



Revelation 3:14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

16 So then because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

17 Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent

20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me,

21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Three Categories

We would like to take our text from Revelation 3:15, which states, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou

wert cold or hot." In this verse we read that man is actually put in three categories. I know there are either saints or sinners but there are three categories—hot, cold or lukewarm.

We want to deal with all three of these conditions All three of them need to be preached on. There is only one condition that God will accept Two of these conditions received the same advice—repent. Only one condition was accepted of God, and that was hot. We just as well admit it—God is not going to accept anything less than a hot experience from you and I. We will never make it without that experience.

Those of you who are cold, who have never known God or have known God and have backslid, need to harken to the voice of the Spirit and repent and be born of God's Spirit. Matthew 5:6 reads, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." Just take the opposite of that, if you do not hunger and thirst after righteousness, you might as well say you are under a curse. That is what I read out of that.

For those of you who have never known God, those of you who have never tasted of salvation and had a real experience I have good news for you—wonderful news for you. You can have salvation. It is a gift, and it is for you; if you will meet the conditions.

All Sin Is Against God

"And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican [sinner]. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican, I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18:9-14).

There is one thing we must get fixed in our minds—all sin is against God. You would not even know what sin was, unless God told you. All sin is against God. Certainly, there might be others involved. You might have wronged your brother, hurt your wife, etc, but all sin is against God. "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight . . ." (Psalms 51:4).

If you get straightened out with God, you will get straightened out with everyone else. You will not have any trouble. No, sir. All sin is against God. God help us to realize that, then we will be more careful

how we live. You will not be walking around running down your brother, because all sin is against God. Your brother may never know about it, but I will guarantee you that God knows it.

Keep this one thing in mind God is a Spirit. He is not some man with a white beard walking around. God is a Spirit and He is everywhere. It makes no difference where you are or where you try to slip around. You can profess something around the saints, and go back home and live contrary, but God knows it.

Now you can see a little bit of what godly sorrow is. Godly sorrow worketh repentance. I just dealt, the other day, with a woman at the jail. I do not speak disrespectfully of her, but God knows I saw a good example of worldly sorrow. She wanted help. She had on slacks, and she knows better, a sleeveless blouse, and she knows better. She had been arrested, and we talked with her and asked her what she wanted us to do for her. I mentioned something about the Lord, and you could feel her tighten right up. See, the thing she needed to realize was that the sin she had committed was against God. People do not like to hear that, but it is truth, anyway.

All sin is against God—keep that in your mind. You can whisper something meant to run down someone, and I will guarantee you one thing, you will pay for it. When? I do not know when but you will reap that thing; and there is much reaping going on,

God Speaks Jesus Speaks The Holy Spirit Speaks

It takes the Spirit of God to live in this world. Do not frustrate the grace of God, make it void, or let it have no effect on you, whatsoever. Can't you see, when people tell you they are living in grace and committing sin, what a lie that is? Isn't there a difference between grace and mercy? There has to be a difference. Everyone who has not been cut off

is under mercy, but not everyone is in grace. Grace is the strength of God, and you cannot live in sin and have God's strength in you. It will not work.

"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" (Numbers 23:19). What did God say? Hebrews 1:1-2 reads: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." God is not speaking through the old prophets now, but He is speaking through His Son.

Now, how does His Son speak to us? There is not a one of us who has seen Jesus Christ in the flesh. If you ever see Jesus Christ, you will see Him in the Spirit. The Spirit of God will talk to you. "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me" (John 15:26).

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will shew you things to come" (John 16:12-13). Get your eyes off the preacher. It is the Spirit of God in him that speaks to you. It is the Spirit of God that anoints the Word of God to give you understanding. A preacher can understand something, but unless God anoints it, he will never get the understanding out to others. You see, that is the reason why some teachers are not preachers. You are out of place if you are a teacher and you try to be a preacher. That is the reason why an evangelist is not a pastor. Why? He cannot do it. It takes the Spirit of God in him to do it. Not one of you can gain an understanding unless the Spirit of God moves through the preacher first. He is willing to put

forth the effort but it takes the Spirit of God to anoint the Word and to open your understanding so that you can grasp hold of it.

Just because you have been born again does not mean you have all understandings That is why there are pastors, evangelist and teachers—for the edification of the church and the perfecting of the saints.

