

Small Group & Personal Bible Study

Pastor Dennis Hadley

Memory Verse: Revelation 3:20

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 him, and he with me.

Daily Reading Schedule:

- Day 1: Luke 24:13-32
- Day 2: Revelation 1
- Day 3: Revelation 2:1-17
- Day 4: Revelation 2:18-3:6
- Day 5: Revelation 3:7-22

Lesson: He's Risen: I'm Changed - Passive to Passionate.

In chapters 2 & 3 of Revelation we find the letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor. These letters describe the good and the bad things going on in the Church (The people in the body of Christ). Read each message and discover and note why Jesus is affirming or rebuking the Church:

	Affirmation	Rebuke
1. Church in Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-7)	Deeds, hard work, perseverance Hate practices of Nicolaitans	forsaken first love
2. Church in Smyrna (Revelation 2:8-11)	Rich even in affliction and poverty Faithful in persecution and suffering	
3. Church in Pergamum (Revelation 2:12-17)	True to His name, faithful witness	Compromise to teaching truth
4. Church in Thyatira (Revelation 2:18-29)	Deeds, love, faith, service, perseverance	Tolerate false teaching, sexual sin
5. Church in Sardis (Revelation 3:1-6)	Some are worthy	Reputation of being alive but dead, deeds are incomplete
6. Church in Philadelphia (Revelation 3:7-13)	Deeds, kept His word, not denied His name	
7. Church in Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-22)		Neither hot nor cold, Say I am rich, I need nothing

1. Read Revelation 2:4-5. In this passage Jesus says, "You have forsaken your first love." What do you think this means? How can the Church return to her first love?
I think this refers to letting anything come into our life that takes a priority over our love relationship with Jesus. As children of God we commit to love Him with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength and when pursue something other than love for God with a greater passion we forsake our first love. This passage makes it clear that if I have forsaken my first love I just need to repent and let God take back control and once again be the center of my life and the primary focus of my love.
2. Read Revelation 3:15-16. What is going on with the Church in Laodicea?
Their love for Jesus has somehow become lukewarm. I think being lukewarm as a follower of Jesus means something like this; I call myself a Christian, I may go to church but nothing in my life shows that I love Him. I fail to obey Him. I fail to worship in Spirit and in Truth from within my heart. I fail to spend time with Him and His word growing deeper in my relationship with Him. And I fail to proclaim Him to a lost and seeking world. The Church of God is to burn with passion for Jesus Christ out of love for who He is and what He has done for us.

3. What does Revelation 3:17 tell you about the church and her relationship with God? Do you see any parallels between the Church in Laodicea and the Church in America?

It shows that they have begun to trust in themselves (I am rich...I do not need anything).

Independence is not a God thing. We are to love, trust, and depend on God for all things. In my opinion, many in the Church in America have become independent, self-centered, and grown lukewarm for Jesus. I sense that God is sending us the same message today. He wants us to return to our first love and burn hot with passion for Him and for His Kingdom.

4. Read Revelation 3:19-20 (20 is our memory verse this week). What does this teach us about Jesus and remind us of as a Church of Jesus Christ. How do we hear the voice of God? How do we open the door to Jesus? How do we let Him come in and remain with us? Jesus speaks to us out of great love. Even His rebuke and discipline is an expression of love for us. It also reminds me that I need to listen to His rebuke and when something is placed on my heart through His Word, I must respond in obedience. Jesus invites us into a love relationship with us where He speaks to us through the Holy Spirit with the Word of God and he uses our prayers, the edification from the Church and even the circumstance going on in our lives to confirm what His Word is saying to us. We simply need to invite Him to have Lordship over our lives and then choose to remain in Him and His word. John 15:1-17 reminds me of this truth.