

I Don't Need a Thing, from God (*Laodicea*)

Revelation 3:14-22 on September 18, 2022

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Please read Revelation 3:14-22 before going further in this transcript.

Today we're wrapping up our study of the 7 churches from the book of Revelation, and we're going to look at Jesus' 7th and final letter, the letter to the church in Laodicea.¹

Laodicea was the wealthiest city in the region, known for its banking, medicine, and clothing industries.² It was uniquely positioned at a crossroads of multiple trade and communication routes.³ Laodicea was also the most

important city in a tri-city area with Hierapolis and Colossae, with Hierapolis 6 miles to the north and Colossae 10 miles to the east.⁴ Paul mentions this tri-city area in Colossians

4:12-13, "Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings... I vouch for him that he is working hard for you [at Colossae] and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis." In other words these three cities, were SO close

geographically, that Epaphras was easily able to minister in all three locations.⁵ Despite all its great wealth though, the city of Laodicea had two major weaknesses: earthquakes and water supply problems. It was located in an area prone to terrible earthquakes which caused significant damage throughout the city's history. It also had no good source of water close by, so it had to pipe it in, through an aqueduct system, which was less than ideal.^{6 7} (*We'll come back to this.*)



Jesus' letter begins in Revelation 3:14, "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation." Now, amen is usually a word we use to end our prayers, often giving a strong affirmation meaning "so be it" or "let it be done!"⁸ Jesus uses this same word "Amen" all throughout the gospels to validate particularly important truths or solemn teachings.⁹ In fact, any time we read Jesus saying something like "Truly I tell you," that's

¹ Just to be clear though, we're not done with the book of Revelation, next week we'll press on with Revelation 4 and right on to the end of the book!

² *The NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2011, p. 2155 footnote on Revelation 3:14.

³ Which made it "politically important as well." Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 2002, p. 201.

⁴ Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 2002, p. 201.

⁵ In fact, some people believe that "Epaphras likely evangelized Laodicea and nearby Colossae and Hierapolis." *The NIV Zondervan Study Bible*, Grand Rapids, MI, 2015, p. 2595 footnote on Revelation 3:14.

⁶ Their water source was located ~6 miles south in city of Denizli. See discussion by Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 2002, top of p. 202.

⁷ A contemporary comparison might be the Flint water crises a few years back. <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/04/20/465545378/lead-laced-water-in-flint-a-step-by-step-look-at-the-makings-of-a-crisis>

⁸ ἀμήν is a "① strong affirmation of what is stated ② as expression of faith **let it be so, truly.**" (William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 53.)

⁹ Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 2002, p. 203.

a translation of this same word, “amen.” So, Revelation 3:14 is a rather rare occurrence, where Jesus is using “Amen” as a title to refer to Himself.¹⁰ Jesus is declaring that His words are the ultimate word of God.¹¹ In other words, when Jesus speaks, He makes things happen, “so be it,” “let be done.” Jesus’ words are “the words of the amen.”¹²

When Jesus says that He is, “the faithful and true witness,” it sets up a sharp contrast to the coming rebuke on the Laodicean church, because they were not being faithful witnesses.^{13 14 15} I’m sorry to be the one to say it, but the church at Laodicea is the only one of the seven churches to whom Jesus doesn’t mention ANY strengths or give ANY commendations.¹⁶ In fact, almost the entire letter is a rebuke for their pitiful spiritual condition, and an exhortation to renew their zeal and devotion to the Lord.¹⁷

Jesus also declares that He is the “ruler of God’s creation.” “Ruler” can also be translated “beginning.” Jesus is both; He’s the ruler of God’s creation, but He is also the beginning of God’s creation.^{18 19} And not just His creation of this world at the beginning of time, but also His ongoing work of new creations.²⁰ 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” So, in

¹⁰ “Amen” is usually “a response to a word from God or to a prayer in both the OT and NT, and it sometimes refers to Jesus’ trustworthy statements. Isa. 65:16 and Rev. 3:14 are the only two passages in the entire Bible where “Amen” is a name.” (G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 299.)

