

Lent, Day 9  
Friday, March 15, 2019

Revelation 3:14–22

In my long preparatory journey for pastoral ministry one of the big lessons I've had to learn, and am still learning, is to be self-aware. I come from a family culture and, perhaps, a socio-economic culture that prides itself on, "giving it to you straight." Anything less is crass deception. The unfortunate corollary to this directness is that people often got trampled by my words. I was unaware of the way my words, which I simply thought of as true, hurt people deeply and painfully. I was unaware. Not great for pastoral ministry.

The church in Laodicea was suffering from the same ailment. They had a picture of themselves which reflected their culture. They were famous for black sheep which produced fine wool, so they were known for their black garments. In short, they thought of themselves as well clothed. When they had a major earthquake they refused financial help from Rome. They were rich. And, they had a good medical school focused on eye care. They could see.

What they didn't have was good water. To either side of them they had neighbours. One had hot water that was piped to them, but by the time it arrived it was lukewarm. The other had cold water that was heated to lukewarm by the time they got it. They, the church, had become lukewarm like their water—fit for nothing. They thought they were clothed, rich, and could see, but they were poor, blind, and naked. They were just unaware of it.

The good news is who Jesus is, the amen. The one who makes his word come to be, therefore faithful and true. And, he truthfully witnesses to them about their state. That was also my process, having myself revealed. This, of course, is also the issue with the church today, too. We are unaware. We think we have everything together, but we have become lukewarm. So Jesus says to us, turn to me and I will make you what you erroneously think you are.

He is our master come home unlooked for. He is the bridegroom come to take his bride. If we open the door we will be with him in real fellowship and share in his rule. It is a difficult and sometimes painful thing to gain self-awareness, but if we embrace Jesus's discipline we will have great joy. I know I've never had such joy until I began pastoral ministry.

Prayer.

Amen, let your word be in us. Reveal our hearts and the deceptions that grip them. Set us free and come in. Feed us and clothe us. Amen.