***Lukewarm Christians

Colossians 2:18-19

COL-465***

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2 Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture is inspired by God, and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

Matthew 4:4: "But He answered and said, 'It is written: Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every Word that comes out of the mouth of God.'"

Matthew 13:16: "But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it."

This morning we direct your hearing and your attention to "The Error of Angelic Worship," segment number 22 in Colossians 2:18-19.

We continue our study of what the Christian's prize is, spoken to us in Colossians 2:18, where the Apostle Paul said, "Let no man defraud you (rob you) of your prize." And we've been trying to delineate this prize – the spiritual power system under which we live, in contrast to Old Testament saints – the church-age believer, in contrast to those Old Testament saints, who had to live under the Mosaic Law. Today, the Christian has a spiritual grace capacity to live a Christlike life, by means of the indwelling Holy Spirit. We can do that which pleases God. Our intentions can become reality.

In Colossians 2:18, this grace power and privilege is called the Christian Prize – a prize which is awarded to him for trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. It's a great benefit of knowing church-age doctrine, and of being filled by the indwelling Holy Spirit – providing supernatural capacity to live a godly life, and to serve God with divine good works, which someday will merit rewards in heaven.

**Laodicea**

The Christian is warned, in Colossians 2:18, not to be robbed, or let anybody rob him of this great spiritual prize in Christ Jesus by the imposition of the legalisms of the Mosaic Law way of life, or of personal carnality. We have pointed out that a classic example of a group of local church believers, who have lost their prize, is to be found in the letter written to the church at Laodicea in Revelation 3. Will you please turn there? This is a classic example of a congregation of church believers who compromise the blessings of their grace prize in life on earth, and their rewards in heaven.

**Jesus Christ is God**

This church is reminded that they are having a letter written to them by the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle John is acting as secretary in taking down the dictation of the Lord Jesus. Furthermore, he points out, in verse 14, that the letter comes from very specific characteristics and qualities of Christ. Namely, he is the "Amen." He's the final word of revelation from God the Father, which we now have recorded in the Bible. He is the witness of God who is faithful and true. He speaks divine viewpoint of the Trinity without error. And He is the creator of the universe, which means He was preexistent before all creation. And that means He is God, and He has the power as a preeminent one of the universe.

The Lord Jesus Christ knows that the Odyssey and Christians have a country-club lifestyle (he calls it their "deeds") in the world system of Satan. The Laodiceans are neither unsaved cold (icy cold), nor are they super-grace spiritual maturity (super-hot) in their temporal fellowship with the Father. And that makes it hard to deal with them, because that puts them in the middle of the spectrum as being lukewarm, or as the word means: spiritually nauseating.

They were so smug here in Laodicea, in their carnality, and their spiritual revisionism. And God says, "It's very difficult to deal with that lukewarm type of Christian – this lukewarm person who is cold. You know that he needs the gospel of the grace of God. For the Christian who is spiritually hot, you know that he is spiritually mature; fulfilling Christian service; and, he can be sent on missions in the service of God.

However, in between, you have a kind of a dead spot. Consequently, the Lord of the church, Jesus Christ, has announced that he has decided to discipline this congregation of believers. And again, I remind you that this is not a bunch of unbelievers, and this is not a bunch of unsaved people. The Laodicean Church is a group of Christians. They have just closed the door on the Lord Jesus Christ on their lives.

**Lukewarm Christians**

So, in Revelation 3:16, the Lord says to them, "So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you (or vomit you) out of My mouth." The word "vomit: looks like this in the Greek. It's the Greek word "emeo." And from this we get the English word for something that causes a person to throw up (to regurgitate). This word is only used once in the New Testament by the Holy Spirit, and that's enough. You have a picture of vomiting God. Once is enough. You couldn't have had an analogy more forceful than this that shows what an offense lukewarm Christians are to the Heavenly Father. It expresses utmost abhorrence by God for their spiritual reversionism. And here it is – a whole church. They thought they were so sophisticated and so cool. This word refers to the future existence of the local church in Laodicea. In the Greek tense, it indicates that they're at a point of no return. He is now going to act in discipline.

It is in the active voice, which shows that the Lord Jesus Christ is going to impose a discipline. And it is the infinitive mode, which tells us that this is the divine purpose. He is going to terminate the blessings and the operation of this church. If they don't change, the lamp stand representing their church is going to be removed from the roster of God's organized believers. And when he says, "you," it's in the masculine tense, and He's referring, perhaps, to the pastor-teacher. He is the one who's been the problem with the quality of the spiritual life of this congregation. And what God says He's going to do is that He's going to spew them out of His mouth. And that refers to the physical organ for eating.

