

Revelation 3

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[0 : 00] This week, the cameras were focused on what are otherwise very insignificant doors, as the world's cameramen awaited the arrival and the emergence of the newborn baby prince.

The doors of Lindowing St Mary's Hospital, they opened and the smiling parents emerged. William and Kate came out holding the royal baby. It was a historic moment, a moment captured for posterity.

And we would wish to send our good wishes to the happy couple on the birth of their baby boy. However, not to detract from those good wishes.

For most of us, the event was little more than a happy interest story that has little a real impact on our day-to-day lives.

[1 : 24] But in contrast, I want to spend some time this morning thinking of another door and another royal entry, as we find it in chapter 3 of Revelation.

But to better understand this passage that I'm going to look at, we need to look at something of the context.

So my first heading, of which I have three, my first heading, I have annotated the seven churches. The seven churches.

I'll briefly go through what is said about the seven churches. The Apostle Paul had been on Patmos when he had this appearance of Jesus.

He was found in the Spirit. He says, on the Lord's day, he says, I was in the Spirit and heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet.

[2 : 30] The voice said to him, write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches. To Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Tyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.

We read that in Revelations 1.11. He turned round and he saw what would have been an awesome sight.

This is described for us in chapter 1, verses 12 to 16. It was such a sight that he fell to the ground as though dead.

Fell at the feet of the one who shone before him. The one spoke and said, do not be afraid.

I am the first and the last. I am the living one. I was dead. And now look, I'm alive forever and ever.

[3 : 29] And I hold the keys of death and Hades. The one spoke and said, to the angel of the churches, write.

First, to the angel of the church at Ephesus, write. And the church at Ephesus were commended for their hard work and their perseverance.

But equally, they were rebuked. They were rebuked for having forsaken their first love. The second church, Smyrna, it was highlighted that they had suffered.

They had suffered afflictions and they had suffered poverty. And yet, in verse 9 of chapter 2, they were described as being rich. Rich in those things that are of heaven, but not of those things that are of the earth.

They were told not to be afraid of the suffering that they would experience, for they would suffer, they would experience suffering. They were to remain faithful.

[4 : 44] And if they did so, they will receive life as the victor's crown. They would receive life. They would receive eternal life if they remained faithful to the end.

To the church at Pergamum, write. They were commended for their faithfulness. Verse 13 of chapter 2.

But in their midst, in their midst was this problem. There were false teachers and there were idolaters.

In the church at Tyatira, they were commended. They were commended for their deeds. They were commended for their love and for their faith, for their service and for their perseverance.

But even there, there was a problem. There was this one called Jezebel, called herself a prophetess. And she was leading the people astray.

[5 : 45] What about the church at Sardis? They had the reputation of being alive, wonderful. But their reputation was false, because they were dead.

And they were being called to repentance. But there were a few. There were a few. A few faithful who would, however, be included in the Lamb's Book of Life.

What of Philadelphia? They were commended for keeping God's Word, for being faithful to His name, for their patient endurance, as they had been commanded to do so.

And an open door. An open door. An open door had been placed before them. And they were instructed to hold on to what they had. Because what they had, this door was open, open to heaven.

What they had was eternal life, the victor's crown. In verse 11, chapter 3. If you were counting, I've only mentioned six of the churches.

[6 : 51] Six of the seven. What about the seventh? And this brings me to my second heading. My second heading. Things are bad in the church at Laodicea.

Things are bad in the church at Laodicea. Where is this place? Or where was this place? Well, it was located in western Turkey. Somewhere to the east of Ephesus.

To which the letter was written. The book of Ephesians. In fact, all of the seven churches were located in western Turkey.

Where is the Christian church today in western Turkey? But this place, Laodicea, was the wealthiest city in Phrygia during Roman times.

It was a wealthy city. It was well known during those days for three things. For banking. For the medical school that they had. And for the textile industry.

[7 : 55] For three things that they were well known for. But there was a problem. There was a problem at Laodicea. The problem was in respect of their deeds.

They were neither hot nor cold. They were neither cold nor hot, it says. They were complacent in their wealth and possessions.

They were in need of nothing, they thought. I am rich. I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing. In modern day terms.

