



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

April 14, 2022

Pastor Randy Ott

Maundy Thursday

First Lesson: [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 116

Second Lesson: [Hebrews 10:15-25](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Luke 22:7-20](#)

Sermon Text: [Revelation 3:14-22](#)

Laodicea: Complacency—Death by Indifference

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Now is the time of God's favor. Now is the day of salvation. Amen.

In Christ, dear fellow redeemed:

Jesus commanded to ***"Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another,"*** ([John 13:34](#)) and that's the steady underlying current of Jesus' discourse with His disciples in the Upper Room throughout Maundy Thursday. If you go home and read through it in [John](#), you'll see that over and over and over. He talks about ***love***. "Love as I have loved you." "By this all people will know that you are my disciples." And on this day, when Jesus knows He is never going to sleep again, He takes the time at the Passover meal to institute this gift, which is the Sacrament of the altar, the Lord's Supper, the Eucharist, Holy Communion; a gift that gives to us this intimate connection with our Savior AND the very forgiveness of our sins as we receive the very body and blood of Christ. You might think it's kind of odd to be looking at this last letter to the churches, this church is Laodicea, because Laodicea seems to not have really gotten "it." But one of the things we've been looking at as we go through these letters is what God is looking for today and what He is warning His churches of all times about. So if you want to know what God would say to Christian congregations that live in an affluent culture and think they've got everything, that think they really only need God when there is a big crisis but the rest of the time, "God, you stay in your corner and we'll take care of things ourselves." If you wonder what God would write to any culture like THAT (which thinks it has all the answers and knows what every one of the problems are), this is the letter to the church of Laodicea. What happens if you neglect the command to "love one another as I have loved you"? What happens if you neglect to take the time to remember as you receive the Sacrament, to remember what you are; a sinner in desperate need of a Savior. To remember what He went through to take away the guilt

of your sins. What happens if you're a congregation that just goes through the motions and thinks God is lucky to have you and gets kind of full of yourself because things seem to be going pretty well? This is what we hear. And I think in many ways it describes our culture and our society today.

When towers get knocked to the ground; "Let's go back to church because now there is a crisis." When a hurricane devastates a city, "Well they must have done something terrible. It must be their fault because God would never do anything like that to us." Laodicea, like our society, was known as the wealthiest city in all of these cities that we've been traveling clockwise around Asia Minor at that time. It was on three major trade routes. Five of the other six cities all had roads that connected them directly to Laodicea. It was well known for its textile industry. Black wool was what it was known for. It was well known for its medicinal efforts, salve, medicinal treatments. Hot springs were nearby in Hierapolis. They were well known for how they could take care of the body. They were well known for their wealth because in 60 A.D., when the city was destroyed by an earthquake, they had the wealth to rebuild it on their own. They didn't go to Rome, to the government, to rebuild it. They had the wealth so they just rebuilt it right away. They were very proud of all of those things.

So as Jesus writes to them, you notice all the other letters, except for one other one, He has something that He says "I commend you for this..." Not in Laodicea. There is nothing to speak any words of praise to them. He just says, "I have this against you. You are neither hot (which makes you wonder if that's a reference to their hot springs that they took such great pride in) nor cold. I wish you were one or the other, but because you are lukewarm, I'm about to spit you out of my mouth." Literally He says "I'm about to vomit you up." Those are pretty strong words.

When we forget God's command to love one another and we love the things or our reputation, we have failed to put God first and we sin against our God. When we go through the motions of what we once loved, which is our Savior, and we become much more enamored with HOW we do things for our Savior than what our Savior has done for us, when we start worshipping traditions and other things, I think we're right alongside of Laodicea in being neither hot nor cold. We're more focused on self.

Jesus' answer to Laodicea is, "***Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent.***" "I'm about to spit you out" means that He still knew there were those there that belonged to Him. He was still speaking to believers. He's talking to believers when He says, "***I stand at the door and knock.*** So what I'm telling you to do is repent! Turn away from your sin. Turn back to me. See who I am and what I have done." Where is it as Christians God has given us this gift where we are to remember who He is and who we are? It's in the Lord's Supper.

