

LIVING ON FIRE — NOT LUKEWARM

A Call to Burn in a Cold World

Revelation 3:14-22, Matthew 24:12-13

[References: 2 Timothy 1:7, 13-14; 2 Timothy 3:1-2, 13, 16; John 15:4]

INTRODUCTION:

It's time to check our temperature to guard ourselves against becoming lukewarm (tepid: *slightly warm*)-unenthused, apathetic, half-hearted, uninterested, unconcerned, limp, listless, indifferent, cool.

Jesus rebuked other churches in **Revelation** for false doctrine, moral compromise, and tolerating sin. These things grieve the heart of God. But when He addressed Laodicea, His rebuke was for something-no less sinful-but more subtle. They were not openly rebellious — they were spiritually complacent. Their rebuke was not about scandal or loud rebellion, but apathy (indifference): *lack of passion, urgency, and sensitivity toward God, His Word, and His will*. And indifference toward God can be just as spiritually dangerous as open sin because it feels safe and respectable. Some may even continue to do *religious activities* but lack spiritual fervor and belief because (Hebrews 5:11) they have **become dull of hearing**.

Note: This is when the heart “cools” while the routine continues.

THE CHURCH AT LAODICEA: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT (Revelation 3:14–22)

Laodicea was a prosperous city known for banking, textiles, and medicine. They rebuilt their city after an earthquake without outside assistance, demonstrating their independence. However, they had no natural water source. Hot water came from Hierapolis. Cold water came from Colossae. By the time it reached Laodicea, it was lukewarm.

When Jesus said, “*You are neither cold nor hot... because you are lukewarm, I will spit you out of My mouth,*” they understood. Hot water heals. Cold water refreshes. Lukewarm water is ineffective, useless.

Jesus was rebuking their spiritual complacency.

THE ROOT OF LUKEWARMNESS: SELF-SUFFICIENCY (Revelation 3:17)

Laodicea believed they lacked nothing. Yet Jesus called them spiritually poor, blind, and naked. They were materially rich but spiritually bankrupt.

Note: Their danger was not persecution or any type of scandal — it was prosperity. Comfort can slowly cool urgency. When we get comfortable, it becomes “easy” to manage life. When that happens, dependence weakens. We do not say (out loud) we *do not need God* — but sometimes we live as though we don't.

A WARNING FOR THE LAST DAYS (Matthew 24:12–13)

Jesus warned that as wickedness increases, the love of many will grow cold. Coldness is subtle erosion through distraction, compromise, and cultural pressure. But those who endure to the end will be saved.

Standing firm requires spiritual heat and conviction anchored in truth.

THE CONTRAST: THE CHURCH AT PHILADELPHIA (Revelation 3:7–13)

Philadelphia had little strength, yet they kept God's Word and did not deny His name. Jesus told them to *hold fast to what they have so that no one would take their crown.*

Note: Faithfulness matters more than influence. Commitment matters more than comfort.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BURN FOR GOD?

Fire in Scripture represents God's **presence** (Exodus 3 – *the burning bush*); **purification** (Malachi 3:2-3 – *God sits as a purifier and refiner of silver*); **power** (Acts 2:3 – *power of the Holy Spirit*), and **holy conviction and zeal** (Jeremiah 20:9 – *“like fire shut up in my bones*).

To burn spiritually means:

- **Hunger for righteousness** (Matthew 5:6)
- **Guard against compromise** (Romans 12:2 – do not be conformed to this world...)
- **Respond quickly to conviction** (1 John 1:9 - ...confess our sins...)
- **Pursue prayer and the Word consistently** (Matthew 6:33; Luke 18:1) *pray always*
- **Refuse spiritual apathy** (*lack of interest in prayer, worship, faith; disconnected numbness*) – caused by unconfessed sin that creates a barrier between us and our spiritual growth; familiarity/complacency – where what was once sacred is now status-quo or commonplace (*no awe of God*). **Spiritual apathy** leads to decreased motivation, heightened anxiety (*lack of trust and total dependence upon the Lord*), and reduced resilience.

Note: Fire requires fuel: prayer, Scripture, repentance, fellowship, and obedience.

FINAL THOUGHT:

The Lord desires a church that is alive (repentant) and burning with holy devotion. Not emotional hype, but authentic passion, commitment, and devotion. Not performance, but purity. Not wavering, but witnessing. Not compromising but committed. *Burning through your family, neighborhood, community, co-working spaces, marketplaces, and ministries!!!* Let your light shine bright **at all times**. You are the light of the world. Keep the fire burning.