

Dear Church: Letter to LaodiceaOctober 27th / 28th

**Speaker:** Mark Batterson

**Scripture:** [Revelation 3:14-22](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+3%3A14-22&version=NIV)

## Sermon Summary:

God loves you just the way you are, but he loves you too much to leave you that way! He is the God of comfort, but our comfort isn’t His ultimate goal. His ultimate goal is that we would be conformed to the image of Christ. What makes us think we can be conformed to His image without going through some of the same things Jesus went through? The good news is God is working all things together for good. Our job? One, learn the lessons God is trying to teach us. Two, cultivate the character God is trying to grow in us.

# Sermon Series Questions:

1. What do you think the letter meant to the original audience?
2. What do you think the letter means to the Church today?

## Sermon Specific Questions:

1. Pastor Mark says, “We have made it more about getting to Heaven than Heaven coming to Earth.” How can we participate in bringing Heaven on Earth?
2. In Laodicea, there was lukewarm water because there was no direct water source. Lukewarm in this Scriptural context is seen as half-hearted or non-committal. What area of your life needs to be given over to Christ fully, and how can you do that practically?
3. Discipline helps us “learn the lesson” and “cultivate character”. What lesson is God teaching you right now, and how is it shaping your character?
4. Laodicea was the wealthiest city of the seven churches. Dr. Dick Foth once said, “Between money and relationships, only one will make you rich.” What does it mean to be rich?
5. What season can you recall that produced significant growth in your life? How was it fruitful?
6. Pastor Mark talked about letting God in the door of our hearts. What does it look like for you to let God in the door? What is that door for you?

# Digging Deeper

## Letters to the Seven Churches

As we study the *Letters to the Seven Churches* found within Revelations, we need to try to understand what **DID** it mean to the original audience **BEFORE** we try to understand what **DOES** it mean for us today. You do not have to be a Biblical scholar to study scriptures! Yet, below you will find information, resources, and questions to guide you and your group in studying these letters together.

## Geography of the City of Laodicea

The city of Laodicea was located in the Lycus Valley, stretching 24 miles long and about 6 miles wide. It was a major center for communication and travel, and a connecting city for those coming from Ephesus and Smyrna. Colossae is another notable city that was situated in the Lycus Valley, about 10 miles east from Laodicea.

## Economy in the City of Laodicea

Laodicea was one of the wealthiest cities among the seven churches. Part of the wealth came from the production of high quality wool. The city was wealthy so much so, that after the great earthquake in 17 A.D. the people of the city refused imperial help to rebuild the city, and chose to rebuild it with their own resources. Their identity was closely connected to both their wealth and materials.

## Culture in the Church in Laodicea

Revelation was written during Domitan’s reign, most known for being the first emperor who declared himself a god while still alive. Christians at Laodicea were deeply affected and persecuted by him because of refusal to follow the imperial cult. The pressure upon rich Christians to maintain wealth was intense. Christian merchants and textile workers faced great tension in their faith under the rule of Domitan.

## RE-READ Revelation 3:14-22

## Questions for the Church Today

1. How does the Church today relate to the Church in Laodicea?
2. The Church at Laodicea had to remind themselves their identity was in God, not something external and temporary. What things distract you from God?
3. What roles do discipline and patience play in helping us today experience Christ more fully?