¹¹ “Christ as the ultimate affirmation, the Amen.... 3:14.” William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 53.

¹² Amen = “As a person designation it describes one who is totally trustworthy and faithful.” *The NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2011, p. 2155 footnote on Revelation 3:14.

¹³ See *The NIV Zondervan Study Bible*, Grand Rapids, MI, 2015, p. 2595 footnote on Revelation 3:14.

¹⁴ Revelation 19:11 says, “I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war.”

¹⁵ John opened his book by describing Jesus in a similar way in Revelation 1:5, “and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth....” “Despite what most commentators think, the titles in 3:14 do not link Jesus to the original creation, but are an interpretation of Jesus’ resurrection drawn from 1:5. His resurrection is viewed as the beginning of the new creation, which is parallel with Col. 1:15b, 18b; cf. “first-born of all creation” (πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως) in Col. 1:15b, which may refer to the original creation in Genesis, and “the beginning, the firstborn from the dead” in v 18b (ἀρχή, πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν). The latter phrase refers to the resurrection as a new cosmic beginning (as evident from the link not only with Col. 1:15–17 but also with 1:19–20, 23). This is parallel with 2 Cor. 5:15, 17, where Paul understands Jesus’ resurrection as bringing about a “new creation.”” (G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 298.)

¹⁶ “The letters to Smyrna and Philadelphia do not contain any weaknesses, and the letter to Laodicea does not contain any strengths.” Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 2002, p. 106.

¹⁷ “Jesus introduces himself to the Laodicean Christians as “the Amen, the faithful and true witness” because he wants them to stop compromising and emulate him so that they will also be zealous “faithful and true witnesses.” (G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 301–302.)

¹⁸ See *The NIV Zondervan Study Bible*, Grand Rapids, MI, 2015, p. 2595 footnote on Revelation 3:14.

¹⁹ “Ruler” can mean “first in point of time (“beginning”) or first in rank (“ruler”). *The NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2011, p. 2155 footnote on Revelation 3:14.

²⁰ “Consequently, the title “beginning of the creation of God” refers not to Jesus’ sovereignty over the original creation but to his resurrection as demonstrating that he is the [beginning] of and sovereign [ruler] over the new creation.” (G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 298.)

Revelation 3:14, Jesus may very well be referring to a more specific creation, the new creation that began at His death and resurrection. This would echo back to John’s opening description of Jesus back in Revelation 1:5, “...Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead....”²¹ Jesus was the first to rise from the dead, but He will not be the last; His resurrection was just the beginning. He is coming back for those who are newly created in Christ, those who are victorious to the end. In other words, in verse 14, Jesus is reminding the believers in Laodicea that they were not being faithful to “the words of the Amen,” to God’s “faithful and true witness,” and to “the ruler of God’s creation.” This Jesus is the One who God put in place to rule over His Kingdom of newly created Christians. This Jesus, had a message for the church in Laodicea. And it wasn’t going to be an easy one to stomach, because Jesus could barely stomach them.²²

Revelation 3:15-16 goes on, “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.” Cold OR hot, EITHER one would be great, but they were NEITHER one. They were lukewarm, and it made Jesus what to spit them out; some translations say, “vomit them out.”²³ This is vivid and startling word picture is directly connected to the local geography around Laodicea. Three of us Johnson’s had the privilege of visiting Ancient Laodicea over my sabbatical this past spring. (*It’s near modern-day Denizli.*)

3 Johnson’s in Laodicea Laodicean pipes

This picture on the left is the three of us standing in front of the ruins of Laodicea. The picture on the right is one that I asked my wife to take of me, pointing out all of the wonderful pipes that ran throughout the city – they were EVERYWHERE! These pipes seemed important to me since Jesus’ letter to Laodicea says so much about water. The water in these pipes came



²¹ Colossians 1:18 agrees, “And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead....”

