

Cooma Anglican 27 September 2026 - Proclamation, Prayer and Praise - Letter to Laodicea

Sentence of Scripture

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. Revelation 3:20

Hymn - Morning has broken TIS 156

**Morning has broken, like the first morning
Blackbird has spoken, like the first bird
Praise for the singing, praise for the morning
Praise for them springing fresh from the world**

**Sweet the rains new fall, sunlit from Heaven
Like the first dewfall on the first grass
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden
Sprung in completeness where His feet pass**

**Mine is the sunlight, mine is the morning
Born of the one light, Eden saw play
Praise with elation, praise every morning
God's recreation of the new day**

Gathering in God's Name

Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:16-17

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you have shed upon us the light of your incarnate word: may this light, kindled in our hearts by your Holy Spirit, shine forth in our lives, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who now lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**

Confession

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:8-9

Dear Friends, the Scriptures urge us to acknowledge our sins, and not to conceal them from God our heavenly Father, but to confess them with a penitent and obedient heart, so that we may be forgiven through his infinite goodness and mercy. We ought always to admit our sins before God, and especially when we come together to give thanks for the good things we have received at his hands, to offer the praise that is his due, to hear his holy word, and to ask what is necessary for the body as well as the soul.

Therefore, let us draw near to the throne of our gracious God, as we sit or kneel to pray together:

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have strayed from your ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, we have offended against your holy laws. We have left undone what we ought to have done, and we have done what we ought not to have done.

Yet, good Lord, have mercy on us; restore those who are penitent, according to your promises declared in Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant, most merciful Father, for his sake, that we may live godly, righteous and sober lives, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

Declaration of Forgiveness

God desires that none should perish, but that all should turn to Christ and live. In response to his call we acknowledge our sins. God pardons those who truly repent and truly believe the gospel. Therefore, have peace with God, through Jesus Christ. **Amen**

If anyone sins we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the perfect offering for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Gracious God, we humbly thank you for life and health and safety, for freedom work, leisure to rest, and for all that is beautiful in creation and human life. But, above all, we praise you for our Saviour, Jesus Christ, for his death and resurrection; for the gift of your Spirit; and for the hope of sharing in your glory. Fill our hearts with all joy and peace in believing; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

Kid's Talk

Ezekiel 33:12-16

¹² “Therefore, son of man, say to your people, ‘If someone who is righteous disobeys, that person’s former righteousness will count for nothing. And if someone who is wicked repents, that person’s former wickedness will not bring condemnation. The righteous person who sins will not be allowed to live even though they were formerly righteous.’ ¹³ If I tell a righteous person that they will surely live, but then they trust in their righteousness and do evil, none of the righteous things that person has done will be remembered; they will die for the evil they have done. ¹⁴ And if I say to a wicked person, ‘You will surely die,’ but they then turn away from their sin and do what is just and right— ¹⁵ if they give back what they took in pledge for a loan, return what they have stolen, follow the decrees that give life, and do no evil—that person will surely live; they will not die. ¹⁶ None of the sins that person has committed will be remembered against them. They have done what is just and right; they will surely live.

Hear the word of the Lord **Thanks be to God**

Psalms 141 A psalm of David.

¹ I call to you, LORD, come quickly to me; hear me when I call to you.

² **May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice.**

³ Set a guard over my mouth, LORD; keep watch over the door of my lips.

⁴ **Do not let my heart be drawn to what is evil so that I take part in wicked deeds along with those who are evildoers; do not let me eat their delicacies.**

⁵ Let a righteous man strike me—that is a kindness; let him rebuke me—that is oil on my head. My head will not refuse it, for my prayer will still be against the deeds of evildoers.

⁶ **Their rulers will be thrown down from the cliffs, and the wicked will learn that my words were well spoken.**

⁷ They will say, “As one plows and breaks up the earth, so our bones have been scattered at the mouth of the grave.”

⁸ But my eyes are fixed on you, Sovereign LORD; in you I take refuge —do not give me over to death.

⁹ Keep me safe from the traps set by evildoers, from the snares they have laid for me.

¹⁰ Let the wicked fall into their own nets, while I pass by in safety.

Revelation 3:14-22 (NIV)

¹⁴ “To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation. 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. 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. 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.”

Hear the word of the Lord **Thanks be to God**

Matthew 9:9-13 (NIV)

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector’s booth. “Follow me,” he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

¹⁰ While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew’s house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. ¹¹ When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

¹² On hearing this, Jesus said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. ¹³ But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’^[a] For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

This is the gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

Sermon - The Letter to the Church in Laodicea

The Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,

suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried;

he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again;

he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father;

from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the Holy Catholic church,

the communion of saints,

the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting. Amen

Hymn - Lord, in the strength of grace TIS 483

Lord, in the strength of grace,
With a glad heart and free,
Myself, my residue of days,
I consecrate to thee.

Thy ransomed servant, I
Restore to thee thy own;
And, from this moment, live or die
To serve my God alone.

Intercessions

Let us pray for the world and for the church.

Response: Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

Notices

Sending Out

Loving God, we thank you for hearing our prayers, feeding us with your word, and encouraging us in our meeting together.

Take us and use us to love and serve you and all people, in the power of your Spirit and in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn - From all who dwell below the skies TIS 72

From all who dwell below the skies
let the Creator's praise arise! Hallelujah!
let the Redeemer's name be sung
through every land, by every tongue! Hallelujah!

Eternal are your mercies, Lord,
eternal truth attends your word; Hallelujah!
your praise shall sound from shore to shore
till suns shall rise and set no more. Hallelujah!

