

Christ's Last Word to His Church SERIES: Laodicea: Listening to Jesus The Amen of God Revelation 3:14-22

Life for us as followers of Christ is all about Listening to Jesus. Jesus said that as His sheep we need to hear Him and follow Him.

Listening to Jesus

Jesus came on an unannounced visit to a church in central Asia Minor, two thousand years ago, and then wrote back a startling letter to them about their deteriorating spiritual health. They really should have listened to Him.

In that letter Jesus Christ starts with His credentials. The opening words introducing Christ in Revelation 3:14 are like getting an official, hand-delivered letter: with medical diagnosis from the leading doctors of the Mayo Clinic, Johns Hopkins, or another a world-renowned group doctors.

The medical advice of someone at work or school is nice and possibly helpful.

The medical advice of a trusted family member is nicer and even more helpful.

But the medical advice, diagnosis, and prognosis from a trained, skilled, qualified, and almost universally trusted medical expert, renowned in their field: ***is almost beyond foolishness to resist, and dismiss lightly.***

The diagnosis and treatment regimen from the highest authority on spiritual wellness in the Universe, is what is contained in Revelation 3 today. Jesus Christ introduces Himself as the One who can be supremely trusted. He is truth incarnate, the Amen. Then He goes on to say that He has a perspective no one else can have: the is a witness, He alone has seen all, knows all, and can testify by personal experience a reliable report. Finally, He speaks as the One who:

as Creator, designed us;
as Redeemer, bought and owns us; and
as Judge has the final say over what goes on in our lives. Jesus Christ

These three titles are a unique combination and all stand together to declare that what

Jesus says will happen. Jesus is introducing Himself as:

The God We Can Trust

He can be trusted, He is reliable, and there is no one else like Him. Jesus is the Amen of God, the One who is in perfect agreement and able to make His promises come true.

First Jesus calls Himself the Amen, then the Faithful and True Witness, and finally the Beginning of the creation of God. Each of these titles are unique, each are powerful, and all reflect the truth that Jesus is the One to listen to. What He says will happen, and when He speaks it is Ultimate Truth.

Please stand as we hear the letter to them, that is also applied by Jesus to each of us. We really need to hear and respond to Christ's words this morning.

Revelation 3:14-22 (NKJV) "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things **says** the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

[v.15-19 lists their seven habits.]

20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone **hears My voice** and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. 21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. 22 "**He who has an ear, let him hear** what the Spirit **says** to the churches.""

Listen to Jesus Christ: The Amen

Amen means: Jesus is the yes to all of God's promises. This title is only used of Christ here, in the whole Bible. In the Old Testament it is a name for God, so Christ is here taking the title of God from the Old Testament.

Note these words with me in Isaiah 65:16. Here Jesus is claiming to be the truth, the affirmation, the firm, fixed certainty of God.

Isaiah 65:16 (NKJV) So that he who blesses himself in the earth, shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he who swears in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hidden from my eyes.

The Hebrew word Truth is AMEN in Hebrew, that is how it sounds, exactly the same. It is transliterated from Hebrew into English. So if you heard Isaiah quote this aloud as he wrote it down, you would hear Amen.

Jesus Amen's the promises of God. He is the declaration that all that God has promised will happen.

Next, we see Paul saying the same thing, but not applying this title to Christ.

2 Corinthians 1:20 (NKJV) For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.

All of God's promises are attached to and come through Jesus Christ. Like the Amen at the end of a prayer hits the "send" key, so Jesus is the connection to all that God has promised.

Listen to Jesus Christ: The Faith & True Witness

Faithful and True Witness means that all Jesus says is true, perfectly accurate, completely trustworthy, and his testimony is reliable.

There is so much we have to take on faith, so Jesus says, what you have not yet seen, I have. I verify it, you can trust Me.

I am the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness to all that God has said.

Listen to Jesus Christ: The Beginning

Beginning of the Creation of God is not the first creation of God. The word is **arche**, it means the Beginning: Jesus is the origin and source of all creation. He is the Creator.

John 1:3 (NKJV) All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made

Hebrews 1:2;11:3 (NKJV)

Turn back to Colossians 1:15-17:

Colossians 1:15-17 (NKJV) He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all

things, and in Him all things consist.

When Paul calls Christ the prototokos in Colossians 1:15-17, he is not saying Jesus was the first born, but is the First or Supreme One over all creation as the Creator.

So the Verifier, the Witness, and the Beginning speaks. What He says is truth, what no one else can know He verifies, and as Creator, Beginner, He is Ruler. Jesus Christ asked them through His Word the same thing He asks us through His Word: Listen to Me!

Listen to the Diagnosis Christ Gave Them

Jesus was speaking to the wealthiest church of this whole region. There was not a more financially prosperous group of people in all of Asia Minor than Laodicea; and there was not a more spiritually defective group of saints than those in the church at Laodicea.

Jesus said it all in Revelation 3:17 (NKJV):

Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'— and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—

By all appearances, it was their wealth that was holding them back from pleasing God.

Sanctification means that God is leading and controlling our lives. Often, the more financial resources we have, the harder it is to surrender control of our lives to God.

So in their state of being rich, wealthy, and having everything: Jesus diagnosed the church at Laodicea as having all but stopped living in the power and sanctifying effects of the Cross. They had slowly drifted away from Christ's control over their lives.