If you properly prepare for the Lord's Supper, which means examine yourself, not check to make sure there isn't toilet paper sticking to your shoe when you walk up front or something goofy like that, but you examine yourself in the sense of what does God say I am? How have I failed my God? No excuses. No pointing the finger at someone else, but what am I? I'm a sinner. No matter how much I want to do better, I fail my God. You do the same thing.

Last Sunday in Bible class downstairs with the ten lies about God, we talked about how we end up making everything about ourselves. God wants me to be happy, so God would want me to do this because it makes happy. We love that because we love things about ourselves. We talked about how foolish we are at times. I can have head knowledge of this. You can have head knowledge of this. But we fail our God!

Yesterday I was in a hurry getting around to make all my visits. When I figured the people I was going to see in the facilities would be at lunch, I stopped in a store to pick up some things. Some things didn't go right. They had things marked wrong on the shelf. So I had to then go and return it. Then the person said, "I don't take returns. They are down there." I'm getting in a hurry now and then I go stand at the end. No one helps me. Finally the person that told me to go to the end (after standing there for five minutes) comes down to help me. I could have had it done by then. Of course that's what I'm thinking because the world revolves around me and my timetable. Then I have to run it out to the parking lot. Then I have to run back to the store and get the right thing that is marked at the right price because I needed it yesterday. Then I come up to checkout and I am standing and waiting by the self-checkouts, and someone comes and goes in front of me. I'm not that little! How can you miss me?! I'm standing right there and this person walks right up in front of me, stands in front of me, runs to the next one that comes open and I say "Hey! I'm standing right here!" And then I lost it because it was all about me.

So when I come here today and I stand in front of God's altar, I can't be offering excuses about "that person at the checkout" or "that person that came in front of me," it's about me. I failed God. I put myself in front of everyone else I was around. I did not love those people as Christ loved me! I can make all the excuses and I can understand why I did it, but I sinned against my God! Now, if I come to communion and I remember what a sinner I am and I look at my life and I see those examples and I see how I have failed my God, it's going to be a little bit harder to get too full of myself. Then, when Jesus says "Here is the very body" that from the time that He spoke the words of our Gospel today He never slept again, "Here is the very body that was nailed to that cross FOR YOU to take away your sins, Randy, because you're just an idiot." And here is the blood that ran down His back when the whips tore His back open or when the thorn was jammed into His forehead. "This was shed for you, Randy, because you're a sinner." And when each and every one of us sees our sin and sees what Jesus went through and

remember what He did, how can you be lukewarm? How can you say "Meh, Jesus died for me"? If you're honest with yourself, you can't.

I have to believe in Laodicea they stopped properly preparing themselves for the Lord's Supper and just went because everyone else was doing it. They didn't see their own sin. They didn't remember what Jesus went through to take away that sin. If you and I get in the habit of just going through the motions or going "Meh, I can get there to church Christmas and Easter. God should be happy with that," "Because you are neither hot nor cold, I'm about to vomit you out of my mouth." Those words are frightening because each and every one of us as Christians at times have been lukewarm toward our God.

The answer is prepare, remember, recognize the times you don't love as Jesus has told you to love, which is love as He loved us. Then rejoice in that forgiveness He gives you in this Sacrament. And seek to live with a fire in your soul that your God loves you with such an amazing love that you want to live for Him, not you have to. You want to get better at loving those around you, no matter who they are or what they've done. That you love them like Christ loved you. That's why the white robes; the forgiveness Christ won for us. That's the gold that is refined. That's the salve for our eyes that actually takes away the guilt of our sins. It's the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That's what Jesus pointed the Laodiceans to, and on this Maundy Thursday, that's what He points us to. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [\(Philippians 4:7.\)](#) Amen.