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# The Church That Makes Jesus Sick

*Revelation 3:14-22*

The Christian faith is just one generation away from disappearing. One generation may be deeply in love with Jesus and solidly committed to carrying out his mission in the world, but if their sons and daughters try to coast along on their parents' spiritual achievements, if they never make their parents' faith their own, the church becomes a social club and genuine faith fades.

**GROUP DISCUSSION.** Are you a first-generation Christian, or do you have a Christian heritage? Tell the group the story of how you personally came to faith in Jesus.

**PERSONAL REFLECTION.** What are you doing (or should you be doing) to make sure that your children or other people you influence are coming to personal faith in Jesus and are not relying on your faith or religious tradition to make them right with God?

The city of Hierapolis, located six miles from Laodicea, was well-known for its hot springs. People came from the entire region

to soak in the healing water. In the other direction the city of Colossae was known for the purity and tasteful quality of its water—cold and refreshing. The water in Laodicea, however, was undrinkable. It was emetic—meaning, it made the drinker throw up! *Read Revelation 3:14-22.*

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**1.** Jesus says that the church in Laodicea is lukewarm, neither cold nor hot (vv. 15-16). What does it mean to be spiritually lukewarm?

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**2.** We can understand why Jesus would want a church or a Christian to be “hot” in their love and devotion to him, but he says, “I wish you were hot or cold.” Why would he want us to be “cold” rather than “room temperature”?

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**3.** How did the Laodiceans see themselves (v. 17)?

Jesus sees them as “wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.” Why is there such a radical difference between the two perspectives?

4. Jesus offers the Laodicean church gold, white garments, and salve (v. 18). What is the significance of each gift?

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5. Even though the Laodicean church is only lukewarm in devotion to Jesus, what do you learn from verse 19 about Jesus' attitude toward them?

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6. Revelation 3:20 is often used as a picture of salvation—Jesus is knocking at our heart's door seeking entrance. What does the verse mean when we see it as Jesus' words to his church?

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7. As you look back over the churches in Revelation 2–3, which of the seven churches does your church or small group most closely resemble? Why?

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8. What can you glean from Jesus' words to the church in Laodicea to help bring repentance or encouragement to your church?

9. Which of the seven churches do you as an individual most closely resemble? Why?

Are you certain your evaluation lines up with Jesus' evaluation?

*Ask Jesus to give you his evaluation of your spiritual condition. Listen quietly and submissively for his response.*

#### **Now or Later**

Laodicea was well-known for an eye salve that was produced in the city. Jesus offers them “salve to put on your eyes, so you can see” (Revelation 3:18). Jesus wanted this church to see the reality of their own condition and of the world around them.

The following questions may help you discover whether you need the same spiritual eye treatment:

- If you only had time to do one thing, would you take time to pray or would you check your Facebook, Twitter, or email account?
- Would you prefer a substantial bank account, or the assurance that God will supply your needs?
- Are you more disappointed when your political candidates (or issues) are defeated, or when Jesus' character is insulted?