

**February 21/22, 2009**

**“Useful?”**

**Revelation 3:14-22 (Laodicea) - Pastor Mark Burch**

**Psalm 37:1 & 4** *“By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion...our captors asked us for songs, our tormentors demanded songs of joy...How can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land?”*

**Exiles feed on hope....**

**Dangerous...**

**This world is not my home - I'm just a passin' thru... Really?**

**Cold or Hot – You've been drifting along too long...**

**Longing for another Kingdom, when this one is so good!?**

**Have we no need for Jesus?**

**“I know that men in exile feed on hopes.”**  
*(Aeschylus – 525-456 B.C)*

## **Home Group Discussion Questions**

### **History (Making it Personal)**

1. Is there anyone in your group who has been an exile...an immigrant who has had to flee their homeland for another safe place? Many have fled “evil lands” in search of a better home...what do they value?
2. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a “freedom fighter.” He never did get to “walk in the promised land” but he clearly had a vision of what it would look like! Do we have as clear of a vision of what the kingdom of God should look like as it breaks in? Do we have a dream? Have we been to the mountain top to look over Jordan? Talk about life on the “other side.” If the “kingdom” broke in today – what would it look like?
3. Why don't we “long” more? Why don't we cry out “how long?”

### **Digging Deeper (Looking to the Bible)**

4. Read Revelation 3:14-22
5. Quickly reviewing the 7 churches and their issues: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and today, Laodicea.
6. Scan through 1:12-18 and then look over Keith Krells list on the back of this sheet. Talk about how our picture of Jesus will affect our dedication to the task we've been called. Do we need to change our focus from the “Sunday School” Jesus who was/is so soft and gentle, to the conquering king of Revelation? What difference would it make in how we serve Him?
7. Talk about the songs of exile! What messages get included in the songs of people who are “on the run.” Songs of hope, songs of strength, songs of conviction, songs of future victory! Do you think we sing enough “dangerous songs” today?
8. Now – specifically to Laodicea – wealth, fashion, and health care were all abundant and therefore the people had lost sight of Jesus – thinking they needed nothing. Jesus rebukes them. What are the implications for us today? Do we have to be destitute before we'll cry out to God like this? How do we raise kids who desperately long for the kingdom to break in, when our lives here & now are quite comfortable??
9. Think of the healing hot springs of Hierapolis, and the cold refreshing springs of Colossae, and then pass around a glass of lukewarm tap-water. What would you rather have? Talk about the role of healing and the role of refreshing that the church of Jesus is to have today. How should these be expressed? How will they be seen?
10. Remind yourself of verse 19. Jesus deeply loved these people! So He had to rebuke them...to discipline them. Do we have the same kind of love today? How would it be seen?

### **Taking It Home (Application)**

11. Think about the image of Jesus standing at the door of your life – or locked outside the doors of WPC - asking for entry – I'd like to have supper with you! Have you/we excluded Him from some areas of your life?

*The following list was compiled by Pastor Keith Krell from Olympia, Washington. Dr. Krell has specialized in the study of “last things” (eschatology) and teaches with passion about the exalted Christ of Revelation. If we could really “turn our eyes” on this Jesus we might find ourselves totally changed!*

## **The Character Of Christ In Revelation 2-3**

“The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand” is a reference to the sovereign authority and control of Jesus Christ over the angelic realm (2:1).

“The One who walks among the seven golden lampstands” is a reference to the intimate presence of Christ among His church (2:1).

“The first and the last” is a reference to Jesus’ eternal existence (2:8).

“The One who was dead, and has come to life” indicates Christ passed into death, through death, and out of death (2:8).

“The One who has the sharp two-edged sword” reveals that Christ’s acts of judgment will be carried out on the basis of His Word (2:12).

The title “Son of God” declares Christ’s absolute deity (2:18).

The description “eyes like a flame of fire” indicates that Jesus is able to see into the secret places of our hearts (2:18).

The description “feet like burnished bronze” means that Jesus will pursue evil and stamp it out (2:18).

The One who “has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars” conveys ownership and control over the Holy Spirit and the angelic realm (3:1).

The One who is “holy” means that Jesus is set apart and a cut above all so called “gods” (3:7).

The One who is “true” means that Jesus is genuine, authentic, and unique (3:7).

The One with “the key of David” means that Jesus is the heir of David’s covenant who has been given all authority to grant entrance into heaven and the New Jerusalem (3:7).

“The Amen” is a testimony to Christ’s ability to produce what He predicts (3:14).

“The faithful and true witness” epitomizes Jesus’ earthly life as the model witness before the world (3:14).

The “Beginning of the creation of God” means that Jesus is the origin or source of all history (3:14).

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Winter Bible Series

## **“The Revelation of Jesus Christ” Faithful Under Fire**

In his book, “Exiles,” Michael Frost talks of four characteristics of people who KNOW that they are NOT AT HOME; people who long for a different land...a different home...a different government. His book is divided into four parts, out-lining the four key traits of these kinds of people. He says they are characterized by:

Dangerous Memories  
Dangerous Promises  
Dangerous Criticism  
Dangerous Songs

When you think of people in “exile” you think of great visions, of great passion, of great dreams, and of great music.

The “Black Spirituals” of the deep south tell the story of a people who longed for their freedom.

Many of our older hymns were written by an immigrant people longing for the days of eternity and the days of freedom.

The 7<sup>th</sup> church to be addressed in our study, receives the harshest criticism. All the other churches seemed to recognize that they were in a “war-zone” spiritually speaking. The church at Laodicea however, felt that they were doing quite well, and that they didn’t need a thing! Rather than living as exiles, waiting for the deliverance of Jesus, they had settled in and were quite comfortable with life in the here-and-now. As such, they were no longer useful to the Master, and He was ready to “spit them out.”

Maybe it’s time for us to recapture some of that dangerous spirit of those in exile. The voices that stand up and cry out – How Long O Lord? How Long?

When will you step in to set the record straight?

The Laodicean letter is sobering, because it hits so close to home. I hope and pray that God will call out the “dangerous” spirit of exile among us? How much do we LONG for the kingdom to break in? How much do we pray? Do our songs reflect this longing? Are we anchored to the promises of God? Have we given up?

Great thoughts.....