

Rev. Bill Johnson is in the spirit on Tuesday. <sup>ON March 29, 81 AM.</sup> NW April 29, 2001 - v  
Jesus, the Alpha & Omega said what thou seest, write in a book, and  
send it to 7 churches, Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamon, Thyatira,  
Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea -  
THE CHURCH WITH A CLOSED DOOR

Rev. 3:14-22

This is another of the letters of our Lord to each of the separate congregations. We have come to the last known as Laodicea. The word means "the rights of the people." No other term can set forth the condition of the present day church, in world affairs. In our time of democracy, the mass of people who cry for power, have a slogan. The voice of the people, is the voice of God. This is ringing all around the world. *Considering the fact that there are two sides to every question, it's amazing that so many people choose the wrong side.*

It is evident of the history of this city that this letter went to a rich church which was founded by perhaps one of Paul's servants -- as he speaks in the book of Colossians. And talks of Ephaphras, <sup>Col 4:13</sup> who went to *great care for* Colossiae and he also spoke of Laodicea. *Reading both letters of both places* I think both of those letters were read to these separate churches. *Col 2:1 Paul had great care for Colossiae & Laodicea*

The city of Laodicea was rich -- it was founded by Antiochus II. Who named it after his wife, Laodicea. It was located in a valley. And was a very famous city.

The church here was decent but not dynamic. They had no problems such as the church at Corinth. They were not divided. They were not roundly in their services. They were a pretty bunch of decent people. They gave fairly well. And they lived fairly moral lives. However, there was little dedication for the work of God. They were totally indifferent. They did not care very much.

This describes many churches -- perhaps our own. There is nothing in the world that will take the place of dedication on the part of the people of the church. A church can have the best staff, the best buildings, and even an unlimited field of opportunity at it's doorsteps. But if the people are not willing to give themselves to the work of Jesus Christ, they are not dynamic. They are just decent.

In our text today, God gets ready to send the letter to this church.

*I DIVINE SPEAKER 2:11K*

He identifies himself to the church as the Amen -- the faithful and true witness. Rev 1:18 I am He that liveth & was dead, Behold I am alive for ever more. AMEN. And have the keys of Hell & Death,

*V. 14*

V. 14 - Amen, that is the (establisher of all that God promises.) Faithful and true witness, who will maintain to the last what is of God, through the great majority of those who profess to follow him.

This is a Hebrew word "Amen" - it is mentioned in Isaiah 65:16. It means that which is (valid) which is (binding.) It is a word that is (expressive of life.) An (unchanging) faithfulness. It is a word with which Jesus introduces his most solemn declarations. Especially in the fourth Gospel. It is (applied) here to (Christ) whose (testimony) (never falls) short of the truth. It is unchanging faithfulness . . . Amen. Contrasts with Laodicea's unfaithfulness. Neither cold nor hot.

The speaker then says that (nothing) can be added or taken away from him. He is the true witness who speaks from eternity. There are no tricks about it. No false things. He is the creator. And he is the only source for any life.

And as he speaks, he has the complaint to bring this church - the church with the closed door.

We might explore some of these ideas. Who locked the door? What closed it? Second, we might think of the tragedies of the closed door. And then finally, we might think about unlocking the door - how are we going to find the key, to open this door.

## II Delinquent Church V15

### I. WHAT CLOSED THE DOOR.

Who locked it - how was it closed up.

V. 15 - the condition of the church is described in this verse. "I know thy works - that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would that thou were cold or hot." They had to close the door. The spiritual temperature of the church is here portrayed. Neither cold nor hot - they are figurative words. But they describe persons who are neither in earnest for God, nor utterly indifferent to God. There was a profession -- but no warm-hearted faithfulness has followed.

He wishes them to become cold or hot. *Friend Preached Clinton N.C., "He said he was in a church that so cold. The women used snakes to collect the offering, some of members has turned into pop cicles."*

The church is totally unfeeling. They did not reject missionary appeals. But they did not really get excited about these things. They didn't mind having visitors in the church. But they did not go out of the way to show their warmth and that they were welcome. They did not mind have people making decisions for Christ. They shed very few tears of joy over these decisions. As long as you did not tie them down - they would do a little service in the church. This was uncommittment. They were spiritually neutral. They were fence-sitters. The door

was locked. And closed.

Now our Lord draws this truth from the history of the city. When he talks about luke-warm water. They had hot mineral springs. As long as the water is boiling hot - one enjoys that. But if you have ever tried to drink some luke-warm mineral water -- it is ill tasting and nauseating. So Jesus uses the background of this - those hot mineral springs that have cooled off. Making the drinker sick when he drinks that water.

