

## Session 7

July 18, 2021

### SUFFICIENT IN CHRIST ALONE

#### Revelation 3:14-22

Water is made up of three molecules: two hydrogen molecules combined with one oxygen molecule makes a water molecule. You can find it in the air; you can find it in all living things. It is necessary for life. The animals need it, the lawn needs it, the garden needs it and people need it. You can drink it from a spring or from a stream; from a fountain or from the tap; from a well or from a glacier. You can pay a fortune for the fancy bottled stuff or drink it free from a garden hose! But it's still water: two parts hydrogen, one part oxygen.

As near as I can tell, the only issues that affect water (when it comes to drinking it) are the container in which it is stored, and the temperature at which it is served. As we shall see, the Lord Jesus was careful in selecting His words to describe the church at Laodicea.

**The context.** Laodicea was located due east of Ephesus, making it the southeasternmost city in the cycle of seven cities. The city of Colossae was a close neighbor. The city was made up largely of Syrians but had nearly 10,000 Jewish men living there. Historical records say the Jews of the city were lax in their religion and lazy in their lifestyle. As a center for commerce and banking, the city was wealthy. An earthquake in 60 AD destroyed part of the city, but they were wealthy enough to rebuild it with their own money. So they gained the reputation of being rich...and arrogant about it. The city was known for its high-quality black wool used in fabric as well as rugs. They also had a renowned medical community and developed and marketed an eye ointment. In terms of the church, we know nothing apart from this graphic description. For reflection: *It's important to understand the circumstances of this city. Otherwise, the counsel Jesus offered makes little sense!*

**The condemnation (vv. 15-16).** Apparently, the laxity of the Laodicean lifestyle had been swept right into the church. These folks were content in their own lack of commitment (v. 17). The wording here is very direct. As far as Christ was concerned, these people were sickening! If only they were hot...like the hot springs of Hierapolis, a city of spas just 6 miles to the north. There, the hot springs brought soothing relief, strength, and restoration. If they were hot in their commitment and fervent in their faith, then Christ would know what to do with them. Or if they were only cold, like the fresh running streams of Colossae just 10 miles to the east. There people drank the water to be refreshed and invigorated. If only the church at Laodicea was cold and refreshing like that of Colossae, He would know what to do. But the water in Laodicea was not like either of its sister cities. It had no wells of its own, so the water was piped into the city along several miles of underground aqueducts. Along the way the water picked up a foul taste from the ancient trough that flowed into the city. And along the way, the water became tepid. The final product was water that was foul tasting, odorless, and almost undrinkable. In essence, the Lord told the church, "You are just like your water...you are tepid and foul. You aren't hot and relaxing. You aren't cold and refreshing." The other churches made the Lord angry. Laodicea made the Lord sick! For reflection: *In what ways do you think today's church has become lukewarm? What do you think it would take to make them vibrant again?*

**The counsel (vv. 18-22).** Here, the context of the city (mentioned above) comes into play. The Lord advised them to invest in real gold; the treasures found only in Him. Second, He suggested white garments of purity, in contrast to the dark wool they were known for. Third, He offered His own eye salve, as opposed to theirs, to restore their spiritual sight. Finally, He offered them an open invitation to a genuine intimacy with Him (v. 21). For reflection: *Verse 21 has been used for years as an evangelistic tool. But the context is Jesus knocking on the door of the church (not one's heart). What do you think the idea of the church dining with Christ entails?*