I have my house. I have my car. I have my job. I've got my weekends. I've got my television. My entertainment. They were totally complacent in what they had. They felt themselves totally self-sufficient.

And yet, they were completely unaware of the reality of their situation. Because Jesus describes it for them. You are wretched. You are pitiful.

[8 : 53] You are poor. You are blind and you are naked, it says in verse 17. And the writer of Ecclesiastes captures it in these verses.

Extracted from Ecclesiastes chapter 2, 8 to 11. This describes the people of Laodicea. I amassed silver and gold for myself.

I denied myself nothing my eyes desired. I refused my heart no pleasure. I denied myself nothing my eyes desired. If I saw something I wanted, I had it.

I refused my heart no pleasure. If I wanted to do something, I did it. This was the people of Laodicea. The writer of Ecclesiastes concluded in these terms.

When I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I have toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless. A chasing after the wind. Nothing was gained under the sun.

[9 : 59] The people of Laodicea. They lived in their misguided state. And there was a contrast, a real contrast, between their own assessment of themselves and the assessment that Jesus made of them.

They are wretched and they are pitiful. They're living a lie. They're deluding themselves. Like the woman sitting in church, dressed in her finery, with a nice bonnet on her head.

And across the top of the bonnet was crawling a little louse, as captured in the poem by Robert Burns.

She did not appreciate, like the Loericeans, they did not appreciate the sin that was in their lives.

This louse could represent the sin in this woman's hat. She did not appreciate her condition. An ugly, creeping, blasted one, or detested, shunned by saint and sinner.

This beast was crawling across our hat. Oh, what some power the gift of Gias to see ourselves as others see us. If only the people at Laodicea could see themselves as others would see them, but more especially if they could see themselves as God would see them.

[11 : 29] If we could see ourselves, if we had that gift to see ourselves as God could see us. If only, if only.

Corrective measures are required. How do you deal with this wretched and pitiful state that the people of Laodicea were in? They were counseled to go on a shopping trip.

This was the counsel given to them. Go buy. That sounds familiar today when we are so caught up with purchasing things and it is so easy.

They were counseled to go to God with their shopping basket. First thing they were in need of. They were poor. They were poor. And they were told, even though they were poor, they were told to go and buy gold.

Seems like a contradiction. But they were told to go and buy gold refined in the fire. In verse 18. 1 Peter 1.7 says, The genuineness of our faith, much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire.

[12 : 44] They were poor. They needed to buy gold. They needed those true riches. They were storing up for themselves treasures on earth. They needed the treasures in heaven.

So they needed to take their shopping basket, go to God, and buy gold. The second corrective measure.

They were blind. They were blind. The second thing they needed in their shopping basket. They needed the prescription from the doctor. They needed to buy this medicinal salve for their eyes so that they can see.

They were blind. They needed to see. They weren't physically blind. They were spiritually blind. Perhaps the most, the prime example of blindness, of spiritual blindness, we find in Scripture is that given and described by Jesus referring to the Pharisees and the teachers of the law.

These people, they did everything for appearance sake. Everything they do is done for people to see.

[13 : 54] They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels in their garments long. They love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues.

They love to be greeted in the marketplace. They love to be greeted with respect in the marketplace and to be called rabbi by others. They're self-assessment.

But Jesus described them in these terms. Blind guides, blind fools, hypocrites, whitewashed tombs, beautiful on the outside, but full of dead bones.

Jesus described them as snakes and a brood of vipers. What an indictment. The people of Laodicea were blind.

They needed this medicinal salve for their eyes. They needed to see. They needed to see the God of heaven. Two things in the shopping basket.

[15 : 02] There was a third. The third problem that they had was that they were naked. They needed their shameful nakedness covered. There were some people in Sardis, a few people in Sardis who have not sold their clothes.

They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. The people of Laodicea had to go and buy white garments, white clothes.

These white garments signifying the righteousness of Christ that would be imputed to us if we trust in Jesus. The third thing in the shopping basket.

Our sins need to be covered. So there are these three corrective measures that need to be executed. The Laodiceans took pride on their industry and the things that they did.

They took pride in three things. The gold. The three things in the basket. The gold represented their banking. The thing they were well known for.

[16 : 11] The white clothes represented their textile industry. The famous eye salve that they had represented the medical facilities that they had.