²² “The theme of this letter then is that the readers need to be renewed... as new creatures in their relationship with Christ by testifying to this relationship in an uncompromising manner. And the creative power of the resurrected Jesus can raise them from their spiritual [apathy] (vv 15–17), strengthen them in faith (v 18) so that they will repent (v 19), and confirm them in their enduring fellowship with him (v 20). If this happens, they will receive a reward (v 21).” (G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 302.)

²³ “Spit” = ἐμέω “vomit, throw up... metaphorically...spew someone from one’s mouth like undrinkable water. ...the emetic character of some Laodicean water supplies....” (William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 322.)

from a spring about 5 miles away via an aqueduct.²⁴ No doubt after traveling 5 miles, the water got lukewarm, no matter how hot or cold the temperature it started out at. So initially, I figured this was what verses 15-16 were probably referring to. Jesus didn't find the water at Laodicea very refreshing to drink; in fact, it made Him want to spit it out! But scholar Mark Wilson points out, that this is only part of the story. Lukewarm drinking water was common in many of the cities to which Jesus wrote, because lots of cities used aqueducts to import their water.²⁵ So there may actually be a fuller explanation for why Jesus chose to use this particular illustration of hot and cold, a reason that goes beyond the fact that the water was being piped into the city.

Hierapolis Travertines Pamukkale
(Visible 6 miles north of Laodicea.²⁶)



Snowy Mt. Honaz above Colossae
(Visible 10 miles east of Laodicea)



The picture on the left is a place called Pamukkale²⁷, which is located by the ancient city of Hierapolis. These “Travertines” are an incredibly beautiful location where all the tourists take off their shoes, wade in the water, and, of course, take far too many selfies! This massive, white rock surface feels like you're walking on an enormous seashell. It's made of mineral deposits that are continually being carried down the mountain from the hot springs above. You can see Pamukkale from a very long ways away, even from 6 miles away in Laodicea. When I first saw it in the distance, I mistakenly assumed it was snow on top of the hill. However, once we arrived there, and began wading in the warm, silty, travertine waters, it finally sank in that this massive hilltop was made entirely out of tiny white mineral deposits. The picture on the right is actually a picture of Colossae, which surprisingly, is not one of the 7 churches that Jesus wrote to. Colossae is buried under that grassy hill on the right side of the picture

²⁴ Some have postulated that Laodicea may have gotten its water from the hot springs of nearby Hierapolis. However, “Water from Hierapolis was never channeled to Laodicea... [it] came from the Bashpinar spring to the south, the same water source supplying the city of Denizli today.” Ege Yayinlari & Mark Wilson, *Biblical Turkey, Corrected 3rd ed.*, Zero Produksiyon, Istanbul, 2014, p. 255.

²⁵ “The cool spring water undoubtedly became lukewarm as it passed through the aqueducts into the city. But this would be true of all the aqueduct and siphon systems that brought water to Ephesus, Smyrna, and Pergamum.” Ege Yayinlari & Mark Wilson, *Biblical Turkey, Corrected 3rd ed.*, Zero Produksiyon, Istanbul, 2014, p. 255.

²⁶ See commentary by Ege Yayinlari & Mark Wilson, *Biblical Turkey, Corrected 3rd ed.*, Zero Produksiyon, Istanbul, 2014, p. 255.