"He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you" (John 16:14-15). Now, we realize here that if we are ever going to get any help, it is going to have to come through the Spirit of God.

Now, what did the Spirit of God say through Jesus Christ? It is recorded in John 3:39: "Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again [or born from above], he cannot see the kingdom of God." Quit trying to see or read or study the Word of God without a born-again experience. You cannot see it. Why? Because first things are first and the first thing you need to do is to be born again; no matter who you are, The newspaper is full of rank confusion. It says "Go to this church. Go to that church. Submit to this doctrine. We will take you right in." You need to be born again! Nicodemus was an intelligent man. He was a member of the Sanhedrin. But Jesus told him, "You must be born again." (My, what that must have done to Nicodemus.)

Sinner

Another thing a sinner must realize is that there is a spirit of the enemy that is stronger than he is. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death [if you obey it, it is going to bring forth death is all it means here], or of obedience unto righteousness [or life, you could say]?" (Romans 6:16). "Jesus answered them, Verily, ver-

ily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8:34). If you are in sin, no matter what the sin is, you are obeying it. You are under bondage. One sin leads to another sin, just as righteousness leads to more righteousness.

When I was a natural man, walking after the sinful flesh, it was natural for me to wake up in the morning and commit sin, because I was under that power. There were not things on my mind pertaining to God when I woke up in the morning. Some of the things on my mind were playing cards that night, stopping in at the local tavern, cashing my check, listening to a ball game, or just whatever

It is just as natural for me NOT to commit sin now that I am living for God. It is no strain to live for God when you have the Spirit of God living within you. Now, when I wake up, I consider God. What can I do for God this day? Who needs help? Who needs prayer? Who is in the hospital? Those things are on my mind. Why? I have been born from above. My consideration is up above. "Set your affections [or your mind] on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:2). Thank God for being regenerated!

What a bondage to be under when sin you will, sin you must, and sin you cannot help it. Thank God, sin has been broken in every form in my life, and it did not take two or three trips to the altar to do it, either. No, sir. What does it take? It takes a death. It takes a good old dying out to self. Certainly, you have a body to keep under (you all have learned that, and if you have not learned that, you will learn it), but the death I am talking about is that sin which has to come to an end. The old man has to die. Why? The old man does not seek anything above. He is earthly. He seeks things of the earth, things of this world.

Thank God for the Spirit of God that can regenerate a man and put life into him. Forgiveness is a good

thing, but the Christian life is good too. "Therefore, if any man be in Christ [or the body, the church], he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold [or stop and think!], all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just. . . ." Jesus Christ is faithful and just. If He gave us our due reward, we would all of us be in hell. Don't think you have anything great coming just because He talked to you about getting saved. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). To be born again you have to confess, forsake, and be made a new creature.

Backslider

God wants to help those of you who have known God and have lost out with Him. He wants you to have the joy of your salvation restored. Psalm 51 reads, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee."

You do not have an ounce of business trying to teach somebody about something you do not have. There is too much of that going on, trying to tell people how to live when you are in the hog pen yourself. I have never seen the like of such nasty spirits and then those with these spirits try to tell someone else how to get free from such things. You cannot do it, friend. No, sir.

"Then will I teach transgressors thy ways." When? When I have the joy of my salvation restored unto me. Do you want to know why? It is not the mouth, it is the life. You can use your mouth praise God, but if you are not a new creature, you are deceived. We can see people practically fly right out of their seats like they have springs in them, wave a hanky, and cry. But then watch them when they come to themselves

and realize they do not really have it. What do they do? Just follow their paths a while. It is not straight paths that you will follow. No, no. They will go to this one and talk about that one, or else they will bend an ear because they are hunting evil. Why? If any man commits sin, he is a servant of sin. He cannot help himself. He is just going to sin, sin, sin; the same as one who is saved is going to bring forth righteousness, righteousness, and more righteousness.

"And the spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded: And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you" (2 Chronicles 15:1-2). Here are the conditions. You notice that the first condition is always on your part—while you be with Him, if you seek Him, if you forsake Him.

Let us review the story of the prodigal son found in Luke 15:11-24: "And he said, A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land [there always does]; and he began to be in want [thank the Lord for that].

"And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have tilled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat. . . ." See how the devil can make a person go so low? No one goes down like someone who has known God. Brother, when they fall, they fall. When they go down, they go down. Why? The devil would like nothing better than to get a hold on someone who professes to be saved, because they are

the only ones who have real influence.

