

Revelation 3: 20-22; "Behold I stand at the Door", Sermon # 28 in the series
- "The Faithful and True Witness, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on
August 20th, 2006, in the Afternoon Worship Service,
and again on August 25th, 2013.

Last week we studied the causes and cure of lukewarmness in a Christian's life. Lukewarmness exists in the Christian's life when he allows himself to become lackadaisical about everything that he knows and everything that he has been given to him by His Lord, the One Who died for him. He has been shown great mercy and has been given great and inestimable privileges and yet he does not seem to take notice of them. He has great responsibilities that have been given to him to keep Christ's commands and to engage in good works, but he seems to have forgotten where his priorities lie. He is relatively unconcerned that people are perishing around him without the knowledge of His Savior. There is a laziness and a lethargy in his spiritual energy level, and an unholy indifference to spiritual things, as if it does not really matter whether he is following Christ or whether anything he does makes any difference to the Savior's cause. It is one of the worst states that a Christian can fall into.

The only remedy for such a condition is that the lukewarm Christian come to Jesus Christ and "buy"; that is that they transact with Christ for the grace that will help them to repent of their self-sufficiency, laziness, and trusting in earthly riches. Earthly riches never can really sustain or empower the Christian to live in a way pleasing to Christ. "How hard it is for the rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven," Jesus says in Matthew 19: 23. Sometimes the Lord must rebuke us for trusting in our own strength and ability to provide for ourselves. The Lord reminds the church in Laodicea that as many as He loves, He rebukes and chastens. Repentance was in order, and zeal to arouse themselves to address, and to come out of, this pathetic condition was needed. This was what the Lord Jesus was saying that they should strive for. Then in verse 20 comes one of the most amazing spiritual pictures that the Lord Jesus gives us of Himself anywhere in Scripture. It is of Himself, standing at the door and knocking. It is not just any door. It is the door of the believer's heart. Our Lord Jesus Christ stands at the door of every believer's heart, knocking to see if He will gain entrance to have sweet fellowship with us, or whether we will leave Him outside because we are too busy with our selfish and worldly concerns. It is a situation which is placed before us every day and He expects us to overcome the temptations to ignore His knock. How can we overcome the temptation to lukewarm devotion, lackadaisical works, and sinful selfishness so that we can go on to become zealous and faithful servants of our Lord Jesus Christ? These verses are telling us that we can overcome these temptations if we will understand and receive into our hearts 2 truths about the Lord Jesus that will strengthen us to overcome. They are the Position that Christ takes with every believer, the Promise that Christ gives to any believer, and the Pledge that Christ gives to victorious believers. We will only have time for the Position and the Pledge, today, but let us learn together what our Lord Jesus is doing to help us to overcome our lukewarmness.

1st- The Position that Christ takes with every believer: "Behold, I stand at the Door and knock".

This verse is often used by preachers of all sorts, both Arminian and Calvinistic, in an evangelistic sense; Christ standing at the door of the unbeliever's heart and seeking entrance into his life. Christ cannot enter until the unbeliever opens the door of his

heart to Him. The picture does seem to fit well with Arminian theology until you look more closely at the context of these verses and you see what Jesus wants to do when He comes in to the heart of the persons that He is addressing. The context of these verses is not an evangelistic appeal being made to unbelievers that they might receive Christ for the first time. It is a loving appeal which follows a rebuke that Christ has made to lukewarm believers who need to understand how to become hot in their service to Him and to His kingdom. It is not as though this verse cannot be used evangelistically, for no doubt Christ does enter the heart of sinners for the first time in accordance with the reception of Christ in the gospel. But the primary purpose for which Christ enters here in these verses does not appear to be to save sinners, but rather to spiritually dine with those persons who are already Christians, even though weak and sinful. When Christ saves a sinner He has already gained entrance to the door of the heart long before the actual transaction of justification has taken place. He does not stand knocking, He simply comes in whether the sinner is ready or not. God the Father has been drawing him and Christ's Spirit has been convicting him of his sin. The Spirit then gives the gift of regeneration, the New Birth, by taking the keys of Election and Christ's grace and opening the door Himself to the heart, so that Christ can enter through the preaching of the gospel. The person's mind, affections, and will are then turned by the Holy Spirit to consider Christ as lovely, as beautiful, and as a powerful Savior and King. Then once this work is accomplished, or while this work is being accomplished, the gospel message comes and the person believes and is saved. Then the Holy Spirit of Christ seals the believer with His own permanent presence and Christ is with us who believe, the hope of glory. It is not as though the sinner's will is by passed or that there is not a knocking that often takes place in gospel preaching; it is that Christ by His Spirit has already come past the door and into the heart-house in order to turn the will. If this were not the case, the person would never want Christ or open the door.

