

Have you ever sat down for your morning coffee, only to discover you've waited too long and now your piping hot first cup is a lukewarm disappointment? There are only two options: (1) put your mug in the microwave or (2) throw the room-temperature drink down the drain. I don't know about you, but for many of us, who start the day with a cup of coffee, the coffee at a tepid temp is worthless. The coffee should be hot or cold, not lukewarm. Just as we may react by spitting it out, so does God regarding His followers who have become lukewarm.

Today's scripture is from the Book of Revelation, addressing Jesus' words to one of seven churches in Asia Minor—The Laodicean Church, which had grown lukewarm, useless, and worthless. Logically, the readers of today's passage would conclude that being "hot" spiritually is understandable and even desired. At face value, this passage also seems to imply that it was acceptable to be "cold" spiritually—the term that could be understood to mean lifeless, even dead.

However, Jesus was ***not*** telling the Laodicean Church that it was appropriate to be "cold" spiritually. Although this passage may sound somewhat confusing today, the people of Laodicea understood exactly what Jesus was saying.

History has revealed that Laodicea was known for its tepid or lukewarm water supply. Nearby were the ancient cities of Hierapolis and Colossae. Both towns had well-deserved reputations for their water supplies. Hierapolis boasted hot springs containing therapeutic, medicinal, and hot mineral water. Colossae enjoyed cold and refreshing mountain spring water. On the other hand, the water in Laodicea was reportedly dirty and lukewarm.

That's why the Laodiceans could easily understand what Jesus was saying in today's scripture about their church. To be "hot" was to be fervent and helpful, and to be "cold" was refreshing and invigorating. To be "lukewarm" was to be undesirable, useless, and worthless.

Laodicea was a wealthy city, and the Christians there were guilty of prioritizing worldly success, fooling them into thinking they were also spiritually successful. The lukewarm Christians at the Laodicean Church Jesus talked about in today's scripture were the worthless Christians whose service for the Lord was not being

done with a genuine desire to please Him. Their pretentious "works" were not sincere and half-hearted to the Lord. They prioritized the physical over the spiritual. They prioritized their agenda over God's agenda. The Christians at Laodicea were lifeless and worthless because their commitment to Christ had formality, but no meaning, no essence.

According to today's scripture, we know that God desires us to be Christians who are either fervent ("hot") or refreshing ("cold") rather than to be "lukewarm." Lukewarm Christians are the worthless Christians practicing worthless Christianity, impacting nothing and influencing no one.

Living in the world but not being of the world is no easy task. The only cure against becoming a lukewarm Christian is to reset our priorities by focusing on Jesus and giving our whole hearts to the Lord. By doing so, we can be either fervent ("hot") or refreshing ("cold") to impact the world around us and influence people around us. When we respond to God's invitation for an intimate relationship, we can find our faith's temperature increases and our hearts are strangely warmed. At that moment, we know that we become disciples of Jesus Christ who can be effective in God's "kin-dom" work in the church and beyond the church.

Here is our spiritual life temperature checkpoint question. Is there anyone who came to Christ because of you? If yes, you are either fervent ("hot") or refreshing ("cold"). If not, unfortunately, I need to say you are "lukewarm." Let's ponder this question today and do something about it. Amen.

