

MUSTARD SEED LEADERSHIP

PODCAST
- BY BRENT BRADING -



EP70

Jesus' Letters to Leaders: Laodicea

FOR THE GROUP LEADER

These notes have been designed to disciple leaders in round the table small group discussions.

What is in *ITALICS* is meant to be read out loud.

Welcome to this week's Mustard Seed Leadership discussion. The current series is "Jesus' Letters to Leaders"

STEP #1: ACCOUNTABILITY

Let's get started. The topic of discussion today is "LAODICEA" But before we start on the new topic, we will usually hold each other accountable about last week's action step.

Since this is the first in the series, let's go straight to the notes.

STEP #2: READ THE NOTES

Option 1: Let each person in the group take turns reading a section. (Each section is marked with a **READER #**). Go clockwise starting with the Group Leader, and highlight or underline what catches your attention.

Option 2: The leader reads all the sections.

Option 3: Watch the video.

<https://youtu.be/3Uoe3wV8ghI>

READER 1

Jesus' Letters to Leaders

Jesus writes seven letters to seven messengers or leaders, giving seven lessons on leading victoriously

Previous Lessons:

- 1. EPHESUS** - Kingdom leaders are in love with Jesus
- 2. SMYRNA** - Kingdom leaders understand suffering
- 3. PERGAMUM** - Kingdom leaders know how to wield the sword of God's Word
- 4. THYATIRA** - Kingdom leaders know how to operate in Authority
- 5. SARDIS** - Kingdom Leaders know how to measure success
- 6. PHILADELPHIA** - Kingdom Leaders know the power of consistency

LESSON #7 - Laodicea

Kingdom Leaders know the power of Jesus dependence

Kingdom thinking and Kingdom life are completely different to the world

- Self reliance or self sufficiency is a celebrated ideal of the world - yet is completely rejected in the Kingdom

That's what this letter is all about.

REVELATION:

Revelation 3:14 (NIV)

14 "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen [Very truly], the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation.

1. Jesus the Amen

Amen is translated as "Very truly" in most cases

- Jesus said it at least 25 times in the Book of John

John 1:51 (NIV)

51 He then added, "Very truly I tell you, you will see 'heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on' the Son of Man."

John 3:3 (NIV)

3 Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”

BIG IDEA: JESUS SPEAKS IN ABSOLUTES

- Binary - yes or no
- No middle ground!

We live in a world that doesn't like binary - it likes relative

- No longer right or wrong - what's right for me
- No longer male or female - what feels right for you

In this world of relative standards and blurry edges - **JESUS IS THE AMEN - THE ABSOLUTE**

READER 2

2. Jesus the Faithful and True Witness

John 18:37 (NIV)

37 “You are a king, then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the

reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”

NOTE: On the side of TRUTH

- The binary - its truth or it's a lie - no gray area*
- Jesus forces us to pick sides - in or out*

3. The ruler of God's Creation

- Laodicia were rulers of economic and judicial matters in the region*
- And for that they were quite proud*
- But now the ruler of all the earth was addressing them!*
- You are either a subject or a rebel - no middle ground*

WHAT'S THE BIG REVELATION: JESUS THE 100% TRUTH & 100% AUTHORITY

- He is the 100% King*
- The Absolute - The Binary - 1 or 0*
- No gray areas*
- No middle ground*

Quote: *“You have to decide - either Jesus is Lord of All or not Lord at all - He can’t be somewhere in the middle”*

READER 3

CORRECTION:

Revelation 3:15-17 (NIV)

15 I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other!

16 So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

17 You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.

Problem with Laodicia?

Not binary - neither hot nor cold

- *“I wish you were one or the other”*
- *Trying to live with one foot in the Kingdom and one in the world*
- *Trying to rely on themselves and Jesus at the same time!*

(New Living Translation (NLT) Study Bible Notes) neither hot nor cold: The hot springs in Hierapolis were famous for their healing qualities. Colosse was equally famous for its cold, refreshing springs. In contrast, the water available in Laodicea was smelly and lukewarm. Such water is distasteful; Jesus was saying that the church's indecisive commitment to him was revolting.

KEY TO UNLOCK THIS LETTER:

17 You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.

- Everything about this city and church could be summed up in TWO words - SELF SUFFICIENT

Laodicia was destroyed in a severe earthquake in AD60, but refused help from the Roman Empire to rebuild

- They did it themselves and it was beautiful

- They do not need outside help All their needs are fulfilled OUTSIDE of Christ

READER 4

PROBLEM: SELF SUFFICIENCY IS THE MOST DANGEROUS SPIRITUAL CHARACTERISTIC THERE IS

The first and probably most important Beatitude

Matthew 5:3 (NIV)

3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

- We were created to be dependent on God*
- We were designed to never function fully in isolation from God*
- It is the humble sense of dependence on God which is the greatest key to the Kingdom*

James referred to this exact scripture from Jesus when he wrote this:

James 2:5 (NIV)

5 Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?

