the Bible.

When Jesus was here on this earth He mentioned such a condition. Turn with me in your Bible to **Matthew 23**. Here are a people. Jesus paints a picture of these folk. You may disagree with me, but I would say that the Pharisees were lukewarm. Jesus says in **Matthew 23:27,28**: "***Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. 28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.***"

You see, once a year the Jews would go out of Jerusalem through the gates to the cemetery. They had what we think of as Memorial Day. They would take a bucket of whitewash with them and some rags or a paintbrush and go to the cemetery. They would locate the tombs of God's prophets that their fathers had killed and make them look like new by rubbing that whitewash on that tomb and making that tomb really look great. Then they would wail and mourn around that sepulcher. And they would place flowers there.

- This was their Memorial Day or Decoration Day.
- They left feeling proud that they were not like their fathers.
- They were honoring these wonderful prophets.
- They placed flowers on each grave.
- Then they went back to Jerusalem and planned the crucifixion.
- They were tithe payers.
- They were Sabbath Keepers.

- They were health reformers.
- After they hung Jesus on the cross they hurried home to have sundown worship and keep the Sabbath.
- They were rotten on the inside but looked pretty good on the outside.
- They were lukewarm. Not fully cold. Not hot.
- They were not on fire for the Lord.

A lukewarm person knows the regulations but he does not know the Regulator, Jesus. They know the rules, but they don't know Jesus Who made the rules. God would rather that they were Hot or Cold. They would have a better chance.

Today we have modern Pharisees. They too are Lukewarm. They go to church but they also get one foot into the world a little bit, kind of half and half, like an electric shaver that works some of the time and other times it grabs the beard and pulls. They never choose an X rated movie. They seldom go to the theater. But they rent home videos of the lukewarm variety. They are not X-rated, they're not G-rated, They are kind of half-way between and unfortunately these movies contain swear words that are not G-rated, and there are four-letter words and five letter words, words that misuse the holy name of God or His Son Jesus. And they watch these videos. Those swear words run through their mind. What if your wife's name was being taken in vain in a certain video? Would you watch that? Would you like that? Or you husband's name, or your children's name?

Friends, how can a true Christian sit there and watch that movie or watch that video hearing God's name taken in vain? This happens not just once, but over and over again throughout the movie. How can we do that? What does that tell you about God who they are blaspheming? What does it say about your Christianity? I believe that when you sit there and you watch something like that, you hear those swear words going through your mind like that, I think that it tears down some moral fiber in your life, your character. I think it destroys something noble, and it reduces you from being on fire for Jesus to being lukewarm. Those things are tools of the devil to get lukewarm people all the way into the devil's ice water.

Today there are three groups: the Hot, Lukewarm and the Cold. Now notice very carefully how these three classes are described just before the coming of Christ Jesus: Turn to **Revelation 22:11**. Notice very carefully how these three classes are described just prior to the second coming of Jesus Christ. ***"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still."***

Do you see the three classes there? How many are there? There are not three. Can you see the three over here in **Matthew 25**? **Matthew 25:32, 33**, ***"And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left."*** Here is another picture just prior to Jesus' second coming. There are the goats on His left and the sheep on His right and what kind is in the middle? Nothing. There is no third class. Just before Jesus comes. Oh, you can see them in **Matthew 25:1, 2**, ***"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish."*** You see the ten virgins. A third of them were wise... Is that what it says? No, five were wise and five were foolish. How many classes are there? Only two. Something is happening here, isn't it?

Perhaps **Matthew 24:40** might list the three. ***"Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left."*** It says that one will be taken and one shall be left. How many classes there? Just two. What happens to the third class? It disappears. One will be taken and the other left. The other will be left, by the way, not alive, but as a carcass for vulture food, and the bird banquet described in **Revelation 19:17**, ***"And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God."***

In **Matthew 13:25** you have a picture just before Jesus comes of the wheat and the tares and the... Just wheat and tares. ***"But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way."*** That's all. Can you see something that happens today? In fact, for six thousand years there have been? The cold, the hot and the lukewarm. Can you see that in the last day there are only two classes? Can you see that? There are only two. The middle class disappears. So, that should tell you that just prior to the second coming of Jesus Christ you're going to see some shuffling taking place. All those people in the middle are going to gravitate to the hot or to the cold. Right? That's what it would tell me. And so you're going to see a paradigm shift here, a great polarization, where you either become negative or positive. Just prior to the close of probation and the Second Coming of Christ, all the lukewarm people suddenly disappear! This third class is gone forever.

At Jesus' coming there will be no third category. You're going to get out of the lukewarm condition one way or the other. Just prior to the end all these lukewarm people are either going on their way out of the Christian experience or they are on their way in to a deeper Christian experience. That's where you want to be. Are you in Jesus? Do you really know Jesus as your Saviour?

As the last days come and the trials thicken around us, and wars will escalate. Things happen and more trade centers go down, bridges go down. We are going to see both separation and unity in our ranks. We're going to see people leaving and others coming in to take the place of those who left.

There will be no fence sitters in the last days. So, what happens to the lukewarm? Why do they disappear? Because of the Latter Rain of the Holy Spirit. It's because of the Shaking time that is coming. The shaking time gets rid of those fence-sitters and puts barbed-wire on top of the fence! And suddenly the fence-sitters get off and they take sides, and they decide, "Well, it's time to make a decision all the way for Jesus." **Amos 9:9**, ***"For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth."*** You will either be shaken out or you will be sealed in.