Blessing

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ Amen

Sermon- Revelation 3: 14-22 - The letter to the church in Laodicea

Have you ever thought it strange how people like to drink cold water, or hot water in coffee or tea, but nothing in between? If you accidentally drink warm water, you just want to spit it out? I was once hosting a number of sailors from Sri Lanka, and one night they cooked dinner, which, as you would expect, was a spicy hot Sri Lankan curry. It was hotter than I expected, so I grabbed the glass of water that was there. But the water was warm - not cold like I expected. I didn't spit it out, but I politely left it to one side and endured my mouth burning from the curry. Apparently, warm water is supposed to reduce spicy heat better than cold, although I didn't know that at the time! We'll come back to the idea of hot, cold and lukewarm shortly in this sermon.

Before we do, today we look at the last letter to the Asian churches in Revelation 2 and 3, to the church in Laodicea. It was situated in the Lycus valley, and was nearby to the cities of Hierapolis and Colossae. The town was quite wealthy due to banking, a textile industry (with a particular black woolen cloth), and a medical school that made eye ointment which was good for tourists who got dust from animal droppings in their eyes. Each of these is significant to the content of the letter, as we will see.

First, following the pattern on the other letters, Jesus describes himself. He calls himself the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. It seems strange to us to call Jesus the word we normally use to finish our prayers, the Amen. But ultimately, we pray to God because Jesus is our amen, the total affirmation that God hears our deepest prayers, he responds to them and is absolutely trustworthy. We pray in Jesus's name because he is all powerful - the creator of the entire universe, and never lies - he is faithful and true, and the only one powerful

enough to answer all prayers with the same power with which he created the universe.

Jesus says he knows the Laodicean's deeds, and that like the water I had with my curry, they were neither hot nor cold. I used to think that this was about being hot - or energetic for God, which is a good thing, and that being cold - unmoved or distant to Christ was bad. Actually, Jesus is saying he wished that they were hot OR cold, and that either was better than being lukewarm. The reason behind this illustration was Laodicea's water supply, and how it differed from the water you got in nearby cities. Hierapolis had hot springs that were well known for their healing properties, and in Colossae you got cool refreshing water that was great on a hot day. In Laodicea, water was piped in over aqueducts, and so was warm and contaminated with salty minerals. It was not at all pleasant to drink. Jesus was saying that he wants hot water that heals from thermal mineral springs, or the cold water that refreshes. He just wanted to spit out the useless lukewarm water that were the Laodicean's deeds.

Then Jesus says that the Laodiceans were rich and independent. We actually have records that after a particularly severe earthquake, they declined a grant from Caesar to rebuild their city. They wrote back politely saying "Thanks but no thanks - we have enough ourselves to rebuild" Even today you can see ancient inscriptions on the buildings saying "rebuilt entirely from the funds of prominent business owners"!

The Laodiceans thought they were rich and self sufficient. They certainly were not humble. We don't like people talking about how much money they have - whether they have it or not. They always seems to be overly competitive. They are not saying they are content, they are saying they have more than you, or they are pointing out that they don't need as much as you because they aren't as profligate, as wasteful as you are. Jesus criticises the

Laodiceans because they say they are wealthy, which they might be in material things, but where it really matters, in their spiritual deeds for God, they are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.

They are wretched: they are afflicted, and experience trials and troubles. Even though they think they are rich they are poor in spirit. They may be able to rebuild their city, but they can't make themselves right with God - only Jesus can do that.

They are also pitiful - they don't even realise that they are poor in spirit, but Jesus does. He sees their trials and troubles, and he knows the answer. They don't even realise they need Jesus to be truly blessed by God, and truly are to be pitied.

They really are poor, poor in a way that only Jesus can solve, and would solve if they only put their faith in him. He tells them they need to buy his gold, refined in the fire, so they can become truly rich. They need to store up treasures in heaven, but they think they only need their earthly, material riches that are ultimately worth nothing in the eternal scheme of things.

Jesus also says that they are blind, even though their city makes the eye ointment that heals the worst of eye infections. They are really blind because they can't see what they really need, and they don't look to the only one who can provide it. They need to let Jesus put his salve on their eyes so they can truly see.

And they are naked, they need to buy Jesus's pure white clothes to wear, so they can cover their shameful nakedness with white, holy purity. They can't rely on the the black, rough woolen clothes their city was famous for.

Jesus criticises them, but despite these criticisms, Jesus loves them, and because he loves them, he rebukes them and he disciplines them in order that they be earnest and repent. He is far happier that they change their ways and follow him than they get upset when he chastises them.

But what about us? I have kept saying that these letters are not just for the churches in Asia, but that they are to be read in all the churches, including in Cooma today. Like the Laodicians, we need to look at ourselves with eyes made clear by Jesus's salve and see whether we are not so much materially rich, but truly spiritually rich with gold that Jesus has refined in the fire, laid up for us in heaven, not on earth. Are we self-sufficient, or are we fully dependent on Jesus, sick people truly in need of a doctor. Like Zacchaeus, we are sinners that Jesus wants to be the first of.

And are we still living in coarse, rough woolen clothing that doesn't hide our shameful nakedness, or are we dressed in the pure white robes that Jesus provides?

And are you hot or cold, bringing spiritual healing and refreshment through Christ's grace and mercy by sharing your faith in him , or are you useless, undesirable, only worth spitting out of God's mouth like warm salty water that only makes us vomit?

To the church in Laodicea, and to us, Jesus calls: 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. 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.

Do you listen to Jesus and open that door? Are you victorious, eternally, where it really matters?

Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Amen