I imagine every little boy in town would gather around when the caravan would come and the new camel drivers, out of the hot blazing sun, to get a big drink of cold, clear water from the chemical rich spring. Much to their discovery found that it was luke-warm. The little boys would roll with laughter when the drivers would spit this sickening water out of their mouths. Now this is what Jesus used. They say these people were half-hearted, on again - off again. They were not totally in the middle, of the church. And it turns his stomach, and he says I could spew thee out.

WANT TO KNOW how to dislocate your shoulder - Put yourself on the back - DON'T BRAG - ITS NOT the whistle that pushes the train -

Thou sayth I am rich. From the beginning, Laodicea was a success story. It was founded by Antiochus and they offered free citizenship to Jews. To entice them to come to this new area. And the reason was that the Jews brought trade with them. And trade meant wealth, commerce, and banking, manufacturing.

Back in 62 A. D., in which the Revelation was written - Faccus, who was the Roman Governor, of the provience of Asia made a decree. It sounds very modern. In his interdiction, to export - to the export of any more gold out of the provience -- they were running out of gold. And they needed to keep

it to bolster their currency. Does that not sound like the United States. Trying to keep its gold supply in order to keep our money sound. Well, this Governor did so in 62 A. D. *on the senate floor, things getting out of hand*  
*Event! Divksen quipped "A Billion here, a Billion There And pretty soon you're talking about real money."*

At that time, as you know, once a year every male Jew about 21 years of age sent 1/2 shekelle to the temple of Jerusalem. To support the worship of Jehovah there. In order to have not too heavy a package of money to send across the sea, however, the Jews in the district purposed to disregard the ban of the Governor, against the export of gold. And to send their contributions in gold anyways. The Governor promptly seized it and confiscated it. It weighed 20 lbs. 20 lbs. of gold is 15,000 drachmas. Each adult male Jew had to send 1/2 shekelle - that that would be 2 drachmas. So each male Jew had to send in Roman currency to the temple. There were 15,000 drachmas represented in that 20 lbs. of gold. And 15,000 to arrive as the number of adult male Jews in Laodicea. That would give you 7,500 adult Jewish men above 21 years of age - living in that area, when this book was written. That was a great population of Jewish families working and building, and trading, accumulating riches.

*But like said in Byrd, Modern Roman Hist, said if Cicero was here alive today he would oppose the Balanced Budget "at point in Strom Thurmond jumped up & said "I knew Cicero, Cicero was a friend of mine & I know he would be in favor of a Balanced Budget"*

Another instance of wealth in Laodicea is found in the story and life of Cicero. Who made an extensive trip. He cashed his letters of credit in the great banking center of Laodicea. That is another instance of wealth. When the city was destroyed by earthquake in 60 A. D., the citizens refused the help of the Emperor. The reigning Caesar. And rebuilt their city themselves.

*Eisenhower & Dulles - Ernie, Potomac discussing Washington's ability to throw a silver dollar across the "one shore to other. Dulles talked distance, just a story Eisenhower" A dollar went a great deal further in those days than it does now"*

There is another thing that speaks of the wealth of this city. It was a garment producing place. They had a cloth industry. A breed of sheep raised in that district was different than any in all of the world. The wool of the sheep

was black. And its glossy raven color was beautiful and superior to any other found in the world. And they manufactured all kinds of garments and exported them.

There is yet another thing that speaks of wealth. The manufacture of eye sauve to anoint the (eyes) was exported from this city. This was a medical center. And these products were made here for the healing of eye ailments.

It is an interesting city, and it is also an interesting church. But most of all it is meaningful because it represents the last of the churches. And what will the church be like when our Lord comes again. The church at Laodicea, represents that last period. And we know, that everything that God says is important. What is it like. This church at the end of time, here it is. With the doors shut. And it has been closed by their indifference and by their wealth. And they have taken on the attitude of the city.

*Divine speaker ~ 14  
Diligent chud ~ 15*

### III. A Detailed Remedy V17-

#### II. THE TRAGEDIES OF THE CLOSED DOOR

Now think a little bit about V. 17 and 18. This speaks of the church of the closed door. And some of the tragedies. "Thou sayest I am rich. And have need of nothing. But thou art wretched and miserable and poor, and blind, and naked. Look at some of the tragedies of this closed door, in this church. Here the church was making claims about its own riches. About their own work. And they were entirely due to their own efforts. They felt that they were able to carry on.

