Easter 6 Revelation 3:14-22
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*CW-S – "I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light"

Hear What the Spirit Says!
I. Hear a stern rebuke!
II. Hear a loving call!
III. Hear a glorious promise!

Dear Christian friends,

This is a really dangerous reading. It would BE SO EASY to page through the **membership list** and **piously think**, "THEY sure need to hear this sermon! I should send them **a copy** but NAH, they'd just toss it in the garbage."

It's also confirmation season in many churches. It's exciting but it's also a BIT MELANCHOLY. Many fall away from their Savior. They FALL for the devil's lies and the **world's screwed-up** priorities. They'd rather cuddle up to their sinful natures instead of ***"denying themselves and taking up their cross and following Jesus."*** Jesus warns us to **about that** in His parable of the Sower and the Seed.

Do you see why I said this is a **dangerous** reading? Do you see what I've been **doing**? Applying these verses to OTHER people! **Others** – THEY need to hear this – but what about ME – **you**? Well, MAYBE us too! ***"Whoever has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."*** That's a call for EACH ONE of us to personally take these **verses to heart**. So HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS! **Hear** 1)a stern rebuke, 2)a loving call and 3)a glorious promise!

I. Hear a stern rebuke!

Are YOU ready to hear ***"what the Spirit says"***? ***"The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation, says this."*** That's Jesus establishing His credentials to ISSUE His **stern rebuke**. When we hear something we DON'T LIKE or don't WANT to hear it's easy to shrug it off with a, "You don't know what you're talking about." Then we have our excuses for why this just CAN'T APPLY to us.

But there's no doing that with ***"what the Spirit says"*** to us here! Jesus is ***"the faithful and true witness."*** When Jesus talks to us ABOUT GOD – He knows what He's talking about. **When Jesus talks** to us ABOUT US – He knows what He's talking about. Jesus isn't going on SECOND-HAND information – what He's heard from other people. Jesus is a ***"witness"*** – He sees – He knows everything. He's ***"the Amen"*** – He always tells the TRUTH – no exaggerating – no mixing things up. ADD to that He is ***"the ruler of God's creation"*** – our Creator God. WHO ARE WE to tell Jesus **He doesn't know** what He's talking about?

Jesus doesn't pull **any punches** with His STERN REBUKE. ***"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot."*** With ***"I know your works"*** Jesus is telling us to JUST LOOK at our lives. Our daily lives are THE EVIDENCE – the proof – for Jesus' **stern rebuke**. Jesus blasts these Christians for being ***"lukewarm."*** It's NOT that they're ***"lukewarm"*** and warming up from being cold. They're cooling down from **having been** hot. It's similar to Jesus telling the church in Ephesus, ***"You have forsaken your first love."***

"Lukewarm" is a compromise between hot and cold. It's not ICY cold or BOILING hot – it's just well ***"lukewarm."*** ***"Lukewarm"*** pictures INDIFFERENCE – not being COMMITTED but taking a CONVENIENT **approach** to their faith and **personal relationship** with Jesus. Being ***"lukewarm"*** they wanted the blessings of being a Christian but not the cross and **sacrifices** that comes with being Christians. Jesus is NICE TO HAVE around **when you need** Him but otherwise He should leave you

alone and not interfere in your life. Being ***"lukewarm"*** when PUSH COMES to shove it's God who's pushed off to the side. Jesus' take on that? ***"So, because you are lukewarm and not hot or cold, I am about to spit you out of My mouth."***

These **Laodicean Christians** were ready to argue that with Jesus. What a contrast between WHAT THEY SAY and what Jesus says! GUESS who's right! ***"You say, 'I am rich. I have become very wealthy and need nothing.' But you do not know that you are miserable, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked."*** Laodicea was a RICH, PROSPEROUS city in **west-central** Turkey. Were these people claiming to be rich FINANCIALLY? Had a relatively good life **made them** INDIFFERENT to their **spiritual needs**? Or are they claiming to be rich SPIRITUALLY? Do they see themselves as **basically** GOOD, decent people God should be happy with? THEY'RE happy. They don't see ANY MAJOR PROBLEMS in **their relationship** with God. They're quite satisfied with **themselves**.

How they needed to ***"hear what the Spirit says!"*** Jesus sees the EXACT OPPOSITE of what they do. ***"You do not know that you are miserable, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked."*** To see that a person must take an HONEST LOOK at themselves **in that mirror** of God's ten commandments – a person needs to see himself STANDING SIDE BY SIDE with God Himself. Standing next to God do you LOOK PRETTY good – as holy as God is? Do you want to tell God how you've ALWAYS put Him first in your life – that you've ALWAYS gladly done everything He wants – that you've NEVER doubted Him – **never** questioned His ways – **never** defied His will? Or **standing there next** to God do YOU FEEL ***"wretched – pitiful – naked"***? Hearing Jesus' STERN REBUKE of these ***"lukewarm"*** Laodicean Christians do you also feel the sting of that rebuke? Have you also been ***"lukewarm"*** in your faith and **daily Christian** life?