**Carnality**

The lukewarmness of carnality is the issue here. The Laodicean Church were neither icy cold (unsaved); nor, were they boiling hot (spiritually mature believers). The Laodicean Church followed its pastor-teacher messenger into reversionism. We suspect that he was the fly in the ointment, and that he was accommodating to the wishes of the people.

**You have to Stretch**

Dr. Lewis Johnson of Dallas Seminary, my Greek professor, one day in class made a special point of stressing that, when you speak to the people of God, the cookies of God's mind, and of God's Word should not be put on the lower shelf, but they should be put on the highest shelf. You should expect most of the congregation to be given the deep things of the Spirit of God. They should be shown what is in the Word of God. And the point he was making was that the very same notes that were on his desk, as he was teaching us that particular exposition of some book in the New Testament, is what he takes with him into the pulpit. He said, "They get it all. They get the deep things of the Word of God. And if they want to go somewhere with the Lord, they have to stretch. They have to stand up, and reach for cookies. Now, some will be lukewarm, and say, "That's a lot of trouble." This is like saying, "Boy, getting up every Sunday morning – that's a lot of trouble to get to church. Every Sunday night – that's a lot of trouble to do." Well, what you're trying to find is the cookies on the lower shelf. They're not going to be there – not the real stuff.

So, here you have church members who are out of temporal fellowship with God the Father, and they're minus the illumination and leading of the Holy Spirit. That is a terrible condition. It's bad enough when you have a few people in the congregation like that. But when the congregation as a whole is at that spiritual level, and they're all smug about it, the Lord of the Laodicean Church, Jesus Christ, said that He could not stomach them, and that He would vomit them up. Nothing could be more discouraging, I would think, than to think that your Savior cannot stomach us.

Now, here's the status – why He could not stomach them. In Verse 17, He says, "Because." This introduces the reason that the Lord Jesus Christ is threatening to discontinue His blessing upon this congregation. This church is faced with extinction by Jesus Christ, since it misrepresents Him, and it dishonors His Name (as we shall see here, in various ways). So, he says, "It's going to come to an end." That does not mean – don't make the mistake of thinking that that means that they're going to come to an end as an organization. Sometimes that's true. But very often, Christ is just out of the operation, and the deep things of the Word of God are out of the operation, and the inherent Scriptures are out of the operation, but the church organization goes on. They have more people than ever, because it's far more comfortable with what they can now hear – the psychological aspects, and the other things that are substituted for the cookies of the things of the Word of God are on a high shelf. They build bigger churches, and they have plenty of money, and they think that all is well.

**God has Nothing to do with Most Religious Activities Today**

*God has nothing to do with most of the religious activities claiming to represent Him today.* And the farther we come along toward the end of this age, the worse it's becoming, as to what churches are focusing upon in their ministries – programs upon programs. But the thing that is hard to find is somebody who can walk into a church service, and then leave with something they understand about what God thinks. You don't have the mind of God, and you don't have your spiritual food. And I don't care how entertaining the surroundings are, or how impressive the pulpiteer here is. It's nothing. It's organization without life. The God of this evil, the God of this world. Satan is well-served by these religious groups who are really out of the will of God.

So, He says in verse 17, "Because you say." And this is a Greek word that refers so much to their specific words, but to the general attitude they're expressing – to general feelings they have about themselves. The substance of the Laodicean statement was, "Gee, aren't we a fine group of Christians?" And what was their proof? They had a lot a lot of dough. But they did not realize that dough is just a bunch of crumbs held together by their money. They thought that, because they were materially well-off, that they were really favored and approved by God.

So, they possessed a totally false picture of themselves. And it's interesting that the Holy Spirit uses this little word "lego," which is: "You say," and He describes the picture they've painted of themselves – a totally false picture, because of their reversion. They had destroyed their divine viewpoint frame of reference, so their minds could no longer accurately judge themselves. When you can't look at yourself and see yourself as God sees you, then the devil going to bring a lot of grief into your life.