"And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself. . . ." Thank the Lord for that. If you are backslid, you ought to come to yourself. ". . . he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him [and this is just what you will say to Him], Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee [there it is again—ALL sin is against God]. And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants [there is your new creation make me]. And he arose, and came to his father.

"But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry." Backslider, you have to come to yourself. The way to do that is to think of Father's house. Then you need to rise and go. Father will see you afar off and will have compassion on you. Do you know what He will do? He will put on the best robe, and He will kill the fatted calf, He will satisfy your soul.

Lukewarmness

Revelation 3:16 reads, "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." We want to deal with the lukewarmness for awhile. The worst condition an individual

can get into is a state of lukewarmness. You notice, He did not spue the sinner out. The lukewarm person claims he is not a sinner, and yet he is not hot for God. The truth of the matter is, if you are not hot for God, according to this text, you are a sinner. Lukewarmness is part of the age we are in right now. The lukewarm person would not think of sinning, but yet you do not see him doing anything for God. Why? He is at a standstill. However, believe me, you are not standing still. You are going to go one way or the other. You do not mark time, as we used to call it in the service. You go one way or the other—down or up.

Whom does God spue out of His mouth? It is not saints. The word "spue" (and you must forgive me for using these words, but the dictionary uses them) means to vomit or to regurgitate. I do not know how to put it any nicer. Now, when does that happen? When you are sick of something or when something does not agree with you, what happens? You will spue. A lukewarm professor does not agree with God, and when he does not agree with God, he is a misfit for the church.

When someone does not agree with God, he does not agree with the church, whatsoever, and he will be out of place. The pastor will be continually working him over, trying to settle him down here, pick him up here, trying to get a little spark into him. Pretty soon, the pastor catches on to him and starts preaching repentance to the man. Why? Because he knows he is not saved. He has lost out.

Jesus did not say that you were lukewarm and then not tell you what is wrong. When He shows a man his condition, He always shows him a way out of it. That is why He is called the "faithful and true witness" in Revelation 3:14.

Rich-But in Need

What are some of the traits of a person who is lukewarm? First of all, he is rich and increased with

goods. You think you are blessed of God, when in reality you are under a curse. Let me get this to you straight. Material gain is no sign of spiritual growth. If that is the case, then some of us will have to be left out, because some of us do not have as much as others. Material gain is no sign of spiritual growth; but it is also no sign that you have lost out. You can be blessed of God materially, certainly. I believe that God will put you on your feet, straighten you out, straighten your home out, and maybe even put a new car in your garage, if you need it; but it is no sign of spiritual growth.

The lukewarm person says he has need of nothing. It is hard to give someone something that he does not need or want. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6). Other things begin to creep in. Do not say that you are hungering and thirsting after righteousness and miss services. I don't believe it. It cannot be. It is impossible. Do not say that you are hungering and thirsting after righteousness and cutting prayer services when you know you should be there. A saint of God has a burden. It is automatic. It does not have to be worked up. It is there. Man did not put it in there. God did. You are concerned for others—that is what God saved you for. You do not have to work up a burden. People say, "Pray for me so that I can get a burden," or "Pray for me so I can read the word more." However, Jesus said that they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled.

Where do the messages that the preachers preach come from? They come through brethren who are hungering and thirsting, so God fills them with the truth. Any knowledge of truth that you get will be because you are hungering and thirsting after it. Anything that you get from God is because you are hungering and thirsting, and Jesus promised that you shall be fulfilled.

The lukewarm person misses

Sunday services, feels no need of prayer services any more, and carries no burden for the lost.

In this day and age, we have to admit that there is more of a need of prayer than there ever was. There is more of a need to get your nose in the Book than ever in your life. Why? You are going to be moved if you do not. God sees your very attitude toward prayer and reading. If you start cutting prayer, what is God to think? What is a pastor to think when you start cutting services? Same thing. There is something wrong! The only difference is God always knows what is wrong. The pastor sometimes takes a while to find out, but then sometimes God reveals it to him in the study.

Isn't it amazing how God will reveal things to a pastor? You can be wondering if something is right or wrong, and it is not long before he preaches on that very thing. Then, if it is wrong and you are saved, you lay it down because you want to lay it down. There is no pulling it out, like a dentist does teeth. The pastor does not have to put us to sleep to get it out of us. God wakes us up and we take it out.

