

Tepid Water

This morning while I was doing my usual routine of putting water and coffee into my coffee maker, the two words, “tepid water” came to my mind. A bit later I thought of an incident from a few days ago.

One cool afternoon, I decided I wanted a hot drink to take with me to a project I was working on. After running some water in the hot water pitcher and getting it going, I left for a few minutes to take care of some other things. When I returned, I mixed my drink, added a bit of creamer, and took a sip of the tepid mixture. Not good. I noticed it did not steam as it should have when I poured the water in but thought it had been a few minutes so it may have cooled off a bit. But this much? I looked and someone had unplugged the hot water pitcher while I was gone, and the result was I had a tepid drink, which did not fit the palate so well. It was a bit lack luster, slightly above the temperature of the air around me. Hot would have been good and I think it would have tasted good cold. But neither one? Well let us just say it did not meet my standard of expectation.

This has cause me to think of those verses we find in *Revelation 3:15-16. 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.* Then he goes on giving us the reason for this tepid state in verses 17-22, *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: 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. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*

I am asking myself, am I tepid? Am I lukewarm? Am I pleasing to God or have I accepted a tepid state and become less than pleasing to God? God says he would rather we be hot, close to him, or cold, which I would take to be sinful; a place where we know where we stand before him. To be tepid or lukewarm is dangerous. It means that we can believe we are safe, maybe with outward worship, a form of spirituality, but be missing the power and grace found in the abundant life in Christ. In this state we compare ourselves with those around us and justify our actions. We are like sluggish and sleepy Christians. Reminds me of what my dad would say, “It’s worse than nothing, because if we had nothing, we would get something better than this.”

Apparently the Laodicean church to whom this message was given, were a successful people. Perhaps they had a financial boon and the situation around them had become quite comfortable. Maybe they would not have called themselves rich, but they had enough that it caused them to not feel their need of God as they should have. Perhaps some time had elapsed since their conversion to Christ, and they had slipped back into some of their former ways. The newness of the gospel had worn off, and they began to take things for granted. Maybe they realized that God had blessed them since they had turned to him, and that had taken their focus; they began to realize that serving God had material benefits and there were social benefits in the church. In another scenario, perhaps

they began the journey of their walk with Christ, but failed to renew it daily, instead they focused on their past experience of turning from the old life to the new. Rather than thinking of Christian life as a journey, they viewed it as a destination they had arrived at. I do not know; I am only using my imagination. At any rate, something had cooled their love for God, and they had come to a state of tepidness, which was not pleasing to God.

For me, this can come when I neglect to pray, or when I feel the nudge to pray and resist it. Or if I rely on my past experiences without renewing my walk with the Lord on a regular basis. I may rely on my talents, or my financial means, forgetting who gave these blessings. It could simply mean that I have lost my fervency in prayer and feeding on God's word or enjoying fellowship with the people of God. Sometimes things come into our heart, and we do not feel like going to church or visiting with fellow Christians. For some the pursuit of earthly goals seems to take the primary source of energy. A financial pursuit, the desire for a new house or car, travel and vacationing, and the list could go on of things where we can get preoccupied with even legitimate things in life, and God sort of slips to the background of our consciousness. It is even possible to be filling an active role in the church, as a missionary, or minister, and become tepid. Our zealousness can become driven by the program or project itself, which takes the place of our original calling to be a humble servant of our Father in heaven.

These Laodicean people do not appear as wicked people, they had just lost their focus of what was first and important in their walk with the Lord. They do not seem much different than us. We do not have to be big bad outward sinners to lose our fervency. In fact, this state of becoming lukewarm, may be the tool that Satan uses the most to steer God's children off course. They begin to rely on their good works, lifestyle, and looking good to those around them. Forgetting, any goodness they have is not because they are good, but because God the giver blessed them.

The recipe for getting out of this tepid state was to turn back to God, repenting of this apathetic state. This is not hopeless, neither is it far off somewhere. This returning can happen in a single prayer of humility before God.

I desire to be aware of this in my own life; not focusing on what a Christian should be like, but rather seeking to be pleasing to the Lord with a humble heart.

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