"Because you say, 'I am' – their status quo. This is what the Laodicean Church kept saying all the time – their expressions, and the way they looked at themselves: "Why do I know that I am under God's blessing? Why do I know that I'm spiritually in tune with Him? Because I have 'plousis.' I have wealth. I am rich." "Plousis" is the word for "wealth." These believers may one time have had a spiritual maturity structure – maybe even at the super-grace level. Then God prospered them. That's what happens often. You become spiritually mature, and God says, "You're going to be my steward. You are now a mature Christian. I can trust you with more of My money. And I know that you will take care of My trust. You will listen to Me when I say, 'I need you to do this with your money, and I need you to do this with your money.' You are spiritually mature." And more and more, they had the great freedoms and opportunities that wealth can bring. What do they do with it? They used it against the Lord. They did less rather than more.

Because you say, "I am rich." Here again, the form of this word suggests that some person is saying this, and you suspect it's the pastor-teacher. So, that this congregation, as a whole, gets the idea is that they are saying, "I am a rich man." They did not have to sing as Tevye did: "If I were a rich man," in "Fiddler on the Roof." He could sing, "I am a rich man." These people were very smug that they were. So, they're saying, "Since I am a rich man." The philosophy of the Laodicean Church was that which, unfortunately, many Christians hold today, and that is that you are what you have. No, you are not what you have. You are what you are in Christ, and your spiritual maturity.

The abundance of details of life had crowded out, for them, the Word of God in their lives. When they were poor folks, the Lord had their attention, and they were on the job for Him. When it easier to be a steward of God, they lost their way. Their spiritual discernment was blacked out. So, they were totally in the dark about themselves.

Now, if you are thinking Christian, this should strike terror in your heart. The Word of God says, "Let him who thinks he stands, take heed, lest he fall." None of us is immune. Unless you're operating on only half of your brain, and you've been around this ministry very long, your mind can go back over the years. You see a prince here, and a princess here. And all of a sudden, one who is a powerhouse of blessing and of service is no more. Then you find out that the world came in. Sin came into the life. A compromise with personal integrity was made – forgetting who they were, and where their top priority lay. They got tangled up in the cares of this world. Spiritual discernment had blacked out for these people.

So, what detail of life has ever sustained you, and comforted you in times of pressure, trial, temptation, and sorrow? Your nice car; your nice house; or, your nice boat? What has ever comforted you in your time of pressure; your time of trial; your time of temptation; or, your time of sorrow? Your friends? Your buddies? No. Only the knowledge of the Word of God and what God thinks. When you know His ways, then your way is clear.

The Bible warns about the dangers, for this reason, of material prosperity without having spiritual maturity in the soul to handle it. You may have had that spiritual maturity. What I'm saying is that you may have had that, and that's why God gave you that prosperity; and, then you lost your maturity. And there you stand, with the worst possible condition. You're disoriented to spiritual things, and you have the means to do anything, virtually, that you want to do in the devil's world.

So, it's no surprise that we have these repeated warnings: having great wealth – wonderful. But don't forget Whose steward you are, and Whose wealth it is. I said that to a man one time, and do you know what he said to me? Instead of saying, "Amen – yeah, that's true," he said, "Everything I have, I've earned."

I read an article about a cartoon program called "The Simpsons." (I'm not sure – I forget the name of it.) Anyhow, I just looked through the cartoon. They were sitting down to eat, and somebody said, "Let's thank God for the food." And this weird-looking kid says, "Why should we thank Him? We earned it." Most Christians don't want to say that, but they act like that.

So, here's why the Word of God repeatedly says, "Don't lose your way, just because I blessed you." James 4:13-14: "Come now, you who say today or tomorrow, we shall go to such-and-such a city, and spend a year there, and engage in business, and make a profit. Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears." And I have seen many times that sad picture of people who, after their ship came in and their fortunes were made, had great plans for doing things for God, and they never made it because they checked out of their earthly life to heaven, and their opportunity was gone.

James 5:1-6: "Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you." And it shouldn't have to be that way: "Your riches have rotted, and your garments have become moth-eaten, and it shouldn't have to be that way. Your gold and your silver have rusted, and their rust will be a witness against you. You will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure. Behold, the pay of the labor who mowed your fields, and which was withheld by you (cheated) on people who had served you. He cries out against you. The outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of sabaoth (armies). You have lived luxuriously on the earth, and led a life of wanton pleasure. You have fattened your hearts in the day of slaughter. You have condemned and put to death the righteous man. He does not resist you."

This is one of the lowest things that people of wealth can do. They think they're superior, and they treat other people with contempt. Sometimes, I've been out with people, and I've had to cringe the way they treat a waitress, or the way that they treat people who are about them – these lowly bugs who are doing the serving. You have to be careful not to lose your sense of perspective. And I like this phrase at the end of verse 4, that it has reached ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Sabaoth is the Lord of hosts – the Lord of the Armies. Do you want to come up against the Lord's armies with your arrogance of wealth? The Laodiceans were doing that. And they didn't realize what madness that was.

