

## Faithfulness in testing times 2/6 Revelation 3: 14-22 Seeing things from God's perspective



- Le Pont du Gard, Provence
- Built by Romans 1<sup>st</sup> C AD
- 50 metres high, 52 km long
- Supplied water to Nîmes
- Perspective varies, depending on vantage point
- Water is essential for life

God's perspective on the 7 churches is clear in Revelation.  
How many of the points can we relate to our own situation?  
How do our times compare with those of 1<sup>st</sup> century AD?  
How is God calling us to change in 2023?

### The Message Jesus brings to the Church in Laodicea

14 'To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

These are the words of ●the Amen, ●the faithful and true witness, ●the ruler/beginning of God's creation.

- Jesus is guarantee of truth
- completely trustworthy & reliable
- through His power everything was created



- last of the 7 churches, only one without praise
- a well-situated city at junction of 2 roads: Ephesus to interior & Pergamum to south coast
- a wealthy banking centre
- sells garments & carpets from black, glossy wool
- medical school, eye salve

<sup>15</sup> **I know your deeds**, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! <sup>16</sup> So, because you are lukewarm – neither hot nor cold – I am about to spit you out of my mouth.



- Hot springs supply Hierapolis
- cold mountain streams supply water to Colossae
- water comes by aqueduct from Hierapolis to Laodicea
- it arrives lukewarm and tainted

- Jesus calls for full commitment
- He know us by our deeds
- He speaks truth into our lives
- Are we ready to hear and follow that truth?

#### Bad Drinking Water

- Despite its wealth, Laodicea was notorious for its terrible drinking water.
- Because of heavy mineral deposits found in the aqueducts leading into the city, it is believed the water came from hot springs in the area.
- By the time the water reached Laodicea, it would have been *lukewarm*.



Jesus uses the hot, cold and lukewarm water supply in these three cities to describe three types of people



The hot mineral springs of Hierapolis have healing properties.

Hot Christians are spiritually alive, living transformed lives fully committed to serving God.



The cold mountain stream that supplies water to Colossae is refreshing and challenging. Spiritually cold people have rejected the claims of Jesus and show no interest in the message. They are open in their denial of the faith, but not hypocrites.

## Jesus sees through appearances and brings truth to bear

<sup>17</sup> You say, "I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing." But you do not realise that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.



- Wealthy enough for citizens to pay for reconstruction after earthquake in 60AD, rejecting financial aid from Rome.
- but self-sufficient & proud, ignoring God

- Reality check:
- their values are superficial
- new priorities from God's perspective
- eyes blind to God's truth
- lacking the riches of God's kingdom
- unclothed in righteousness of Jesus
- Does this ring true for today's world?



## Jesus has the answer for those who are ready to receive it

<sup>18</sup> I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so that you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so that you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so that you can see.



When we come to Christ we are a new creation: 2 Cor 5:17

- the true gold of heaven has been refined by fire, and the church at Laodicea might have to go through trials to grow in faith
- the white garments represent the righteousness of Jesus imputed to us at salvation, replacing their black wool of sin
- Holy Spirit brings true insight, replacing their eye salve.

## Grace of Lord Jesus, love of God, fellowship of Holy Spirit

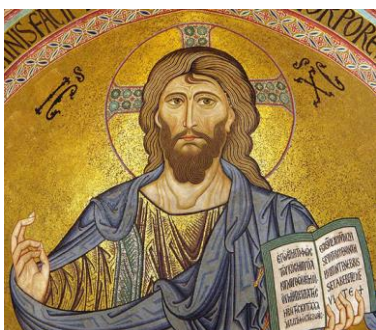
<sup>19</sup> Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. <sup>20</sup> Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.



Now is the time for decision!  
The Laodiceans have built up a resistance to God's word through pride and complacency, thinking they have no need and are self-sufficient. Now Jesus reveals the truth and they have the opportunity to repent and let Him into their lives and their church. How will they respond? How relevant is this for us?

One of three paintings by Holman Hunt with this title "I am **the light of the world**. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." John 8:12 NIV

<sup>21</sup> To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne. <sup>22</sup> **Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.**'



Jesus makes a further promise to those who hear the gospel, repent of their sins and invite Him into their lives: they will reign with Him and the Father for eternity. This word applies to all churches and all times, including our own.

So let us examine our hearts:

- Ask Holy Spirit to teach us
- Are we hot, cold or lukewarm?
- How committed are we?
- How sure of our salvation?
- How can we draw closer?



Cathedral of Cefalù in Sicily