²⁷ This Turkish word is translated the “cotton castle.”

because it's one of the few sites that hasn't been excavated yet. That snow-capped mountain that you see in the background is called Mt. Honaz. It's also visible from a long ways away, even from 10 miles away in Laodicea. So this is the more likely explanation for why Jesus chose to use this illustration of hot and cold: Laodicea was surrounded by a visual reminder of snow-capped mountains near Colossae that would melt and provide cold refreshing water to the streams, as well as the white mineral deposits of Pamukkale, whose hot thermal pools were renowned for their healing powers.²⁸ My Study Bible summarizes it nicely: "The church in Laodicea supplied neither healing for the spiritually sick nor refreshment for the spiritually weary."²⁹ That's why Jesus mentions "deeds" at the beginning of Revelation 3:15-16, "I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! 16 So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth." In other words, "You should be hot or cold."³⁰ Their deeds were lukewarm, not helpful and not useful. The church in Laodicea should have been known for their spiritual healing, like the hot waters of Hierapolis, and for their spiritual refreshment, like the cold snow-melted waters near Colossae. But they were lukewarm and lacked having any useful purpose for God's Kingdom.³¹

Jesus goes on in Revelation 3:17, "You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked." They mention their "acquired wealth" but there's not even a hint of thankfulness to God for His provision. In other words, they'd come to believe that they'd gotten rich on their own. They'd forgotten that everything comes from God and belongs to God.³² Financial wealth can be dangerous to our spiritual health, particularly if we allow it to produce a self-sufficient attitude within us. An attitude of self-sufficiency drives us far away from depending on God. There's a danger of becoming smug, rather pleased with ourselves, instead of eager to please Christ.³³ My Study Bible gives some helpful information about the history of Laodicea: In AD 60, some 35 years before Jesus' letter, the city of Laodicea suffered significant damage from a major earthquake. The city was SO wealthy, that it declined help from the Roman Emperor and

²⁸ "Laodicea's dramatic situation between the white travertines of the thermal springs and the surrounding snow-covered mountains most probably accounts for the 'hot-cold' imagery in the letter." Ege Yayinlari & Mark Wilson, *Biblical Turkey, Corrected 3rd ed.*, Zero Produksiyon, Istanbul, 2014, p. 255.

²⁹ *The NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2011, p. 2155 footnote on Revelation 3:16.

³⁰ See personal translation by Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 2002, p. 203.

³¹ See discussion by Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 2002, pp. 205-206.

³² Deuteronomy 8:10-18 comes to mind.

³³ Dependence on God is a core value of the Christian faith. One good way to test whether we're dependent on God is to examine our prayer life. If we don't pray very much, it may be because we don't think we really need God very much, that we can handle things on our own. On September 11, 2022, Pastor Eric preached on our interdependency as many parts of one body, the church. "You need the church body, and the church body needs you."

<https://efcbemidji.org/sermon/the-body-together>

decided to fund their own rebuilding effort.^{34 35} Essentially, they said, “we have acquired wealth and do not need a thing from the emperor.” Jesus now accuses the church in Laodicea of making a similar boast about its own spiritual self-sufficiency, “we don’t need a thing, from God.”³⁶

So not only did they lack thankfulness, but they lacked perspective. They sincerely thought that they were doing just fine; they were OBLIVIOUS to their true spiritual condition before God.³⁷ Jesus saw through their outer façade of wealth, and He tells them that He can see just how wretched and pitiful they are. At the end of verse 17, He describes them with three words: poor, blind, and naked. So Jesus offers them a solution in Revelation 3:18, “I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.” Here Jesus is confronting them directly in the three areas where their city took the most pride: their financial wealth, their clothing industry, and their famous eye salve.³⁸

➤ You see, Laodicea was well-known for its soft, raven-black wool which put its competitors to shame, and helped it corner the market, “making it incredibly wealthy.”³⁹

➤ Laodicea also “developed a compound for curing eye diseases called ‘Phrygian⁴⁰ powder,’ which brought it even more fame and [fortune].”⁴¹

So Jesus reference to “gold refined in the fire” represents the spiritual riches that will last for eternity, eternally longer than the riches of this world. “White clothes to wear” represent our desperate need to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ. Even the finest clothing from Armani⁴², Dior⁴³, or Ralph Lauren won’t gain us access into heaven.^{44 45} “Salve to

³⁴ Consider Hosea 12:8. See *The NIV Zondervan Study Bible*, Grand Rapids, MI, 2015, p. 2595 footnote on Revelation 3:17.