V-17

Note the words -- I am rich.

N. 17

Look at the (five) descriptive words which our Lord uses here. As he states very clearly.

✓ First, you wretched. To be wretched means to be oppressed. With a problem or a burden. Here you are, boasting of wealth and its place in the world. You are so spiritually helpless - that you cannot even lift the burdens that you are supposed to be carrying. It was actually a burden to them and they did not know it. *Some people think they are busy when they are only confused,*

✓ Second, miserable. This means pitiable. That which is in need of pity. Our Lord was moved with pity upon his church. It is upon the individuals, in this church. *The man who says he is just as good as half the folks in the church seldom specifies which half. IN A depression, Not talking about the weather, tropical depression!*

✓ Third, poor. Now this must have shocked the members of that early church to be called poor. For they were not beggars -- they thought they had a plenty. But Christ said to them, you have nothing. *Had a wife, Trip to Browns, another couple - Tony & son, fine beautiful stone, 57 in Aug, tiled. Next day returned one man took his wife & hand on hand, sweet words, kissed her hand. Ely said to you do some thing & take hand hand want to say "with this King & the wheel" Instead "upon this Rock I will Build my Church!"*

I wonder if today, the truth may be the same. We are satisfied with our affluence, with our position, and we are not beggars. We say to the world, we don't need anything! But here, do we have that which satisfies the inner heart. And Jesus was telling them that they would not carry the wealth of the world with them.

✓ Fourth, you are blind. Now he is saying to the church that you do not see things clearly. You are near-sighted. And you see only the earthly things. And

like man giving testimony of love you - God loves you And I don't want you to die and go to Hell!  
there is no Heavenly vision. And there is no grasp of that which is beyond life or death here for you. They lacked real spiritual vision. Blind

These people were what you would call broad-minded. As we find today. With their prejudices. And yet they were blind leaders -- leading the blind.

Fifth, naked. Now this was our Lord's final characteristic in saying - they were nude. Stripped of all clothing. Now we know the clothing needed will be the robe of glory of Jesus Christ. The cloke of righteousness - so that we are fit to stand in his presence. The book of Genesis tells us that when Adam and Eve sinned, their eyes were opened, and they knew that they were naked. They sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

Tom Stone Salisbury, N.C. "He fought a good fight but his razor was dull."  
"Ha" "I Told you it was sick!"

People are trying to do the same thing today. But they are trying to cover up their spiritual nakedness. Then Christ comes along and he speaks to them.

V. 18

Now let me sum up for you something of the tragedies of the closed door.

First, there was indifference toward the doctrine and the teachings of God. These people were luke-warm. And indifferent. They were not cold, and they were not hot. They felt that any old religion would do. Is not this just about as good as another. And their goodness made the Lord sick. They were indifferent about the doctrines of God. Almost any Christian you ask today - any simple question about God or about the Bible, and about Jesus Christ.

7.19  
Opening The Closed Door! -11-

hear my voice, I will come in. The letter like this -- is a letter that comes to your soul and to mine. He that hath an ear, let him hear, what the spirit sayeth to the churches. Be thou faithful unto death. What an impressive thing that he says here.

Your duty as an individual Christian is to hear. We cannot cover ourselves or hide ourselves -- here is the faith of the individual. And individuals must hear. And only in this way, can they be rescued. As each man must eat for himself, sleep for himself, repent for himself, die for himself, and be judged for himself. He says to him that overcometh - V. 21. Will I grant to sit with me in my throne.

v. 20  
This is a beautiful and precious passage from the book of Revelation. It is a most unusual passage. Our Lord here is pictured as being near - he is at the door. What a wonderful visitor stands there at the door.

And he stand there in shining strength.

When the Lord comes in - it is because we open the door. Unless that door is opened, he never forces an entrance into a man's life. If we open the door, we must let him in. He never forces his entrance. You remember the rich ruler - he turned away from Jesus. And Jesus let him go. Why did not the Lord put his hand on him and compel him. God has reverence for personality. And the Lord will not violate your choice. The decision is ours to make. He never comes where he is not invited. He never enters a heart that is not open. He never saves a man who does not ask him.

Christ is pictured as standing there knocking -- as the Saviour. You might say,

I am not interested in, or I don't want religion. Or, I am a bad person. Or

I wouldn't let him in if I could. I know I am lost, I am undone, I am drifting.

