

Lukewarm Christianity

By Elder David Pyles

We hear many messages that are intended to warn and dissuade from the dangers of our times. Drug abuse, illicit sex, imprudent marriage and unproductiveness are leading errors of the age and are therefore primary candidates for such warnings. My life has likely been spared by such warnings, especially ones that were given in my youth. Today I intend to discuss an error that actually represents a much greater risk to you in that it occurs with higher probability than any of the things just named. Further, none of the things just named will happen to you if this error can be avoided, whereas any and all those things can happen if it is not. This is the error of degenerating into a lukewarm Christian. Statistics on this subject should capture our attention and put us on guard. Lukewarm Christians exist in the hundreds of millions. They represent the majority of professed Christianity. Their numbers are also increasing, and on this account, modern Christianity has become increasingly accepting of it, like a frog being slowly boiled to death. These are reasons why lukewarm Christianity represents a formidable danger to us all.

Indeed, the specter of it is such that I suppose any sensible preacher would be hesitant to take this subject for fear of bringing the judgment of God upon himself. The words of James should be daunting to anyone who would presume to talk about this. He said, *“My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation,”* (Js 3:1). But my prayer is that our merciful God will view me as placing myself at risk today for your sake.

The expression “lukewarm Christian” might appear a strange choice of terms. You perhaps expected more academic expressions like “semi-Christian,” “quasi-Christian” or even “pseudo-Christian,” but Bible readers will know that I have borrowed the term “lukewarm” from an extremely important Bible verse. In the book of Revelation, Christ warned the church of Laodicea saying:

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. –
Rev 3:15-17

This statement will likely jolt the first-time reader. Some verses in the Bible are hard to remember. This verse is hard to forget. Most would think it surely better to be half-Christian or third-Christian than to be no Christian at all, but the verse forcibly refutes this idea. Though our initial reaction is surprise, the text will appear much more sensible upon further thought. There are at least two compelling reasons for its strong rejection of lukewarm Christianity.

The first is that a lukewarm Christian is an overt contradiction. A man can profess to be an infidel and can also live in a way that is consistent with what he professes. He can deny there is a God and can also lead a godless life. Accordingly, a man can profess to be a Christian and can live in compliance with his claim. He can profess that Jesus is his Savior and Lord, and claim

Him as the first priority of his life, and can also live in way that corroborates these assertions. On the other hand, the claims of a lukewarm Christian can never be reconciled with his actions. Further, even the simplest Christian can be sensible of his own inconsistency. The Savior is a Merciful Judge who takes our circumstances into consideration when rendering judgment. This fact is usually expected to work in our favor, but be warned that it can also work against us. For example, if a man were in error on a deep doctrinal matter such as election or predestination, one could reasonably expect the Savior to take the difficulty of these subjects into account when assessing the man's case. But if the error were a simple, palpable contradiction, then there is little to excuse his errant behavior. One should not be surprised if the Savior viewed such a matter with greater severity. Such is obviously the case with lukewarm Christianity.

The second reason is that a lukewarm Christian is typically more hurtful to the cause of Christ than one who is stone-cold. For example, a church may have a man on its books who has not attended in years. Though he is as cold as a corpse, he deceives none because his error is manifest. On the other hand, a lukewarm Christian deceives many because he has an appearance of legitimacy that is illusory. Also, the active members of the church may not even be aware of the existence of the stone-cold fellow, and they are therefore incapable of being influenced by him either for the better or the worse. On the other hand, a lukewarm Christian appears enough to spread his highly-contagious disease to others.

“Lukewarm Christianity” Defined

Given the severity with which Christ views it, it is clearly imperative that we have a reasonable understanding of what it means to be a lukewarm Christian. It is also important that both you and I resist the strong temptation of defining the term in self-exonerating ways. I will offer a couple definitions that I think to have compelling support in scripture and in reason. These two definitions are in fact different ways of saying exactly the same thing.