The pastor will not have any trouble with a saint of God. They love the truth. They will pray for him. If your pastor is a man of God, pray for him. Hold up his hands, just like Moses' hands were held up. Then the battle will be won. Actually, the battle is already won, but we have to go through it.

Borderline Anemia

When people become lukewarm, they do not go for the vile things, You will not find them down in the honky-tonks. No. You will not hear them swearing. They will not be doing something out in the open, such as lighting up a cigarette, or taking a chew of tobacco. No. Those things are as unclean as can be. (I don't know of any filthier habit than chewing tobacco.)

Perhaps the lukewarm woman's

dresses will be on the borderline of being too short. A saint of God sister has no trouble wearing a long skirt. I do not believe you when you say you have salvation and your skirt is extremely short. There are some things you do not have to hear preached about. I can give you an example, and I have seen it happen. I saw a sister come into the congregation one night, and she was worldly. However, she went to an altar of prayer, and we hardly knew her the next night.

I have never seen the devil get so brazen as today. Women who should know better march right into the church building with mini-skirts on, just as bold as can be. However, you mark this down: God will call their number one of these days, and the reaping will not be like the sowing. There is heartache, shame, and pain in the reaping.

You sisters who do wear long skirts, God help you to learn how to sit. It does no good to wear a long skirt and then sit wrong. Do you know something? When you tempt a brother, the Bible says that offenses must come, but woe unto those through whom they come.

Something else that people do when they get a little lukewarm is get a TV set, claiming they do not see anything wrong with it. However if they get around a spirit-filled pastor, they will. God have pity on you, if you have been hanging around the Church of God for years and still have to have a TV set. God have pity on you if you do not see anything wrong with it. Why? That thing will drain you. You have to give something of your time, and there is nothing on a TV set worth giving your time to. Tell me, how many spirit-filled services have you heard over a TV set?

I know what I am talking about, because I had one. I still owed money on it when I got rid of it. I had to pay on that thing for a year afterward. Why? I made the debt, and God helped me clear it up. I had to reap what was sown. What a sigh of relief came over me when

the last payment was made!

It is just as bad to "happen" to drop into the neighbors. You would not have a TV, but you know they have a nice one, so you drop in during your favorite show. You walk in and say, "Is Bonanza on now?" However, you usually make it on time, because you know what time it is on. Don't tell me that thing does not have a drawing power! You can walk through a retail store where one is, and feel the drawing power there. TV is one of the biggest tools of the devil. J. Edgar Hoover even knew that. He cried out against it more than some Church of God preachers do.

Something else that a lukewarm person might easily take up is bowling. I used to love to bowl, but when I was saved, the bowling alley had to go. Why? The same thing goes on there that goes on at the honky-tonks, only in a more sophisticated way. That is supposed to be the up-up of society, but all they are is "gold-polished" sinners with their self-righteous rags.

What You Are Counts

In the parable found in Luke 18:9-14, all the Pharisee could see were the things he did not do (vile sins) and the things he did do (attend church, fast, and give his money). In reality, it is what you are that counts with God, not what you do not do, not what you do do, but WHAT YOU ARE.

When a person is lukewarm, in reality he is wretched and miserable (you will have to admit that), poor (I am not talking about money), blind, and naked. Now, what is the cure? Repent. Own your true condition unto God and He will lift you up.

How can you tell if you are hot? Well, certainly you would know it, but there is a way. Jesus said in Revelation 3:18, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed . . . and anoint thine eyes with

eye-salve, that thou mayest see." First of all, you are rich in the things of God. Secondly, you have on white raiment, or the white robe of righteousness. Thirdly, you can see. Your eyes have been anointed, and you know and realize that your sufficiency is of God. "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward" (Hebrews 10:35).

What is your true condition? Are you cold, lukewarm, or hot? Do you

hunger and thirst after righteousness? The Bible says that you will be filled with righteousness if you do. If you are cold, you need to repent, be born again. If you are lukewarm, same message, you need to repent, get straightened out with God. If you are hot, you need to go right on living for God. Go just as fast and as hard as you can and try to stay right in the center of God's will, God has some great things out

ahead for us - I am sure of that

How does the Word of God find you? Hot, doing all that you know to do for God? Lukewarm, hypocrite, professing, going right over the top of things that you know are wrong? Or cold, completely cold, away from God?

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