A bit like in times past we think of Dundee as the place of jute, jam and journalism. Or we think of Aberdeen of the city of granite and of black gold.

But these three things, these three things in the shopping basket. The gold, the clothes, the medical prescription. What were the price tags on them?

What price did they have to pay for them? Extracting lines, albeit slightly out of order, extracting lines of a modern day hit song by Jesse Jay.

It's not about the money, money, money. Forget about the price tag. When the sale comes first and the truth comes second. Why is everyone so obsessed?

[17:18] Money can't buy us happiness. In that song, she was concerned about love and happiness through her music and dance.

Things that money couldn't buy. But what was the price on these items that the people had to come to God for? Come, come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters.

And you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread?

And your labor on what does not satisfy. Listen, listen to me and eat what is good and you will delight in the richest of fears.

The richest of fears. You've got your shopping basket. You've got your three things in it. You take them to the checkout. What do you find? The price has already been paid.

[18:22] Christ has already paid the price for our sin. He died on the cross for us. It is by grace. The Laodiceans, they would have been obsessed by their money, money, money.

Where do we stand? Are the gold, the clothes and the medical prescription in our shopping basket? Are we ready for that one-click shop?

To the Laodicean church. Because they were neither hot nor cold, Jesus said to the Christians or to the Christians inverted commas, to those in Laodicea, Jesus said, verse 16, and these are very solemn words, I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

Can you imagine if God is speaking to us in those terms? I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

You are neither hot nor cold. And this brings me to my last heading.

Not the end, not without hope. Not the end, not without hope. Things were undoubtedly desperate for the church at Laodicea.

[19:45] They didn't think so, but the reality was it was a desperate situation. They were neither hot nor cold. I mean, we feel in here sometimes it's a bit hot or a bit cold.

Some in some parts of the building will feel hot, some will feel cold. We have thermostats, we have thermometers to set or gauge the temperature. But how do we gauge our spiritual temperature?

Are we, like the Laodiceans, are we self-sufficient? Are we living off the fat of the land? Are we saying to ourselves, I don't need a thing?

Again, Jesus said, I wish you were either hot or cold.

The Laodiceans, I wish you were either hot or cold. Well, you'd have thought, you would have thought, he might have said, I wish you were hot. You wouldn't have thought he would have said, I wish you were cold.

[20:48] But think for a moment. If you were hot, you'd have the zeal for God's work. You'd want to please him, you would want to do everything you could to please God if you were hot for Jesus.

You'd want to reach out to the poor and needy. You'd want to reach out with the gospel. You'd be so filled with the word of God that you'd want to share it with others. And you'd want to seek the lost.

If you were cold, why would Jesus want, I wish you were cold. Why? If you were cold. If you were cold, if you were in Siberia and you were cold, you would realize you were cold.

You would search out for something to cover, cover yourself to get some heat. You would feel the cold. You would feel your need. You would be on bended knee praying to God, crying out to help.

Have mercy upon me, a sinner. I need your help. God, the question is, is Jesus saying to the people living in Aberdeen, I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

[21:59] Is Jesus saying to the people of Scotland, I am about to spit you out of my mouth. I hope not. Can any of us identify ourselves with the church at Laodicea?

Let me tell you that we are all sitting under the same judgment. But wait, it's so easy to read verse 16.

Verse 16, and miss something. I am about to...

So because you are because you look warm, neither hot nor cold, I am about to spit you out of my mouth. It's so easy to read that verse and miss a very critical word.

That word, the word about. It's our get out clause. It's our way out. The door has not completely been shut yet.

[23 : 04] This word is conditional as we see in verses 19 and 20. We have not yet been spat out. The people at Laodicea had not yet been spat out of the mouth of God.

If you belong to God, if you have yielded your life to Jesus, if you have the Holy Spirit living within you and you identify yourself with the people of Laodicea, then these verses, 19 and 20, are for you.

Those whom I love, I rebuke and discipline. God works His providence in our lives. He works His providence in our lives to change us so that one day we'll be conformed to the likeness of His Son. We are all work in progress. There is a sign saying, men at work, God at work. There's a sign in front of us. God is still working on us.