³⁵ It’s also interesting to note that “In AD 25 Laodicea applied for permission to build the second imperial cult temple in Asia, but was disqualified due to lack of civic wealth required to maintain a provincial cult.” (Ege Yayinlari & Mark Wilson, *Biblical Turkey, Corrected 3rd ed.*, Zero Produksiyon, Istanbul, 2014, p. 248.) In other words, this may have stung their pride deeply enough that they were still holding a grudge some 35 years later, and now they wanted to thumb their noses with their strong position of wealth.

³⁶ And so, “The church was like the city, believing its material wealth connoted spiritual wealth.... the city had no perceived need for help from Rome, and the church had no perceived need for help from God.” Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 2002, p. 207.

³⁷ So if we ever find ourselves saying or thinking, “we don’t need a thing,” we may want to think twice. The financial wealth of the church in Laodicea had blinded them to their spiritual poverty. “The Laodiceans were immensely wealthy, and this led to self-sufficiency and complacency, a deadly combination for the Christian.... The problem, however, was not wealth per se but the smug self-satisfaction it engendered.... [In verse 17, Jesus points out that] Their...self-sufficiency rendered them ‘blind’ to the truth [they didn’t realize their own wretched condition]... they had succumbed to their own affluent lifestyle, and they didn’t even know it.” Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 2002, pp. 206-207.

³⁸ *The NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2011, p. 2155 footnote on Revelation 3:18.

³⁹ Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 2002, p. 201.

⁴⁰ “FRI jee uhn”

⁴¹ Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 2002, p. 201.

⁴² “are MAA knee”

⁴³ “Dee OR”

⁴⁴ I like how Grant Osborne says it “They had ‘bought’ everything from earthly merchants and so had gone to the wrong ‘store.’” Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 2002, p. 208.

put on your eyes” represents our desperate dependence on God for the spiritual vision that we need, to keep us from being blinded by the things of this world.⁴⁶

Jesus tells them, “I counsel you.” Boy oh boy did this church ever need Christ’s counsel. And oh that E-Free Bemidji will have ears to hear Christ’s counsel for us! In light of this, and in light of our celebration of the Lord’s Supper today, it’s vital that we pay close attention to these next two verses. In Revelation 3:19 Jesus says, “Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent.” Brother or sister in Christ, when we recognize the wretched and pitiful condition of our own sinfulness, we need to run earnestly toward Jesus, toward repentance. If it weren’t for God’s great love for us, He’d just let us wander away. But, because He loves us, He brings us an offer of repentance and reconciliation.

It’s interesting to note how this word, “earnest” (or some translations say “zealous”), is placed before the repentance, not after it.⁴⁷ In other words, the order here is not repent of your sin, and then go back to being earnest and zealous about your faith. The order is the other way around. Jesus appeals to our earnest desire to be right with God, He appeals to our spiritual zeal for the Lord, and then lets that drive us toward repentance and toward taking immediate action to do something about our spiritual deficit.⁴⁸

Divine love mandates divine discipline. Because the Lord loves us, He disciplines us. And because we’re all sinners, we all have times in our lives when we need discipline. If the Lord hasn’t rebuked and disciplined us lately, it may be because we’re doing well in our walk with Christ; but it’s also possible that either we’re not listening, OR... we’re not listening. Jesus ends His 7th and final letter, the same way that He’s ended all His letters. In Revelation 3:22 He says, “Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”⁴⁹ The point that Jesus seems to be driving home with the church in Laodicea is that they didn’t even REALIZE their true spiritual condition. They thought that they were doing just fine, “We don’t need a thing!” But in verse 17, Jesus revealed that they weren’t just fine, what was really going on was, “wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked.”

⁴⁵ In Luke 16:9 Jesus counsels His disciples, “I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.”