The first definition is: A “lukewarm Christian” is any purported Christian who cannot be entrusted with the preservation and progress of true Christianity. If care of the church were committed to such people, there would soon be little church for which to care. Lukewarm Christians may attend church from time to time, but it is by means of other people that those churches exist and endure. If left to the lukewarm Christians, there would be no guarantee that the doors of the church would even be open on the day of worship. A lukewarm Christian is also an undependable trustee of the truth of Christ. He typically has only a fragmentary knowledge of the Bible, yet is very comfortable in his ignorance. This shows he does not have proper value for religious truth, and many of his kind would readily forfeit it for convenience or other personal gain. There would be little hope of finding the pure and complete truth of Christ in the world if left to lukewarm Christians. Their willingness to dismiss or desert sound Christian doctrine in their word and works is sometimes bewildering to the sincere. Paul said to the Galatians, “*I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel,*” (Gal 1:6). Many dedicated Christians have experienced the same surprise.

Judging from his actions, in the mind of a lukewarm Christian, the primary purpose of the church is to serve his personal needs and interests. The church does more to serve him than he does to serve the church. The church exists primarily to give him therapy, give him inspiration, give him a social life or give him a basis for intellectual debate. His membership in the church is analogous to his membership at the local gym. He will avail himself of it if he sees potential benefit to himself, and if it does not conflict with his list of greater priorities.

This view of the church is fundamentally wrong and is at the core of his errant way of thinking. When received into the church, we were *entrusted* with a cause that is much greater than our personal interests. As Paul told young Timothy:

O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen. – 1Tim 6:20

This verse is even more applicable today than when it was written. Millions have been reduced to lukewarm Christians because they have, to some degree or another, become dupes to the pseudoscience of our times. Paul elsewhere described his own obligations in the same terms with which he exhorted Timothy:

According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. – 1Tim 1:11

But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. – 1Thess 2:4

It is important that all understand that God has committed to our trust a thing that He considers to be the most precious possession of our earthly lives. Young people must understand that such trust has been invested in you also, and you must understand that this fact is more consequential than you likely perceive. Youth have a unique ability to encourage and inspire others, but they also have great potential to dishearten. I know of many struggling churches whose handful of highly dedicated members would be ignited with hope if only two or three of you were in their midst. While I am of course thankful for dedicated Christians of all ages, older people will happily acknowledge that it is the youth who brighten, inspire and energize the most. On the other hand, when lifelong saints see you degenerating into infidelity, worldliness and lukewarm Christianity, it reduces their minds to a sense of defeat and despair.

Some of you may have been participating in church because it was required of you by your parents. The truth is that you may be more important to the spirits of that church than they are. If you have been attending for this uninspired and unacceptable reason, then today ought to be a significant turning point in your life. When you are old and writing your autobiography, I hope you will write that today was the last day of your life that you ever attended a church for such

reasons, and that today you came to full realization and conviction that something most precious had been *committed to your trust*.

This leads to my second definition: “Lukewarm Christianity” is any form of self-centered and self-serving Christianity. The terms “lukewarm” and “egocentric” are interchangeable in this case. A Christian who puts others above himself and puts Christ and His cause above personal interests is exactly what any Christian ought to be. He is the furthest thing from being lukewarm. It follows that lukewarm Christianity must be egocentric, and it should be no surprise that egocentric Christianity is also lukewarm. If a soldier on the battlefield is seeking self-interest, then do not expect a vigorous fight from him, and be sure that he will retreat or surrender when circumstances appear adverse. This is the logical thing for him to do given his objectives. But if a man fights for a cause greater than himself, such as for principles of freedom, justice and human dignity, or for the protection of his family and friends, then he will valiantly fight to the death, even in the face of all adversity.

Almost every error of lukewarm Christianity can be largely explained in terms of egocentricity. For example, consider the common excuse for missing church that claims better spiritual fulfillment can be found in other ways, i.e. communing with nature, listening to religious broadcasts, reading uninspired religious books or even reading the Bible. Even if these methods fulfilled their dubious claim, no consideration is given to the fact that they do little or nothing to encourage others, inspire others or set a proper example for them. The argument is strictly based on personal interests. Matters are made worse when church is missed because of self-serving worldly interests. The Bible commands us to present our bodies as a living sacrifice (Rom 12:1), yet this exactly draws the line that a lukewarm Christian typically does not cross. They present their bodies only when it does *not* become a sacrifice. Indeed, I have asked some to name one aspect of their life where church truly takes priority. Judging from their actions, it is not over sports; it is not over family; it is not over leisure; it is not over work, etc. Church is routinely missed for all these things. Jesus said His kingdom is to be first over *everything* (Mt 6:33), yet with many lukewarm Christians, one must wonder if it is really first over *anything*.