We are a work in progress. I rebuke and discipline those whom I love. So be earnest and repent. May we turn from our sins and may we listen to the voice of Jesus speaking to us through His Word and through our enlightened conscience.

[24 : 22] But if you're in the other camp, if you have not yet taken that step of faith to follow Jesus, if you're still in that lukewarm state, then these verses, 19 and 20, are for you.

And in particular, verse 20. It was in fact this verse that drew me to this passage. It was this verse I was thinking about when I was deciding what to speak on this morning.

before I'd realized the precise context in which it was to be found. The words that went through my mind were the more familiar translation.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me. I prefer the AV version of this, not because there is one thing that is perhaps different and which is perhaps not as good in the fact that it talks about man meaning mankind.

Man means man, woman, boy or girl. But because of the first word, behold. If you look at the text, verse 20 in our text here, the NIV has translated this, here I am.

[25 : 36] I'll be with an exclamation mark after the I am. But I much prefer this rendering. Behold. It starts with this word, behold.

Now, I looked up a, which I'm not often found doing, I looked up a Greek New Testament. I don't have one at home, but I looked up on the internet. For a Greek New Testament, and I found this word, which is a word in Greek, edu, if I pronounce it correctly.

I mean, I'm not, I'm not a Greek scholar. I am familiar with many of the Greek letters, but mostly in mathematical formulae. But this same word, edu, is the word we find in the AV in Matthew 1.23, where it begins, Behold.

Behold, a virgin shall be with a child and shall bring forth a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel. which being interpreted is God with us. The NIV translation, Here I Am, it seems to me a little too passive.

But behold, look, take hold of this. What comes after here, what comes after this word is important. Take note. This is of eternal importance.

[26 : 53] Behold, the onus is in you to do something. There is the imperative. There is the knock at the door. Do you know, do you know who's standing on the other side of that door?

Perhaps you're looking at a solid door. You can't see who's on the other side. You don't know Jesus. He is something that is out, someone who is out there.

Perhaps it's a misted glass door. You have some vague notion of who Jesus is. Behold, I stand at the door.

We have to be careful. There is a knock at the door. If we leave it too long, that knock could get fainter and fainter and fainter until such a time is that we don't even hear the knock and we certainly don't hear the word of Jesus.

And what we are in effect doing if we are outside of Christ, what we are in effect doing is putting bolts across the door and shutting him out. No, even if we are in Christ, we need to open the door for him and let him into our lives in our everyday situation.

[28 : 10] Behold, I stand at the door. This is no ordinary visitor. This is no casual passerby. This is the Son of the Most High standing outside the door knocking.

None other than Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the one spoken of by the prophets. Do you hear the knocking? More importantly, do you hear the voice of Christ?

The voice of the Lord is calling you. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, you need to do something. You actually need to go and open the door. If the doorbell at home is ringing, you don't

just sit there.

You go and open the door and see who is at the other side. But notice, notice the order of events.

Jesus comes to the door. Jesus knocks.

Jesus speaks. Jesus comes in. It is all of Jesus. Jesus takes the initiative. It's all of grace. God sent his only begotten Son into the world to save sinners.

[29 : 20] We simply have to accept him through faith. whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

We have to open the door of our hearts to receive him. Have you done that? If not, why not? Peter was preaching to the people in Jerusalem at Pentecost.

When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, Brothers, what shall we do? Peter replied, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.

And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off. For all whom the Lord our God will call.

in Revelations, I'm nearly finished, in Revelations 3-9 we read, Be earnest and repent. If you declare with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

[30 : 34] For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified and it is with your mouth that you confess and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

For everyone who calls in the name of the Lord will be saved. If you hear his voice, if you hear his voice and open the door, he will come in and sup with you.

He will come in and have fellowship with you. And just a few words to finish. Has the royal entrance, has this royal entrance impacted your life?

Or have you left the royal visitor standing on the doorstep outside? If you haven't done so already, I urge you to go and open that door, the door to your heart and let Jesus come in.

If you take nothing, if you take nothing from this message this morning, I would ask you to grapple with this verse, with these words. Behold, I stand at the door and knock.

[31 : 45] If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me. If any person hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to them and eat with them and they with me.

Amen. May God add his blessing on these few thoughts. Let's just turn to a brief word.