As the churches to which Jesus writes continues in their fall away from Him, the last of His critical letters to the Seven Churches is that written to the church at Laodicea. “I know your works”, says Jesus, “You are neither cold nor hot.” (Revelation 3: 15) So the worst condition that a church can be in, according to Jesus, is a LUKEWARM CHURCH. Worse than being corrupt, worse than being compromised, worse than being dead is to be the lukewarm church, running neither cold nor hot, blasé about Jesus, indifferent to His sufferings. Jesus went to the cross and died for you!!! Whatever... Jesus was nailed to the cross and suffered excruciating pain for you!!!! Whatever... A crown of thorns, a scourging of 40 lashes plus one, nails piercing His hands and feet, the painful death at Golgotha, the shame of nakedness and being humiliated by His enemies, His disciples all running away. What He endured for you and me. Whatever... Jesus lived His life and died and was raised just for you!!! That’s nice –Whatever... If Jesus was crucified on a cross of hatred 2,000 years ago, today He is crucified on a cross of indifference. Are you passionate and desperate and excited today? Or are you at best lukewarm and indifferent where Jesus is concerned? It is the question of Lent Jesus poses in His letter to the church at Laodicea.

The church at Laodicea was a wealthy church filled with well-off people. Like Israel of old whenever a church becomes too successful it tends to forget the reason for that success –its Lord and Savior. It begins to take credit itself for its own accomplishments. When it is poor or in trouble it prays desperately on its knees; when then the Lord answers its prayers, it takes credit for its own victories and loses its first love. There may be no greater danger than success in the church, by succeeding and losing its Master in the process. Laodicea manufactured a particularly desirable purple dye and made its fortune. It also had hot mineral springs running through the area that spewed forth undrinkable water. Drink from the springs of Laodicea and you would spew forth the wretched, warmish, un-potable water. It would make you sick. Jesus uses this imagery to say: “Because you are lukewarm, running neither hot nor cold, I will spew you out of my mouth.” (v. 16) Jesus says the Laodiceans say of themselves: “Because I am rich...I have need for nothing.” (v. 17) In the church, sometimes, nothing fails quite like success. Jesus reserves this last and most stinging criticism for the lukewarm church, the church of “whatever”, the church that runs neither hot nor cold in relation to Him. May it never be said, you are a lukewarm Christian singing lukewarm praises in a lukewarm church. O Christian, never drink from the springs of Laodicea for then Jesus will vomit you out of His mouth.

One of my favorite poems was written by Geoffrey Studdert-Kennedy, entitled “Indifference”. He writes of Jesus coming to Studdert-Kennedy’s hometown of Birmingham, England. I will take the liberty of changing his poem just a bit. Here is his poem...
When Jesus came to Golgotha, they hanged Him on a tree. They drove great nails through hands and feet and made a Calvary. They crown Him with a crown of thorns; red were His wounds and deep. For those were crude and cruel days, and human flesh was cheap.

When Jesus came to (Washington, PA) they simply passed Him by, They would not harm a hair of Him, they simply let Him die. For men had grown more tender, and they would not give Him pain. They only just passed down the street, and left Him in the rain.

Still Jesus cried, “Forgive them, they know not what they do.” And still it rained the winter rain that drenched Him through and through. The crowds went home and left the streets without a soul to see. And Jesus crouched against a wall and cried for Calvary.

What will you do with this man, Jesus? What will you do with His cross? What will you do with His love? You can accept Him. Or you can reject Him. You can ignore Him. Or you can embrace Him. O yes, you can crucify Him again, only this time on a cross of indifference. Or you can live for Him. You can die to self and be raised to new life in Him. But you cannot just pass Him by. You cannot ignore the cross that looms before you. You cannot just accept Him and not accept that then your life must be different; your time spent must be with Him; you must desire Him above all else; He must be and become the first fruit of your heart and life. Your first love, not your last. Your first priority, not somewhere down the list. The number one appointment in your calendar, not someone you work in when you deign to take a little time out of your busy schedule for Jesus. You cannot treat Him indifferently. You cannot run neither hot nor cold with Jesus. Better not to be here at all, than to be lukewarm…

Jesus also writes to the church at Laodicea: “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.” (v. 20) It is communion; the season of Lent. And it is the time to return to Jesus and to make Him the first love of your heart once again. Through this sacrament hear the voice of Jesus calling. He is calling your name. He is knocking on the door of your heart. He doesn’t want just part of your heart, He wants all of it. He doesn’t want you to tip your hat at His cross, He wants you to live for Him. He asks you to move from indifference to true love today. Open the door to Jesus and He promises He will sup with you in communion and you will never be indifferent to Him ever again. Move from lukewarm to HOT today, in Jesus’ name. Amen and Amen.

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IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!