Now, notice that the grain stays in and the chaff is shaken out. The precious grain will remain inside the church. Only the wicked will be shaken out. Somebody said this church is Babylon. God forbid! There is no way it is Babylon. You stick with it. That doesn't mean the church is going to save you. You're not saved by the church. For me, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the closest church to the Bible than any church that I know of. I want to stay with it. Don't be shaken out of it. The sinners in Zion will be shaken out. Are you on your way in or out? If you are on the way out you are going the wrong way.

What is the cause of the shaking? The straight testimony to the Laodicean church. Turn to **Revelation 3:18**. Here's the counsel. Here's what we're supposed to do about this problem, the Laodicean Church, the church in existence today, the last-day church. It says, ***"I counsel you (who are wretched, pitiful,***

poor, blind and naked) to buy from Me gold." What is the most valuable thing that you could think of that is not out of this world and not monetary? Could that be the love of Jesus? Faith? I think that's what gold represents: faith and love. And he says, "I counsel you to buy some white clothes to wear." What does that represent? The beautiful, pure righteousness of Jesus Christ that should be covering all of us. In fact, if you're cold, you need to put on a coat. Right? And that coat should be the righteousness of Christ. The third problem with the Laodicean church is that it is blind. What is the remedy for that? If we would paraphrase this counsel into one sentence it would be something like this: "You would need the righteousness of Jesus Christ which comes through faith, and you need Jesus' love brought into your heart by the Holy Spirit. Because we're poor. Only Jesus has the gold and the faith. And we're totally naked. We need to be covered. And nakedness is terrible. How many clothes do we contribute to our salvation? Do we go out and provide these clothes? Where do we get these clothes? We get it from Jesus. It's His robe that covers us. We provide zero to our salvation.

God says in **Revelation 3:18**, "***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 eyesalve, that thou mayest see.***" There is no middle ground here. We are either covered by His pure robe of righteousness or we stand there in total nakedness. And He says, "You are blind." Blind without the Holy Spirit. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you spiritual insight and faith and love. Ask Him to show you your deepest need. We will never move from lukewarm to hot until we see our great need. No one goes to the doctor until he thinks he is really sick. Jesus is the great heavenly Doctor. He will save us.

Ask Jesus to save you. When Jesus knocks at the door of your heart let Him in. Probation has not closed yet. It will close soon, but I don't know when. I am thankful that Jesus is still knocking on each door and that we can still answer. I'm glad that the door of probation is still open. It won't be open much longer. ACCEPT Him as your Saviour. **John 1:29** KJV says, "***...Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world.***" If you have sin in your life that you are battling with, Who is going to take it away? Jesus. The lamb of God, He takes away the sin of the world. Only Jesus can save. We cannot save ourselves.

Salvation for me is based on what I do with Jesus Christ. It is not based on my behavior. God says in **Ephesians 2:8,9**, "***For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.***" We don't save ourselves. None of our works save us. You can put with that, **Romans 4:5** where it says, "***But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.***"

Our salvation is not dependant on our own works. Our good works have nothing whatsoever to do with securing our salvation. They really don't. We don't secure our salvation by what we do. They do not cause our salvation. Good works do not obtain our salvation. They do not pay for our salvation. What are they then? Good works are the fruit of our salvation, the result of our salvation, the product of our relationship with Jesus Christ. Our salvation is totally dependent on what God did for us through Jesus Christ. When we accept Him, when we enter into a relationship with Him then we have salvation. So, this is how this basically happens.

I don't know of anything more effective at helping you to establish a good relationship with Jesus Christ and go from a lukewarm state to an on-fire state than studying the scriptures as for hidden treasure,

praying with end-time fervency and meditating on the only one who can save you - Jesus Christ! Good communication is the key to a good marriage. And good communication is the key to a good Christian experience. We need to communicate. Ever hear of a mountain top experience? Read God's love letter to you! The mountain top is within its' eternal pages! Read the word - Pray fervently to Him, daily experience the mountaintop! You're going to grow more like Him. That's the nuts and bolts of salvation is communication. Relationship, Bible study, prayer and meditation. That's how you get strength.

Here is how we find strength. **Jeremiah 29:13, "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."** When you are a Christian, give it all to Jesus Christ. You will be changed. You will be like Jesus. Only first class Christians will be saved. The cold and the lukewarm will be lost forever. If you are reading the words of this message and you sense that your spiritual life is cold, that you are losing Jesus, I urge you to come back to Him before it is too late. You do not have to stay among the frozen chosen.

John 17:3, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." If you know Jesus you've got it. You're on fire for Him. What a wonderful thing that is.

When a lukewarm Christian comes to the place where he sees his great need of the Saviour then he's home free. Our biggest problem in the church today is that we really don't know Jesus. We don't have that connection with Jesus. We don't spend time praying and learning about Him. Our greatest need is to know Jesus as our personal Friend and Saviour. In **Philippians 3:8**, Paul says, **"...I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord!"** Isn't that a beautiful statement? In verse 10 Paul says, That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.... That's the goal of his life. It's to know Jesus. If that's the goal of your life, you're not going to be lukewarm very long. You're going to be on fire for Jesus.

Some day soon we will look up and see our Saviour Jesus coming. He will be surrounded by billions of friendly angels. Then will come your chance to actually meet Jesus face to face. Won't it be special to be able to say-I know You! But the most thrilling thing will be to hear Him say to us: "I know you, too!" If you are lukewarm, put on a coat. Put on the warm covering of Jesus' free righteousness!