Then 1 Timothy 6:6-10 gives us this warning: "Godliness, actually, is a means of great gain, and accompanied by contentment." How do you secure godliness? You secured by coming to church every time the doors are open, listening to the explanation of a little more of the mind of God, from the Word of God, through expository preaching. The result is that you develop the frame of reference so that you know what God thinks; what God expects; and, how to conduct yourself in the presence of your Father. The result is a godliness, and a sense of contentment, and a sense of purpose – fulfillment that things can never give you.

Verse 7: "For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. And if we have food and covering, with these, we shall be content. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation, and a snare, and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge men into ruin and distinction." There's nothing wrong with being rich. There's nothing wrong with trying to improve your financial status – all that you can. The problem is what you do with it after you get it. And it plunges them into foolish and harmful desires.

It's one thing to have to pray: "Lord, I need the money to get this. I need the money to get that. I really need that." That's one thing. But when you don't have to go to Him and ask Him for the money, you have to be very careful. You still have to pray, and say, "Lord, should I do this? Should I not do this? I'm your servant. What do You want me to do?" And He wants you to enjoy what money He's entrusted to you, but He wants you to remember what's important. He's important – not your things.

Verse 10: "For the love of money is the root of all sorts of evil, and some, by longing for it, have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang." This is the Laodicean Christians. These are not people who didn't know better. They wandered away from that pristine faith that brought them into salvation, and God's blessing poured out upon them because they were now under His canopy of grace. And they wandered away from faith. They wandered away from doctrine – the truth principles of the Word of God.

Then there's one more, at the beginning of the New Testament. Matthew 6:25-34 is an illuminating passage: "For this reason, I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, as to what you shall eat or what you shall drink; nor, for your body, as to what you shall put on. Is not life more than food in the body than clothing. Look at the birds of the air? They do not sow. Neither do they reap nor gather in the barns. And yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are they not worth much more than they? And which of you, by being anxious, can add a single cubit to his life span? And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow. They do not toil; nor, do they spin. Yet, I say to you that even Solomon, in all his glory, did not clothe himself like one of these. But if God so arrays the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow it is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more do so for you? O, men of little faith. Do not be anxious then, saying, "What shall we eat? What shall we drink? Or with what shall we clothe ourselves. For these things the gentiles eagerly seek. Your Heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom, and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore, do not be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough troubles of its own."

Now, all that is God's viewpoint. It's good. It's good information. And we need to remember it. The Laodiceans, in their time of financial prosperity, forgot it.

So, in Revelation 3:17, we read, "Because you say, 'I am rich,' and furthermore, they're saying: "I have accumulated many things, and so I have become wealthy ('plouteo')". This word "plouteo: means "to be rich," or "to get rich." We get our English word "plutocrat" from that – somebody who's rich. He's a plutocrat. And these people in Laodicea said, "We're rich. We have things. We have money. We have resources. Therefore, we have become wealthy." The boast implied that having become rich was something that they did: their cleverness; their skill; or, their merit. In the past, something happened, and they secured wealth. And now they equate their material wealth with the possession of spiritual wealth. They think that God's blessing upon them materially shows that He favors that.

However, the Lord Jesus Christ said that He became poor so we could become rich. The Lord Jesus Christ pronounced great blessing upon the poor widow woman who gave her last two copper coins, which was her livelihood, to the treasury. She was enormously blessed. And Jesus said, "Far more than the wealthy Pharisees who gave a great deal more, but they had a lot they kept."

Aha! So, maybe the frame of reference is not how much you give, but how much you keep. Fortunately, in the age of grace, that question is answered for everybody individually by the director leading of the Holy Spirit. There is no stated percentage.

**Need of Nothing**

So, these people here in Laodicea were smug. They were spiritually blind in their possessions, and their freedom to kick in all their indulgences: "You say, 'I am rich. I have great means now. I've become wealthy. I've accumulated many things. And then I have (a word for their status) need for nothing. This word "need" means something which is lacking, but which is necessary. And they say that they have need of nothing.

The Greek word is "oudeis," which means "no material thing in any respect." It's a strong negation. It means: "In no way do I need anything. I have absolutely no lack of anything. And they again did not realize that their material wealth did not reflect their spiritual wealth.

