



cient city a didn't see any wolves or foxes, but I did see only scattered remains spread throughout the now empty countryside. A few rocks are still piled one upon another. Grass has grown over the stone seats of the city's theater. A few rusty signs are all that tells the visitor that this is the scene of the once self-sufficient city of antiquity.

I pray that this will not be the fate of our nation, our churches, or the spiritual condition of our lives. Until the end, the chance is always right before us to be able to change. Jesus said to the Christians in Laodicea, **“Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him. And he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne”** (3:20-21). All we have to do is “open the door” in obedience to the gospel—but the responsibility is ours!



Ruins of Ancient Laodicea



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Faithful Sayings Issue 15.19 May 12, 2013

## Welcome Visitors

We are so glad that you joined us today.  
Please come again.

- Let us know if you have any questions.

ISSUE

15.19

BULLETIN OF  
THE OLSEN  
PARK CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

# Faithful Sayings

May 12, 2013  
2013

## Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM  
10:20 AM  
6:00 PM  
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

### Elders:

Pat Ledbetter  
Jeff Nunn  
Kyle Pope

### Deacons:

Dean Bowers  
Eddie Cook  
Steve Dixon  
Jack Langley  
Neil Ledbetter  
Brady McAlister  
Walker McAnear  
Lance Purcell  
Rusty Scott

### Evangelist:

Kyle Pope



## The Example of Laodicea

By Kyle Pope

In the first century the prominent city of Laodicea was one of Asia Minor's most prosperous communities. Laodicea was a leading banking center, set on an important commercial trade route. It was also the home of an important medical school. Scholars tell us that her prosperity was so great that in 60 AD when the city was leveled by an earthquake, Laodicea refused the Roman Senate's offer of financial assistance and rebuilt itself within only a short time. The city's wealth came from her abundant natural resources. It was famous for the production of a glossy black wool taken from the Lycus valley. This wool was used in the production of carpets and cloaks. The city was also known for an eye salve which it produced called *collyrium*, that was famous throughout the ancient world. Laodicea was also filled with warm water from the hot springs of nearby Hierapolis. This water flowed into Laodicea by means of a



Ruins of Ancient Laodicea

sophisticated aqueduct system. Today, however, we don't remember this city for her ancient prosperity, but for the solemn warnings given to the Christians that lived in her centuries ago by the Lord Jesus.

Some of the most powerful statements given to a specific church were directed to the Laodiceans in Revelation 3:14-22. The first of which was the fearful declaration, **"I know your works"** (Rev. 3:15). This simple truth,



Olsen Park church of Christ

so fundamental to faith in Christ is so often disregarded. God knows our deeds! The Lord was not ignorant of their behavior. He knew their strengths and weaknesses. He knew their faithfulness and their sins, just as He knows ours today.

The rest of the text probably refers to some of the very aspects of the city's prosperity mentioned above. For example, He declared, **"You say 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—And do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked"** (3:17, NKJV). Had the city's self-sufficiency in rebuilding after the earthquake some years before led even the Christians among them to an unhealthy self-confidence? The Lord's rebuke shows how often physical wealth can be misleading. It can cause one to be blind to his or her own spiritual poverty. The Lord's rebuke continued, **"I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint you eyes with eye salve, that you may see"** (3:18). Jesus calls these citizens famous for their export of black wool to seek "white garments," and those known for their production of "eye salve" to seek a balm that could truly restore their sight. The spiritual security they needed was not to be found in material resources.



Ancient Water-pipe from Laodicea

Earlier in this rebuke the Lord made allusion to another aspect of the city's resources. He warned, **"You are neither cold nor hot. I could wish that you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth"** (3:15-16a). The Laodiceans would have understood the value of warm water. Having water piped to them from the nearby hot springs, they could easily understand this spiritual analogy. He tells them, in essence, "you have become like your water"—"lukewarm" when it came to them. Just as water that was "lukewarm" could neither refresh nor cleanse, the "lukewarm" believer does nothing but stagnate the gospel. Thus He admonished them, **"be zealous and repent"** (3:19). The gospel should inspire a zeal within us to move us to action.

This ancient rebuke is especially valuable to us today because it has so many modern applications. Whether we are talking about our nation, our churches, or our individual lives, far too often we are guilty of the same problems. We say, "We have need of nothing" and don't realize our spiritual poverty. We rely on our material resources rather than guiding our lives by God's word—the true "gold refined in the fire." Sadly, we can move ourselves to zealous excitement over any number of material things, but we are "lukewarm" in our zeal for the gospel, service



Grass-covered Theater of Ancient Laodicea

to the Lord, and love for the lost. If Jesus gave a rebuke to us today would He say such words to us? Are we like the church in Laodicea? Are we "lukewarm"?

Laodicea, like so many today seemed to think that her material condition would last forever. As the years moved on she was eventually destroyed and abandoned. By the seventeenth century, one observed noted that she was then only inhabited by "wolves and foxes." In 1995 when I had the honor to visit the ruins of this an-