⁴⁶ So Jesus uses these three areas in which the city boasted, to point out three areas of spiritual deficiency by the Laodicean believers. They lacked true spiritual riches, they weren’t wearing the righteousness of Christ, and they were blind to their true, spiritually wretched condition.

⁴⁷ See discussion by Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 2002, bottom of p. 211.

⁴⁸ Proverbs 3:11-12 agrees, “My son, do not despise the LORD’s discipline, and do not resent his rebuke, because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.” See also Psalm 94:12; Hebrews 12:5-11; and 1 Corinthians 11:29-32.

⁴⁹ The psalmist prays in Psalm 19:12, “But who can discern their own errors? Forgive my hidden faults.”

But Jesus isn't simply dropping the hammer on them, He's standing at the door, He's eager to offer them an opportunity to reconcile with Him.⁵⁰ In Revelation 3:20 Jesus says, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me."⁵¹ (*This was written to the believers in the church.*) Right in the midst of Jesus' rebuke and discipline, is this beautiful invitation to reconciliation! Verse 20 presents a compelling word picture of Jesus standing outside the door of each believer's life, and He knocks.^{52 53} He doesn't force His way in, He simply knocks at the door, He stands close enough that we can hear His voice, and then... He waits. If we hear His voice and open the door, if we earnestly repent of our sin, then Jesus forgives our sin, and He comes in and enjoys a meal with us. In other words, our intimacy and close fellowship with the Lord is restored. So this is not only an invitation to repent of our sin, but it's also an invitation to reconcile our relationship with Him.⁵⁴ However, if we ignore His knocking, if we continue on in our sin and self-sufficiency, if we say to ourselves, "I don't need a thing, from God," then we leave Jesus standing outside the door...⁵⁵ Jesus has made the first move, He's come halfway. The other half, the response to Him knocking at the door, is up to us. This is why it's SO important for us to celebrate the Lord's Supper on a regular basis. It reminds us of God's great love for us. And it reminds us of the importance of maintaining close communion with our Lord.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Romans 2:4 says, "...God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance."

⁵¹ Eating together was an important cultural practice at this time in history, particularly eating together in someone's home. We don't do nearly as much of this in our American culture. That's one of the things I really appreciate about some of our Life Groups is that we meet in homes, which conveys a deeper sense of trust and connection.

⁵² The "anyone" ("tis" in the Greek) in verse 20 seems to indicate an individualistic thrust, thus it is a personal one to one invitation. See Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 2002, p. 217 footnote on Revelation 3:20.

⁵³ "This fellowship may well anticipate the future messianic banquet, but it cannot be restricted to that event. It is more likely that...present fellowship will be the result." Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 2002, p. 217 footnote on Revelation 3:20.

⁵⁴ See *The NIV Zondervan Study Bible*, Grand Rapids, MI, 2015, p. 2595 footnote on Revelation 3:20.

⁵⁵ The emphasis here is on "the importance of personal response." Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 2002, p. 212.

⁵⁶ You see, even though the church at Laodicea is the only church to whom Jesus doesn't mention ANY strengths or give ANY commendations, that doesn't mean that there is no hope for them. Jesus has most certainly NOT given up on them, but He does insist that they turn back to Him. In fact, Verse 21 gives us an entirely different word picture, it's a hopeful picture of those who are victorious in their Christian life. Jesus says, "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." Those who respond to the Lord's loving rebuke and discipline, who earnestly repent of their sin, who open the door and restore their fellowship with Jesus, they are reminded that spiritual perseverance leads to sitting with Jesus on His throne. To ruling and reigning with Him throughout eternity. (See Ephesians 2:6 and 2 Timothy 2:12a.) Brother or Sister in Christ, we are sons and daughters of the king; He shares His victory with us. Revelation 22:5 says that we will serve God in the heavenly city, and we will reign with Him "for ever and ever."