We see this blessed work in such a verse as Acts 16: 14 if you will turn over there with me. When Paul came bringing the gospel to Philippi, the foremost city of Macedonia, he and those who came with him went down to the riverside where prayer was customarily made; and they sat down and spoke to the women who met there. Then it says, "Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us." "She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God." "The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul." It doesn't say that the Lord stood knocking at the door of her heart through Paul's preaching, and she opened it. No, the Lord opened the door and then she was enabled to heed the things spoken to her by Paul. God through Christ does this gracious work and the person hearing the gospel responds in faith. And then by faith they begin to live the Christian life. If you think of the Apostle Paul and the way that he was converted on the Damascus road, you see that this whole work was simply speeded up and accomplished by God in a shorter time; more suddenly in his case. He was struck down with blinding light and he heard the voice of the Savior which brought him to conviction and humbled his proud heart. And then the Spirit quickly turning his heart so that he could respond rightly and acknowledge Christ as his Lord. It was indeed a mighty work. But regeneration is always a mighty work which opens the door of the heart. It always takes place in a moment of time, but the events of how we are effectually called which surround it may be spread out in time greatly, in one case, or compacted together in time in another case, as God may see fit to accomplish His purpose.

Now the position that our Lord Jesus takes here is the position of a dear friend who has come to call. But He is not just any friend, He is our Savior and Lord. He is standing at the door and he is knocking. He has given us grace, He has opened the heart before, but now He knocks and waits for a response to all that He has given to the believer and to all that He has done for them. Will we open to Him, or will we keep to ourselves, and our own earthly interests and pursuits? That is the question. Will we bring him into the place where we live; our personal life and our private thoughts and all the activities which mean the most to us? He wants to gain our attention. "Behold." Take a look, believer! It is your Lord who comes to call at your heart-house today. He is there every day looking through the spiritual lattice of your heart. What condescension is this? It is not an earthly dignitary, a President, a Prince, or Queen. It is the King of Glory. Here I stand, He says, knocking, waiting patiently for a response from you. This is how the Lord Jesus would have each needy sinner and each believing saint to see Him. He stands and knocks. He has come to speak with you about your soul. He has come to share with you His wisdom; and He will come every day seeking entrance to speak with you through His word in your heart. If we were wise always, we would do what a wise person does every day, as it is recorded in Proverbs 8: 32 where it says, "Now therefore, listen to me, my children, for blessed are those who keep my ways." "Hear instruction and be wise, and do not disdain it." "Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of My doors." "For whoever finds Me finds life, and obtains favor from the Lord." If we were wise always, every day we would be watching at His gates and waiting at the posts of His doors. But we are not wise always. That is why Christ takes the position that He does. He comes to us because He is faithful, loving, and true as a Savior and as a Friend. He comes to us in this wonderfully gentle but definite way because He knows that faithfulness is something that He must build in us if we are ever to achieve it in this life. He must come to us and knock on the door of our heart; and He does.

2ndly – We have here the Promise that Christ gives to any believer; "If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and dine with him and he with Me."