This is not about money. This is a heart attitude that is saying “I don’t need anything or anyone. I don’t need God”

BIG IDEA: YOU ARE ONLY AS RICH AS YOU HAVE LEARNT TO DEPEND ON JESUS

Paul's thorn is still one of the most powerful examples of how highly Jesus values dependence

2 Corinthians 12:8-9 (NIV)

8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

CHRISTS POWER RESTS ON THOSE WHO DEPEND ON HIM

JESUS IS LOOKING FOR A PEOPLE COMPLETELY DEPENDENT ON HIM

- Not one foot in and one foot out

Jesus is the greatest example of exactly this:

John 5:19 (NIV)

19 Jesus gave them this answer: “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.

BIG BIG IDEA: So this is the correction Jesus is calling for - either trust in me or trust in yourselves, but stop trying to do both!

REPENTANCE:

Revelation 3:18-19 (NIV)

18 I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. 19 Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent.

REPENT: *Instead of everyone coming to you to have their needs met - you need to start coming to me!*

(New Living Translation (NLT) Study Bible Notes) *White garments represent spiritual purity [and devotion]. Black wool cloth and garments were prized exports of the city of Laodicea. This famous black wool cloth was a source of Laodicea's material wealth; it probably represents the Laodiceans' proud and unredeemed spiritual condition.*

Laodicea's material prosperity was also due to their well-known Phrygian eye ointment. The Laodiceans needed to buy ointment from Christ

through faith. Only his eye salve would enable them to see their sin and repent.

They were rich and famous because of their black cloth and eye ointment

- Jesus counsels them to come to him to buy white clothes to wear to cover the SHAME of their arrogant self sufficiency*
- And salve so that they can really see their true spiritual state*

So this harsh? Yes!

19 Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent.

BUT WHAT DOES REPENTANCE REALLY MEAN FOR THIS CHURCH?

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

To move from SELF SUFFICIENT to JESUS DEPENDENT means:

1. Who do you REALLY trust?

- *That's at the heart of the issue*
- *Do you really trust in God's word and God's promises?*

Israelites grumbled and complained about no water - Moses brought water from the rock

- *God rebuked them by identifying their true sin - "Is God really among us or not?"*
- *You say you a believer but grumble, complain and worry all the time*

READER 6

2. Then make the leap from the PRAGMATIC to the PROPHETIC

- *"not lean on your own understanding"*
- *God's ways are so different and so counterintuitive*
- *So when God's word and your reasoning collide*
- *who do you choose?*

***To grow your finances grow your generosity -
YIKES! “The measure you give is the measure
you will receive”***

- *That doesn't make sense*
- *The math doesn't add up*
- *Your highest authority is not faith in God's word
but your own sense of reasoning*

3. Submit to him

***“6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will
make your paths straight.”***

***Quote: “You surrender yourself to
breakthroughs in the Kingdom”***

- *Dependence not self sufficiency is our place of
greatest strength*

***CHALLENGE: Are you living a self sufficient
pragmatic life or a Jesus dependent prophetic
life?***

REWARD:

Revelation 3:20-22 (NIV)

20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me. 21 To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne. 22 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

BIG REWARD: If you will sit with Jesus in FELLOWSHIP, you will sit with Jesus in RULERSHIP

DEPENDENCE LEADS TO FELLOWSHIP WHICH LEADS TO RULERSHIP

- How do you learn to trust Jesus in those tough areas of life?*
- You fellowship with Him in prayer through the midst of the struggle*

It starts with opening your heart to fellowship with Jesus

- This is vulnerable*
- This is intimacy*
- This is dependence*

Testimony of asking God to take away my nervousness of preaching

- *But nervousness makes you dependant*
- *Is it what you really want?*

DEPENDENCE LEADS TO FELLOWSHIP WHICH LEADS TO RULERSHIP

FINAL WORD: *So the ABSOLUTE ONE, challenges the church to stop sitting on the fence*

- *Trust yourself and be self sufficient and live a pragmatic life*
- *Or trust in Jesus and live a dependent prophetic life*
- **BUT STOP TRYING TO DO BOTH**

STEP #3: SHARE YOUR HIGHLIGHT

*Now let's go around the group and take turns sharing what stood out to you the most from what we read. **What stood out to you and why?***

STEP #4: EVALUATION

*I am going to ask each of you in turn to evaluate yourself (From a 5 which is **EXCELLENT**, down to a 1 meaning **LOTS OF WORK NEEDED!**) on how well you are doing in the area of this topic and then share this with the group and why you chose this score.*

STEP #5: Application

Lastly, let's go around the group and answer the following questions:

- 1. If you evaluate yourself as a leader, do you display a high or low level of consistency in terms of character, vision and strategy?*
- 2. When you review your history as a leader, can you recognize how consistency or lack of consistency has worked for or against you?*
- 3. What are some things, especially in the areas of holiness and truth, that you should be giving more attention to 'keeping'?*

CLOSING

A great way to close off is to pair up briefly for a moment of prayer. Pray for each other that you will succeed in your action steps. Thank everyone for coming and committing to grow as a disciple of Jesus.

For more notes visit:

<https://outlookchurch.co.za/mustardseedleadership>