"I am about to spit you out of My mouth," Jesus sternly warned them. But then ***"hear what the Spirit says!"*** – yes…

II. Hear a loving call!

When we realize how ***"wretched – pitiful – poor – blind – naked"*** we are BEFORE GOD this is a loving call. We HAVE NOTHING to offer God but our sin and guilt. Jesus should ***"spit us out of His mouth"*** and throw us into hell's ***"lake of fire."*** But HEAR His loving call! ***"I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments, so that you may be clothed and the shame of your nakedness may not become public, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see."***

The Spirit isn't telling us that we can BUY OUR WAY into **God's good graces** and **eternal life** in heaven. This ***"buying"*** from Jesus makes several points. ONE – what Jesus has to offer us is SO VALUABLE – worth more than **all the money** in the world could buy. We should treasure what **Jesus here offers** us AS OUR GREATEST – most priceless treasure. This ***"buying"*** is like God's call in Isaiah 55 – ***"Come, all you who are thirsty, …and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen to Me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare."***

HEAR the loving call! Jesus offers us the GOSPEL with all its **many precious blessings** that meet all our spiritual needs. The **gospel** is that simple GOOD NEWS that reveals Jesus is God's own eternal Son born our flesh-and-blood brother to be the perfect Savior for a **world** of guilty sinners. The gospel proclaims the **good news** that Jesus took our place under God's law and took care of **everything** to save us. Jesus perfectly obeyed every commandment for us. Jesus lived His **whole life** with a PERFECT LOVE for and a PERFECT TRUST in His heavenly Father – and Jesus gives us all the credit for it. Jesus willingly took the sins of the whole world on Himself and fully paid for EVERY ONE of them with His **own innocent sufferings** and death on the cross. Jesus rose triumphant from the dead on

Easter morning conquering death and the grave for us. The gospel promises that TRUSTING in Jesus we have God's **forgiveness** of all our sins – we have a whole new relationship with God – we are going straight to heaven when we die. We could never buy EVEN ONE of those blessings but they're all God's GIFT to us through faith in Jesus.

The GOSPEL is the real gold that ***"makes us rich"*** – the ***"gold"*** of God's grace and **forgiveness**. The gospel provides us the ***"white clothes"*** of Jesus' righteousness – Jesus' perfect life – to ***"cover our nakedness"*** so we can stand acceptable in God's sight and live forever with Him in heaven. The gospel is ***"the salve"*** for our eyes so we can see the AMAZING GRACE and kindness and faithfulness of our Savior God.

Hear ***"what the Spirit says!" "I rebuke and discipline those whom I love. So take this seriously and repent."*** Jesus' stern rebuke was **not** Jesus UNFAIRLY PICKING on them but Jesus REACHING OUT to call them back to Him. Jesus doesn't want to ***"spit us out of His mouth"*** – He wants us to spend eternity with Him in heaven. Oh hear ***"what the Spirit says"*** –

III. Hear a glorious promise!

"Look, I stand at the door and I am knocking. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will go in with him and dine with him, and he with Me." What a picture of TENDER – EARNEST love! Through the gospel Jesus knocks on the doors of our hearts calling us to faith in Him. Through the gospel the Holy Spirit works that faith in our heats that OPENS OUR HEARTS to Jesus and welcomes Him as our dear Savior. The **unbeliever** just can't understand HOW PRECIOUS is this relationship between Jesus and us. Having Jesus as our Savior doesn't take ALL THE FUN out of our lives – it doesn't make our **lives miserable**. Our relationship with Jesus is a CLOSE, PERSONAL **one of love** – like two friends SITTING DOWN and enjoying a **good meal** and a good time with each other.

"To the one who is victorious I will give the right to sit with Me on My throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with My Father on His throne." Do you see HOW FAR we've come? Jesus sternly rebuked them for their ***"lukewarm"*** faith. He bluntly told them, ***"I am about to spit you out of My mouth."*** But then Jesus reached out to them with the GOSPEL'S LOVING CALL of **free forgiveness**. Now to the VERY SAME PEOPLE He so sternly rebuked Jesus so gloriously promises, ***"You overcome, you will reign with Me."***

We are in a REAL BATTLE for our souls. We can grow tired from the DAY AFTER DAY **battles** and **temptations**. We can grow ***"lukewarm"*** in our Christian faith. Just remember what this is ALL ABOUT – **Jesus** – the **gospel** – eternal life in heaven. WHO needs to hear this? WE ALL do! ***"Whoever has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."*** Amen.

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