What we have here is a promise that Christ is giving to any believer, that if he opens the door of his heart to fellowship with Him, that He will come in and "dine" with him and he with Christ. The first thing that we must do if we would have fellowship with Christ, the kind that will bring warmth and fire to our Christian life, is to open the door. I want you to turn with me to Song of Solomon 5 to see this. Sometimes just getting up to open the door is a problem for a lazy, sleepy believer, as we find here. In verse 1, having been feasted with the wine and milk that Christ had brought to her, Christ came to His church looking for fellowship. Her heart is pictured as a garden that Christ has come into in Chapter 4. But it is a heart locked up, as it says in verse 12, "A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed." He knows that there is much fruit that He can gather from her life, her words, and her actions, but it will take His Spirit's working in her heart to bring it out. In verse 16, we find the believer or the church saying in prayer, "Awake, O north wind, and come, O south!" "Blow upon my garden, that its spices may flow out." "Let my beloved come to his garden and eat its pleasant fruits." Christ then comes to this garden late at night "having gathered myrrh with His spice, having eaten His honeycomb with His honey; and having drunk His wine with His milk." Christ, having partaken of His sufferings on

behalf of sinners and desirous to communicate to them what cost Him so much to purchase, wishes to communicate to His sister, His bride the church, all of the good graces and truths necessary to her strengthening and her refreshment, so that God would be glorified in her witness to him. Christ knows that in His giving her this grace and the promise of His love, that if she will open to Him, He will establish every good thing to her to establish her faith and obedience. His coming to her this late at night looking for fellowship should be no problem to her. But He is disappointed in this. In verse 2 she says, "I sleep, but my heart is awake; it is the voice of my beloved!" "He knocks, saying, 'Open for me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one; for my head is covered with dew, my locks with the drops of the night.'" But she says to Him, "I have taken off my robe; how can I put it on again?" "I have washed my feet; how can I defile them?" My beloved put his hand by the latch of the door, and my heart yearned for him." "I arose to open for my beloved, and my hands dripped with myrrh, my fingers with liquid myrrh, on the handles of the lock." "I opened for my beloved, but my beloved had turned away and was gone."

There are a number of things that we can learn from this. Christ must have been out there knocking and waiting for along time if the dew and the drops of the night had covered His head. She did want to get up and go to the door because she was tired and sleepy, and she had taken off her robe. It seemed entirely inconvenient to have Him in for fellowship at this late hour of the night when He first came. Her heart was awake, but she slept. She was awakened to righteousness, she did know Christ, but she was asleep. She had fallen into this state of lukewarmness and lethargy in her relationship and obedience to Christ; so much so, that she did not feel that she could get up to open the door to have fellowship with Him. Let me ask you, dear believer, whether this is the case with you? Are you like this with your Lord? Has He been knocking and calling "Open for me", for some time now? Does it seem inconvenient to you to have sweet fellowship with the Lord and to talk things over with Him and to receive the blessings of His grace, mercy, and peace which He has died to bring to you? Have you taken off the garments of your remembrance of what Christ has done for you in salvation; that is, have you in your heart put off what Christ has given to you wear by His grace and righteousness, so that you can lie down on the bed of your own carnal pleasures and self-sufficiency; to take your ease at the very time when He desires to have fellowship with you the most? You are content with the darkness of this world and the sad state of your own heart? You can see here that even opening the door was hard for her, so He puts His hand by the latch of the door. It is only then that her heart begins to yearn for him. Even if there is only a small hole in our locked hearts for Christ's work of grace to enter, it will enter effectually because of His power.

Christ will obtain your obedience not by breaking down the door with His demands but by arousing our affections of love toward Him for all that He has done for you in the past, in His sufferings and death. And how He has loved you with a dying love. That is what is pictured by this myrrh that the handles of the lock are dripping with. When Christ's church, the Bride, finally does obey His call and get up from the bed of carnal ease and self-sufficiency to open the door to Him, then He has already left; He is gone. We will look more into what happened next, the next time we are together around this text. It is only by your opening the door to greater fellowship with Christ in His sufferings that you will be able to conquer the lukewarmness which plagues your heart.

But in the next message we will discuss more of Christ's promise to dine with us, and His pledge to have us sit down with us on His throne if we overcome.