Even when the lukewarm Christian attends church, his egocentricity blinds him. His questions will almost surely be: “What kind of church music do **I** like?” “What kind of preaching do **I** want to hear?” “What kind of doctrine best suits **my** values and **my** way of thinking?” “What kind of service makes **me** feel better?” Be sure there are millions of Americans whose church decisions are based on these very criteria, yet none of these questions have any relevance whatsoever. Indeed, if they had any relevance, there would have never been a Jesus Christ, and the Christian religion would not even exist. The relevant questions are: “What kind of music does **God** like?” “What is in the Bible that **God** wants me hear?” “What are **God’s** value and how does **He** think?” “How can I render worship that is most pleasing to the **Lord Jesus Christ**?” There is no shorter word in the English language than the word “I”, yet a man can waste his life strangling on it.

Accordingly, a lukewarm Christian commonly expects to receive more care and attention out of other Christians than what he gives himself. If he becomes sick or has other obstacles to church attendance, he might easily be offended if faithful Christians do not check on his welfare or visit him, yet seldom does he show such care for others. Almost anyone who has been pastor of a church for any significant period of time has witnessed such behavior.

Egocentricity can also contaminate our prayer life, resulting in prayers that are dominated by self-centered, self-serving requests. On the other hand, suppose a man's prayer habit were committed entirely to making requests for others and for the welfare of the cause of Christ, who is ignorant enough to think that God would not richly bless the life of such a man?

I must wonder if egocentricity also plays a key role in the popularity of Arminianism and other works-based religions. In all of these religions, the primary role of good works is to deliver from personal loss and to secure personal gain. If this makes sense to you, then remember that the only human to ever live a perfect life on this earth did so for the sake of others. I acknowledge that Christ as God would have been perfect in any scenario, but He became flesh, subjected Himself to humiliation and temptation, and overcame, for the benefit of sinners. Jesus Christ laid His personal interests aside that we might be liberated to lay our personal interests aside and pursue more noble ends. One beauty of the doctrines of grace is that they have us aspiring to good works for the very same reasons that Christ did. Having received eternal bliss through His blood, we can now lay personal interests aside and set ourselves on higher ambitions. I happily acknowledge that many Arminians are fervent Christians and are not lukewarm, but I think this is because they have more grace in their hearts than they profess in their mouths. Sometimes Primitive Baptists can have more grace in their mouths than in their hearts. This is definitely a case of lukewarm Christianity.

Observe that in defining a lukewarm Christian, I have said nothing about how a person feels. This is a point that will be misunderstood in our times where so many measure religion by the feeling it gives. They think that if a religion feels right then it must surely be right. This idea did not derive from the Bible. Jesus said the Pharisees were so heated in their zeal that they would compass land and sea to secure only one convert (Mt 23:15), yet He denounced both the Pharisee and his convert as children of hell. In His parable of the sower, Jesus described those corresponding to the stony ground as having received the word with joy (Mt 13:20), yet He said they were ultimately fruitless. This was owing to the fact that their religion had no depth of root, being based in feeling and fiction rather than fact. Even the lukewarm Laodiceans were described as feeling very good and secure about themselves.

On the other hand, fervent Christianity may not always be accompanied with good feelings. A person could be suffering with cancer and be pickled with chemo-therapy, yet for love of Christ and His children, continue to drag themselves into church, continue to pray for the needs of others, etc. Even though this person would prefer a bullet to a backrub, they are not lukewarm. They are red hot. A person may also have a mind that is oppressed with remembrances of past

sins, and on such account, are more forgiving and merciful than they might otherwise be, and also finding a greater appreciation for the Friend of Sinners. Notwithstanding their downcast state of mind, this person is not a lukewarm Christian. They may be a red-hot Christian, and will in fact be such if also moved to repent of their sins. They are sad but heaven is happy (Lk 15:7). Jesus said to the Laodiceans, *“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot...”* (Rev 3:15). Notice that His judgment was based on their *works*, not on their state of mind.