They had cultivated some very bad habits. Habits that made them unacceptable to Christ, and even worse, sickening to Him. In these verses Jesus writes a letter that asks them, and us today, to repent as often as needed until we are personally pursuing:

Listen to the Seven Habits Christ Desires

Habit One: Jesus wants us to
Repent of any Spiritual **Neutrality**

v. 15 **"I know your works** that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. 16 So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, **I will vomit you out of My mouth.**

- Spiritual **Neutrality** is when we stop aggressively resisting sin in our lives.
- Spiritual **Neutrality** is when we say that it no longer matters that every part of our life come under Christ's control. Remember I Corinthians 6:19-20:

*1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NKJV) Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; **therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.***

- Spiritual **Neutrality** or failing to glorify God for Who He is: is sickening to Christ. So Jesus Christ calls each of us to repent today of any Spiritual **Neutrality**.
- Jesus died to pay the penalty for all my sins, taking my place He suffered for me, erased the record of my sin and now offers me to live each day in His sanctifying power. Spiritual neutrality is failing to say no to sin.

Habit Two: Jesus wants us to Repent of any Spiritual **Self-Sufficiency**

v. 17a Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and **have need of nothing**'—

- Spiritual **Self-Sufficiency** is when we think we are making it on our own, and don't need the Lord's power, guidance, and presence.

Psalm 16:11 (NKJV) You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

- Another form of Spiritual **Self-Sufficiency** is when we stop seeking God's will before our own in all the decisions of our lives. Christ is to be first in priority. Jesus is to be the greatest influence upon us.

Matthew 6:33 (NKJV) But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

- Spiritual **Self-Sufficiency** is when we stop needing to stay in close contact with the Lord. It is when we drift away, and start making it on our own.
- Spiritual **Self-Sufficiency** or making it on our own: is sickening to Christ. So Jesus Christ calls each of us to repent today of any Spiritual **Self-Sufficiency**.

Habit Three: Jesus wants us to Repent of any Spiritual ***Insensitivity***

v. 17b and **do not know that you are** wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—

- Spiritual ***Insensitivity*** is when we lose our spiritual sight, and no longer see ourselves as God's Word explains we are. We lose touch with the mirror of the Word that shows us what needs changing each day as we wait before the Lord.
- Spiritual ***Insensitivity*** is becoming what James calls a "forgetful hearer" Look again at James 1:22-25 (NKJV):

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. 25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

Anything Un-Surrendered Displeases God

For a moment, go back with me to the very first imperative in Romans 6:11. That first imperative, for a response expected by God, is followed quickly by five more. Let me show them to you. They are the pathway to being sensitive to what pleases God.

To repent of insensitivity starts with dedication or presenting ourselves back to God just as Paul explains here in Romans 6.

Romans 6:11-19 (NKJV) has six straight in a row commands from God about seeing how much we need to get willingly under His control.

Likewise you also,

1. ***reckon yourselves*** to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Operate on what you know is true. Believe God & respond to Him.

2. v. 12 Therefore ***do not let*** sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

Say NO to sin. Because sin is defeated, we must treat it that way. Say no, turn away in the power of the spirit, and be amazed at God's

power.

3. v. 13 And **do not present** your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin,

Break the old patterns by refusing to follow them. Sinful patterns are like ruts, you anticipate them and hold tightly to the wheel and stay out of the ruts; and if you slide in, get right back out by the grace of God. Break the old pattern and don't stay a moment longer in any rut than needed, and soon you'll learn to steer clear of those ruts.

4. but **present yourselves** to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. 15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!

Start following God as a choice, a part of each day's plan. Jesus reduced all that He wanted from His first disciples to just those two words: Follow Me. I am to be an instrument in His Hands that promotes righteousness.

It is always easy to ask: would Jesus go there? Would He do this? Is this what pleases Him? Am I following Him by hearing His voice and responding to His Word?

5. v. 16 Do you not know that to whom you **present yourselves** slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? 17 But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. 18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

Enlist yourself each day as a slave of Christ. Go to Him and say I want You to be my Master, and I willingly again present myself back into your Hands. Remember, that was the content of the prayer Jesus commanded us to use a life-long pattern in matthew 6.

Focus me back upon who you are as God; Control me as my Master; Lead me in doing what pleases You; Supply me with whatever I need to do Your will; Cleanse me from anything that displeases You; and Empty me so You get all of the credit from my life.

6. v. 19 I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of

lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, ***so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.***

Get enslaved by a passion for holiness. Seek to be holy even as God is holy. That is what He is asking for. This is impossible by any human strength or power, but we are called and empowered by Christ to be enslaved by His righteousness unto holiness.

As Paul said in II Corinthians 5, the love of Christ constrains us. We want to be like Him and follow Him in His path which is holiness.

Are You Listening to Jesus?

Spiritual ***Insensitivity*** or no longer seeing ourselves reflected in the mirror God's Word: is sickening to Christ.

So Jesus Christ the most respected authority on spiritual health in the Universe calls each of us to repent today of any Spiritual ***Insensitivity*** by these simple Romans 6 commands:

1. Start operating on truth,
2. Start saying no to sin,
3. Start breaking the old patterns,
4. Start following God daily as a choice,
5. Start presenting yourself as His slaves, and
6. Start pursuing a passion for holy living.

Jesus said, "My sheep, hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27).

Hearing and Following Jesus is the essence of all that we are as born-again believers today!