*V. 20 God says I will come in & sup with you & He with me!  
The Good News is - "God wants to meet with us" - Stimpfen  
Exodus - God said to Moses "I will meet with you!"*

Nevertheless, Jesus is knocking at your heart today. He knocks through the

Bible The word of God. This book speaks. Every service in this church is a way

of God enabling his word to point you to Jesus Christ.

*That's the in strange place to meet - students - tradition met  
Had at " " Prayer. Elmer school near Boston little girl tag Pole  
By self & Teacher went out, ask, what are doing? I am here for...  
seen you at the pole, well there is no one else here. Oh No she said I am  
Here to meet God"*

*AP*  
*V. 22*  
A preacher went to New Mexico as a young evangelist. And there was a big  
rancher who was an unbeliever. He said he was an infidel. And people said there  
is no use to go to his house. He insults people. And he went anyways. He found  
that he was out on a certain part of the ranch taking care of the windmill. So  
he went out and introduced himself to him. To his amazement, the man put down  
his tools, put one foot on the fence and began to talk.

But folks were correct, he was rough. And as he began to talk - the young  
preacher asked him if he had a Christian mother. He said, when he asked the  
question, that he supposed that he had not thought about that for years. But  
he was trying to represent God, and the man said "yes". I had a wonderful  
Christian mother. Then he said, well, tell me about her. Did she ever pray for  
you. Did she ever ask you to become a Christian. So he went back through the  
years and he began to weep out the cobwebs out of the windows of Glory. And he  
began to tell about his Mother, and her Godly, Christian life. And how she prayed  
for him with tears. In no time at all, there were tears falling from that man's  
eyes that he was talking too - as he began to describe his Godly mother. When  
the Preacher shook hands with him to leave - he said, young fellow, I'll be there  
tonight. Well, Christ was knocking at the heart's door of that man. And that  
is the way Christ speaks. Sometimes in the natural ways, he will come and speak  
to us and touch us.

Remember this, Jesus is eager to enter when the door is open. One cannot buy salvation.

10 In London, in St. Paul's Cathedral, there is a picture of Hallman Hunt, the light of the world. It illustrates the point of this text. The painting is Christ knocking at the door. The spiritual insight that the man had, is a picture of a cottage. Run down and neglected. With a few weeds growing up to the window. Grass is growing in the pathway. Through the years the vines and the weeds have covered the hinges - and they are rusty. But in the midst of the neglected place, there stands a kingly form. The Lord, in his robe. One hand is a lantern, on which the light falls upon the door. And with the other hand, he is knocking at the door. The artist was overwhelmed in his soul, when he sketched that. There Jesus stands, knocking at the door.

And one of the most familiar stories that I have ever read about this painting is, that one day a man looked and he went to see Mr. Hunt, the artist, and he said - you have made a mistake. You did not put any handle on the door. It is just a plain door. The artist replied, no, it is not a mistake. You misunderstood. The handle is on the inside, of the door. And we must open the door. When we do, the glory of that light falls upon the soul and what a difference. The Lord says I will come into him and sup with him. And he with me.

11 Before The Throne V21 - 22 God's Throne  
Reigning with our Lord -

That is exactly what Jesus is telling this church here. And he is telling us today. That you are personally accountable for keeping your furnace hot. You can do something about your spiritual indifference. You can repent. Indifference is sin against God. You may let your devotion wane, and take an

"I don't care" attitude. But the Saviour is knocking on the door.

As Martin Luther said before his conversion, had you knocked at the door of my heart and asked me who lives there. I would have said that Martin Luther lived there. And had you come and looked for me, I would have been a monk with a head shaved, sleeping in a shirt, with his head on two tables of stone. And a big whip hanging down beside the bed. But now if you come and knock upon my heart, I will reply - Martin Luther no longer lives here. Jesus, the Lord, lives here now.

"  
If you are tired of the load of your sin, let Jesus come into your heart. If you would like a new life to begin, let Jesus come into your heart. Just now, your doubts give ore; just now reject him no more. Just now throw open the door. Let Jesus come into your heart.

*I will not Break Down The Door!*

Would you, it is as simple as that. Just open the door and say, Lord Jesus, come in. And give to him the destiny of your life. And he will come and abide forever.

*Harriet Beecher Stowe poem Knocking, Knocking,  
Waiting - waiting - Wondrous Fair  
But the Door is hard to open  
What is the Hour? The Night is turning -  
In my heart a chilly sad unrest  
Give me Rest - He longs to give Thee Rest,  
God wants to meet with you!*