The self-absorbed nature of lukewarm Christianity well explains the disgust that Christ expressed for it, but if we can see it as He does, this of itself will help us avert it. Self-serving Christianity can never be as inspired as the true Christianity of Christ. It must be lukewarm. Remember the example of the soldiers given earlier. A soldier who is fighting for himself will flee when the battle takes a turn for the worse, but one who is fighting for something greater than himself will surely stand. All of you know the day will come when the only thing that will matter to you is whether you will be able to say, *“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith,”* (2Tim 4:7). You know there may be many distractions from this fact along the way, and possibly even detours, but also know that ultimately this is the only issue that will matter. Whether we make or break will depend upon which soldier we resolve to be.

Carefully Choose Your Source of Heat

Whether we are cold, lukewarm or hot will of course depend upon our source of heat. Too many Christians attempt to derive it from large congregations of people rather than from Christ and His word. A group of penguins at the South Pole can huddle together and keep themselves warm for awhile, but they will ultimately freeze to death if they have no other way of producing heat. Such will be the case with any Christian congregation or movement whose ultimate heat source is anything other than Jesus Christ and His word. To use a better analogy, Jesus warned against houses that are build on sand and not on The Rock, by which He meant Himself. He said that when the storm comes those houses on sand will surely fall. Christians today have become very fond of building great castles on sand foundations. Most of you are young enough that you will live to see the spectacular collapse He here prophesied.

I acknowledge that the fact a church is small is not of itself vindication, nor is it of itself incrimination, but be sure that when churches become extremely large – such as are loved by so many people today – this is almost sure proof that lukewarm Christianity is the product being sold. If you consider this to be bold and judgmental statement, then please hear me further.

With almost complete consistency, you will find that when Jesus encountered multitudes of people at religious gatherings, He viewed their intents with disapproval, then preached to them about their shallowness, worldliness and insincerity, and by such means, He typically drove the vast majority of them away. In contrast to this, you will find that He was very disposed to feed multitudes of people and also to heal multitudes of their physical infirmities. This should be expected since God causes His natural rain to fall on both the just and the unjust (Mt 5:45). But

when it was time to teach spiritual truth, the Savior's attitude took a radical change. This was nearly always limited to a small number. The multitude was deliberately denied. This pattern is observed in so many places that no reasonable person could dismiss it to coincidence.

I will begin with the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus is commonly depicted here as speaking to a great multitude of people, but Matthew introduced this sermon saying, "*And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him, And he opened his mouth, and taught them...*" (Mt 5:1-2). It is implied that Jesus actually went up the mountain for the purpose of withdrawing Himself from the multitude so that He could teach His closest disciples personally.

In chapter eight of Matthew we read further:

*Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, **he gave commandment to depart unto the other side.** And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead. – Mt 8:18-22*

All this shows Jesus had no interest in being followed by lukewarm Christians. Can anyone image such things being done in the crowd-craving churches of our day?

In Matthew chapter 13, Jesus was by the sea shore with a multitude so great that He actually had to teach them from a boat. But He addressed them in a way that you will never hear preached in a mega-church. Indeed, I must wonder if even I have sufficient courage to do what He did. He taught them His famous parable of the sower, in which He implied that some of them were unregenerate and would be unaffected by what He had to say; that other of them had shallow religion based on feeling and fantasy rather than fact, and that they would soon defect, and that yet others were more in love with the world than with God. Later, when He was asked by His disciples why He spoke to this multitude in parables, His reply was, "*Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given,*" (Mt 13:11).

In Matthew 23, Jesus spoke unto the multitude at great length and never uttered a parable, but the purpose of His speech was to plainly warn them about the corruption in the religion of their day. This is one of the most scathing rebukes to be found in the New Testament, and even threatened eternal damnation, yet it was against the Pharisees, the largest denomination in Jewish religion.