So, you say that you have need of nothing. And then the Lord Jesus says to them, "And you do not know." The Greek word is "oida." This word, in contrast to the Greek word "ginosko," means, "I learn by my experience." However, this word means, "I learn something by intuition, or by education, or by the Word of God." And you do not know that what your real situation is. You do not have a perception, you do not have a grasp of what the Word of God is telling you. They never had a true picture of themselves spiritually. They were in a status of self-delusion (in their human viewpoint). And they had no mature knowledge of themselves. They were reversionists. There in the dark. They failed to see their gross condition. And they were seeking out their own kind of people to reinforce this perverted self-image. They were a country club, and they loved it.

The Lord says, "That's your picture. Now let Me give you My picture – the way things really are." And these are terrible things. It says, "What you are is," and in the Greek, it says, "The one." You're the one who is. You almost have the feeling that what you have here is a combination of the pastor-teacher, who is the leader of the band, and the congregation, so that they are together – "the one."

**Wretched**

The first thing is that: "You're wretched." Here is the Greek word, which gives us insight exactly what these concepts are: "talaiporos." This word means "to be distressed." They might say, "Wait a minute. I'm not distressed. I'm rich. I'm fat, and rich, and happy." This word is used in Romans 7:24. It gives us an insight to its meaning: "Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of death? The apostle Paul says, "I want to do what is right. The sin nature brings me down. I don't know what this spiritual power system is for me to be victorious in the Christian life." So, he said, "I'm wretched." And what he meant was that he is just miserable in his soul. They say that they are something very special.

No. What they are has a calloused condition upon their soul, and they are very hard toward God. And if God disciplines to teach them, they're very resentful of it. They do not receive instruction.

Notice Hebrews 12:10-12. The writer says, "For they discipline us (our human fathers) for a short time, as it seems best to them. But Ge (God) disciplines us for our good, that we may share His Holiness." When He disciplines us, He's trying to straighten us out. He's trying to (especially with these people, in their wealth and their good times) say, "Wait a minute. Everything isn't OK with you. In fact, things are seriously awry. It could be more than OK with you. You're putting yourself up for tears streaming down your face at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and you shouldn't do that. There is no reason for that: "All discipline, for the moment, seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful. Yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards, it yields a peaceful fruit of righteousness. Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak, and the knees that are feeble."

**Discipline**

If you've ever been in the military service, and you go to boot camp, you get a new sense of meaning of the word "discipline." It's so rigid; so demanding; and, so intense, that some people can't even finish it. And you wonder why there is all this almost bordering on excessive abusing and harassment. That's because the drill instructor knows the intensity of the situation you may someday face with an enemy who's determined to take your life, and you will find yourself under conditions of such distress, that you will be inclined to take the easy way out. But it'll be to your own destruction. So, what they're trying to do is to enable you to understand what you have to be, or to get you out of the picture, lest you come down and bring all the people around you down with you. The discipline is what makes the difference.

**Pitied**

Furthermore, as if that we're not bad enough, these people are in a state of misery, and a state of wretchedness. They don't know how terrible they are. They're also miserable. This word, "eleeinos," means "to be pitied:" "Wait a minute. You're talking to Laodiceans. We're pretty sophisticated people. We've been around. You are telling us, you poor little character, that you pity us?" It was shocking that the Lord Jesus Christ says, "You people are to be pitied. You're really pitiful. You think you're elitists, and you can see Christian groups who believe they're such elitists. They're so sophisticated and superior that you pity them for their lack of wisdom.

This word is used one other time in the whole New Testament, in 1 Corinthians 15:19: "If we have hope in Christ in this life only, we are, of all men, most to be pitied. If you don't have hope that Jesus Christ is going to take you into eternity, all you have hope for now is because He's a nice example to follow now, and He's a good pattern, and He gives you good life guidance now. You are to be pitied. That's a pitiful condition. It has no future. And a Christian who is a reversionist, is a pathetic sight. And it makes one sad to view his complacent attitude.

**Beggars**

Furthermore, there is one pile upon another of words to these people. It is coming like hammer blows. Here he says, "Now let me tell you what you people are like. You think you have everything, and you're something. You're wretched. You're miserable. You're to be pitied." And as if that weren't enough, then the Lord gives them another blockbuster. And He says, "Furthermore, the sad thing about all of you here in Laodicea is that you're "ptochos." You're poor. And the word means "you're a bunch of beggars." Now, these people have money coming out of their ears, and out of every pocket of their clothing. And He refers to these as beggar types, who are scrounging around, carrying an image of one who cowers before the world's system of Satan. So, they get along with it.

