Laodicea, Keeping His Word, and Ezra's Ready Pen

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The Laodicean State — Pride of Position and Unfelt Truth

Revelation 3:14–20 describes the final and lowest state of Christendom: I am rich, and am grown rich, and have need of nothing — while in reality being wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. The person in a Laodicean state does not know their own condition. They may encounter rebuke and say: what is that person's problem? They may go through trying circumstances and say: why is the Lord doing this to me? I am fine. The tragedy of the state is precisely that nakedness and shame are present, and they are not seen.

What characterises Laodicea is the trafficking in truth that is not felt and not walked in. It may be collected, archived, discussed, historically catalogued — but it does not touch the conscience and it does not transform the walk. A person can be a meticulous historian of everything related to the Lord's people, can collect and correct and preserve, and be entirely unexercised in their own soul. That is Laodicea — knowledge without reality, position without life.

And yet the Lord stands at the door and knocks. The picture is of Him outside — at the heart's door, as in Song of Solomon when the beloved comes to knock and the bride's heart is cold and slow to respond. His desire is not to condemn but to come in, to sup, to make His abode. John 14:23 is the parallel: if anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him. The remedy for a Laodicean heart is the same as it always has been: open the door.

Prophets Who Searched and Sought — 1 Peter 1

First Peter 1:10 provides a striking contrast to the Laodicean posture: concerning which salvation, prophets who prophesied of the grace toward you sought out and searched out. These prophets were not sitting in the prophet's chair waiting complacently for the next revelation. They were seeking and searching. They wanted to know. They had been given truth, and they were not satisfied with possessing it intellectually — they pressed into it, they pursued it, they were not content with what they had.

Matthew 13:16–17 shows the Lord saying to the disciples: blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear — for many prophets and righteous men desired to see the things you behold, and did not see them. God had not revealed everything to those prophets. But their posture was one of desire, of searching, of wanting to know more of His mind. And that posture — not complacency, not the contentment of having arrived — is what God blesses with further revelation.

Abraham exemplifies this. When the Lord was planning to bring judgment on Sodom, He said to Himself: shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? And He revealed it to him. Was Abraham pestering God to get information? No. Abraham was faithful in his walk, worshipful in his relationship, a man known for altars, a man of faith. And God said, I am going to reveal something to you. He entered into that privilege because he was in a state where the revelation would be used, would be walked in, would not merely be collected as another historical artifact.

Keeping His Word — What That Means

John 14:23 says: if anyone loves me, he will keep my word. What is it to keep His word? It is not to write it on papyrus and put it in an archive. It is not to preserve it so that future generations can access the collection. Those are good

things in their proper place, but they are not what is in view. To keep His word is to value it — to hold it dear — and valuing it necessarily produces walking in it. If I hold something dear, I live consistently with it. If I say I hold it dear and do not walk in it, I am self-deceived.

The same is true negatively: if the Lord brings a rebuke through something read or heard or spoken, and the response is to accept that rebuke and recognise: I have been lax on this, I see it now, I want to walk in it — that is a change from a Laodicean condition to keeping His word. And conversely, when I say I know the truth but am not walking in it, and defend that non-walking, I am the Laodicean who says: I am rich, I have need of nothing. The path from one to the other is the open door.

Ezra and the Returned Remnant — Walking in the Truth They Had

Ezra 3 records the returned exiles setting up the altar of God and beginning to offer burnt offerings — morning and evening, according to the law of Moses, according to the custom, as the duty of every day required. The phrase as it is written appears repeatedly. They had a word, and they walked in it. They faced opposition immediately — the surrounding peoples resisted and eventually got the work stopped by a letter to the king. But when they stopped, it turned out to be more than just the royal decree that halted them: they were building their own houses instead of the house of the Lord. Haggai and Zechariah had to come to recover them.

Ezra himself was a ready scribe in the law of Moses. A scribe wrote the whole law out by hand. He was familiar with it, not academically only but practically. And the king granted him all his request according to the hand of the Lord his God upon him. That is the difference between a historian of religious movements and a man who walks in the truth he knows. The hand of the Lord was upon him.

The prayer of Ephesians 3 shows how far beyond Ezra's portion we have been brought. The Father of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named — Jew, Gentile, angels, all named under one Father. Strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith. Not reign over them from a distance, but dwell — a fixed habitation, an abode. Rooted and grounded in love, to comprehend what is the breadth and length and depth and height. That ocean without a shore. The fullness of God, not competitive like the world's things where one must be emptied out to make room for another, but filling the heart entirely. May that be ours, not as a historical possession but as a present reality, Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith.

> *I stand at the door and knock. If any one hear my voice and open the door, I will come in unto him and sup with him, and he with me. — Revelation 3:20*

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