Again in Luke 14, upon seeing multitudes following Him, Jesus turned and warned that they could have no priorities in life above Him, and exhorted that they should not embark upon Christian commitments without first considering the cost and the loss it entailed. Contrast this with modern Christianity where a vast array of carnal inducements are used to draw the masses.

Further, in John chapter six, Jesus was being followed by a crowd that any church would envy, but He told them they were following because of how He had fed them and not because they had accepted the implications of His miracles. Then He began to preach to them doctrines that have historically proven consistently effective at driving the vast majority of professing Christians away; namely, the doctrine of depravity and how that natural men innately and invariably reject the truth of God, the doctrine of election, the doctrine of irresistible grace and its necessity, and the doctrine of preservation. These subjects quite predictably produced defections so great that Christ asked His own disciples, “*Will ye also go away?*” (vs 67), to which Peter famously replied, “*Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.*” But John further explained that, “*Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him,*” (vs 64), which was to say that Jesus was not in the least dismayed or deterred by the defections. He knew this would be the effect of what He taught. The multitude was driven away *deliberately*.

Jesus once promised, “*For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them,*” (Mt 18:20) but it is clear from all the above that where two or three *thousand* are gathered together, there He likely is *not* in the midst of them or else is planning to leave.

I have pastored one of the largest churches among Primitive Baptists and two of the smallest. Based on that experience, I can tell you that where two or three are gathered together in His name, you can be fairly confident that everyone present is real. On the other hand, when two or three *hundred* are gathered together, you can be fairly confident everyone is not real, and when two or three *thousand* are gathered together, the Savior is likely commanding you to “*depart unto the other side.*” Further, when I was preaching to the small churches, I did not preach any less Jesus than I did in the big one, neither was there any less joy in Jesus, nor any less love for those who had been saved by Jesus. Oftentimes such small churches are carelessly described as “almost dead.” In fact, Jesus Christ is the very antithesis of all that is dead, and any group having Him in the midst is anything but dead. As for some of the behemoth churches we are seeing today, “almost dead” would be a considerable improvement over what their case might actually be. Remember also that a congregation of only two or three is easily sustained. A congregation of two or three thousand is virtually predestined to decline. Small churches will be the means by which God will preserve His witness in this world until the day that Jesus returns. Being discouraged because your church is small is not always reasonable and will do nothing to make it larger. “*Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet...*” (Heb 12:12-13).

The Happiness of a Fervent Christian

One reason we must measure our warmth as a Christian by our works and not our feelings is that we are very capable of being deceived about our feelings. Jeremiah said, “*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings,*”

(Jer 17:9-10). In realization of this fact, David said, “*Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*” (Ps 139:23-24). Also, it is impossible for us to comprehend a state of mind or feeling that we have never known or have forgotten. A man who has always been poor has no real comprehension of what it means to be a millionaire, and might be content to have enough money to buy a hamburger. On the other hand, a man who has been a billionaire would be sickened were he to be reduced to a millionaire. A man who has always been immobile would be content to walk. A man who has always been lame would be content to run. A man who has always had to run would be content to have a horse. Yet it could be the case that none of these men have any comprehension of an automobile, train or jet – any one of which would far surpass their highest concept of transportation. It is also true that our opinions of what will tend to happiness can be perverted and can actually tend toward self-destruction. A drug addict is very sure that another fix will make him happy, whereas the truth is that another fix could bring him total loss of freedom, death, divorce, etc.

Happiness can be a very complex subject. Solomon was one of the deepest thinkers the world has ever known, yet he struggled to understand the cause of happiness. His book of Ecclesiastes documents his intellectual strivings while seeking a grasp of it. He endeavored to understand why some people had almost every reason to be happy but were not, whereas other people seemed to have little reason to be happy yet they were. Even in the Bible we find that its most pessimistic book (Ecclesiastes) was written from a palace whereas its most optimistic book (Philippians) was written from a prison. In the latter book, Paul stated, “*And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus,*” (Phil 4:7). Here he spoke of a peace that defies logic. Such complexities led Solomon to the conclusion that happiness has no explanation outside of God. He concluded that happiness is a blessing that comes directly from God, and that God tends to give this happiness to those who obey Him. Thus he ended with the famous words, “*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man,*” (Eccl 12:13).