The Laodiceans are in a state of abject spiritual poverty. And the worst part about it is that they don't know it. So, they don't have any desire to correct it. They may look very bold and arrogant outwardly, but inwardly, they're a cowering bunch of beggars in the face of Satan. They are enslaved to world opinion. This is a very tempting thing – that society can enslave us. Even the poor public school – many of them have gone to school uniforms. Do you know why? Because mothers cannot keep from letting the world enslave their children to the styles of Satan's world system – and especially the girls. We used to have these little girls come to school. They weren't so little – junior high. And they have bare midriffs. They felt that nobody had ever seen a bare midriff, and it was really something special. And you suspect that their mothers wish they could go around with bare midriffs, but there was too much midriff there to bear.

However, finally, you're pressed to the wall. And what do we do? When they put that dress code in front of me, I didn't know what color pants to wear to school anymore. I mean, you're trying to be so definitive, and about the time you put it down, it's like mercury. It's very slippery. It slides right off from you – out of your hand. And they've changed it. So, we said, "We'll spell out the costume." We will say, "This is the uniform. And we'll have the style that's appropriate for a Christian school, and our testimony, and that's it. Bingo! The public schools all over are doing the same thing – going to school uniforms. Now, if you want to have the world's system (these beggarly things that you're subject to) – if that's problem, you don't have to worry about it anymore.

**Begging for Happiness**

So, these people cannot enjoy their money because they're a bunch of beggars. What are they looking for? What are they begging for? Happiness. They're on a frantic search for happiness. And you would think that, with all the material wealth, they should have that happiness, and this shouldn't be a problem.

**Blind**

Furthermore, they're not only wretched; miserable; and, beggarly poor, but they're also blind. They are "gumnos." These people lack spiritual clothing that is befitting a new creature in Christ Jesus. These people are blind ("tuphlos"). What they're blind to is the realities of their own spiritual state. These Christians view themselves in a way that is totally false on their spiritual condition. This is a condition of emptiness – a condition that's described in Ephesians 4:17-19. It is a condition brought about by their negative volition, and their ignorance of the Word of God. And when you don't have divine viewpoint, then you bring in human viewpoint of the world system. So, these poor people are in a condition where they are blind to reality.

**Naked**

Then, there is one more. He says, "They are, furthermore, poor, and blind, and (now) naked." Now we have "gumnos." What they did is that they lacked spiritual clothing. Notice Ephesians 4:24: "And put on the new self, which, in the likeness of God, has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth."

**Knowing and Responding**

Wear the garments of spiritual integrity. The Laodiceans, when they came to church on Sunday, they were a style show. There was no doubt about it. But their spiritual maturity structure was not there. And the spiritual maturity structure is like the "Shekinah" glory, which should envelop the child of God. And if that glory is not there, they're standing naked, spiritually, before God, and before all the angelic hosts. Only *knowing and responding* to the Word of God can give you a true perspective of yourself. Otherwise, you do not realize how terrible you look.

**Integrity**

James 1:22-25: "But prove yourselves doors of the Word, not merely hearers who delude themselves, for anyone is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his normal face in a mirror. For once he has looked at himself, and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But the one who looks intently at the perfect Law (the Law of liberty), and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer, but an effectual person – this man shall be blessed in what he does." So, is personal integrity a good thing? It is a great thing. It is the only thing, above all else, in the Christian life, because if you want to be blessed by God, that's the way you do it. And you do not stand naked in your carnality. That's what it is. And before God, it's all clear.

Because they were lukewarm, God vomited them out of His mouth: "Why am I going to do that? Because you say you're rich, but you're not. You say you have become wealthy in things, but you're not wealthy in the things that count. You say that you have need of nothing, but you have need of a whole spiritual life. You do not know, from the knowledge of the Word of God, that what you are is wretched, and that you're miserable, and that we have to pity you, and that you're really poor. You think you have something, but you're poor spiritually. And that's what you're going to take to heaven. That's where your treasures will be. And you're blind. You do not see spiritual realities. And finally, the result is that you stand naked before God, because you have no spiritual covering of experiential righteousness. And for that reason, unbelievable as it is, to these people who had so much, Jesus is saying, "You have nothing."

How stands it with us?

Father, we thank You for this, Your word. And we pray that You will help us to apply these things to our own experience. It is so easy to get along with the world system.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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