



## Part 9: Hope to Overcome Spiritual Blindness

Revelation 3:14-22

*We have hope to overcome our spiritual blindness,  
because Jesus can heal our eyes.*

### The Sad Irony of the Laodicean Church

- They were gathering without the presence of Jesus!
- They were blind to their own condition because they were looking through the lens of their culture.
- Their problem: spiritual blindness leading to pride, leading to spiritual barrenness.

*"Perhaps none of the seven letters is more appropriate to the 20th century church than this. It describes vividly the respectable, sentimental, nominal, skin-deep religiosity which is so widespread today. Our Christianity is flabby and anemic. We appear to have taken a lukewarm bath of religion. Zeal, heat, fire, passion---these are the qualities we lack today and desperately need." John Stott, quoted in "Unveiled Hope."*

A few words about the city of Laodicea that will be helpful for understanding Jesus' rebuke of the church there:

### Jesus' Identity | Revelation 3:14b

"The Amen" = the utterly trustworthy foundation of life

"The faithful and true witness" = the faithful witness/revelation of the Father (Revelation 1:5, 19:11)

"The beginning (arche) of creation" = the source and archetype of creation; the origin, pattern, and purpose of creation (Colossians 1:15-20)

*"And the implications of his claim are staggering! It means that everything in the universe has the stamp of Jesus on it. From microscopic existence to the far-flung reaches of interstellar space, it all bears the imprint of Jesus the arche. ... The personality and way of Jesus are not merely written in the text of Scripture, but into the texture of our being. Is that not why the New Testament says we are 'predestined' to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ? That destiny is written into every cell of life. Every cell of life works best when it operates in harmony with Jesus." Darrell Johnson, "Unveiled Hope"*

### **Jesus' Diagnosis and Rebuke | Revelation 3:15-18**

- They are "lukewarm."  
They are not providing healing for the spiritually sick or refreshment for the weary. They were barren in their fruitfulness, and faithless to their calling.
- They are "poor."  
They are rich in material things but beggarly poor in spiritual treasures (1 Peter 1:7).
- They are "blind."  
They could not see their own condition because they were looking through the cultural lens of their city.
- They are "naked."  
*"The saying, 'I have everything' is a terrible saying when 'everything' does not include the living God." Augustine*

### **Jesus' Command and Promise | Revelation 3:19-22**

Q: How do we know Jesus loves us? We look at His life and His death for us on the cross. Then we can have the faith to receive His correction and discipline.

Jesus' counsel starts with His command to look at Him. Spiritual sight comes quickly or in stages (Mark 8:22-25).

See Holman Hunt's famous picture – "Light of the World."

Jesus' promise is a Middle Eastern way of saying – "I will make a covenant with you to be all I am for you and to share all I am with you."

Discussion Questions (for small groups or the dinner table):

1. How does the background information about Laodicea help you understand Jesus' diagnosis and the rebuke of this church?
2. Have you had an experience where you were "blind" to a certain reality? How did you come to see it more clearly?
3. Consider the quote by John Stott about the American Church. Do you think he's fair?
4. How do you respond to Jesus' command personally? How do you think Greenwood might respond?