This same principle was succinctly expressed by the Apostle Paul with:

Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; – 1Tim 1:5-7

Observe that in this simple but profound statement, Paul spanned the full spectrum of human feelings. “Charity” refers to how we feel about our fellow man. “Good conscience” refers to how we feel about ourselves. “Faith” refers to how we feel about God. Paul said that these three things were the objectives of the commandments of God. Simply stated, the path to feeling right is in doing right. Many problems of the world can also be simply stated in the same terms: Many problems of the world are owing to the fact that man is on a perpetual but futile quest to find ways of feeling right by means other than doing right.

When a man thinks he can feel right by means other than doing right, either he will terminate upon a state of acknowledged unhappiness or a presumed state of happiness that is in fact delusional and pathological. The latter was the case with the Laodiceans. Jesus said:

So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: – Rev 3:16-17

This statement is so descriptive of our times that many Bible scholars have been moved to a theory that says the seven churches in Revelation actually correspond to seven eras of history with the last era being described by the church of Laodicea. I think this theory is credible. Our times have prosperity, comfort and convenience surpassing any society in history, yet also have social and psychological problems at unprecedented levels. Because it is richer than people of the past, our society deceives itself into thinking it is also happier, when in fact the very Creator of Man judges it to be being wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. One would think that with such misery and unrest people would be seeking resolution in tried and true religion, but they are instead all the more invested in vanity. Indeed, this society, which is so deceived by the state of its own feeling, makes the same feeling its primary spiritual compass.

Jesus therefore exhorted:

I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. 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 will sup with him, and he with me. – Rev 3:18-20

The book of Revelation is without a doubt the most controversial book in the Bible, yet, curiously, practically all Christians agree on the meaning of the imagery in this verse. The “gold tried in the fire” is a sure reference to scriptures. The “white raiment” is obedience to scriptures inspired by the desire to honor Christ for the righteousness He has freely given us. The “eyesalve” is the Holy Spirit of God by which we are enabled to understand scriptures. Now any sensible Christian will fear the possibility of being or becoming lukewarm, and any sensible Christian will earnestly want to know the medicine whereby he can remedy this disgusting condition. Observe that we need not consult Joel Osteen on this, or Norman Vincent Peale or David Pyles or even our pastor. The Savior Himself, the Great Physician, has plainly and directly told us what to do: “*I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire...*” The solution is that we study scripture, pray that the Holy Spirit enable us to understand scripture, go to a church where scripture is taught, then live according to what he have learned. Any other presumed solution, even if promoted by a so-called “church,” is at best seed sown on stony ground. I have

never known any avid Bible reader who was a lukewarm Christian. I have never known any avid Bible reader who failed to be a blessing to his church and to those about him.

This text has both bad news and good. The bad news is that lukewarm Christianity is a condition fraught with inexcusable contradiction, disgusting egocentricity and self-deception that carries to self-destruction. Any happiness to be found in it is pathologically perverted and illusory. It is no wonder that the Lord said He would spew the likes of such out of His mouth. The good news is that the perceived difficulty of overcoming lukewarm Christianity is equally illusory. It is an easily curable condition. The reason is that the Savior stands ready to escort any man or woman who wants to cross over to the other side. *“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 will sup with him, and he with me.”* The decision to run from lukewarm to hot may be hard to make but will be easy to execute.

This decision will then carry to a state of happiness, peace and confidence that the mind of a lukewarm Christian may not be able to comprehend and appreciate because it is well beyond anything he has ever experienced. Satan will try to focus his mind on the dangers, toils and snares of being a true follower of Christ. But while any faithful Christian may look upon his past and reason that there were in fact many of such, this is not how he will feel. What he will feel is *“the peace of God, which passeth all understanding,”* (Phil 4:7). His feeling will be, *“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me,”* (Phil 4:13). And most of all, his feeling will be, *“Rejoice evermore,”* (1Thess 5:16).

Presented at Salt and Light Youth Conference
Tyler Primitive Baptist Church
Tyler, Texas
August 2018