

Sunday theme – **One body, one Spirit.**

First some background about Laodicea. We know that Laodicea was rich, a thriving trade centre; and they refused imperial help from Rome following the earthquake there and surrounding area in AD61. It was the banking centre for the region. It had a medical centre which specialised in ophthalmology. We know that they lacked good quality water, particularly in summer. They had dug aqueducts from two nearby towns, Hierpolis to the north, whose water was from hot springs, full of minerals, and from Colosse to the south east, whose water was Alpine quality from snow-capped Mount Cadmus. So hot water from Hierpolis cooled down, and cold water from Colosse warmed up, both turned luke-warm on the journey to Laodicea.

**Read Revelation 3: 14 – 22** – the most famous of the seven letters to the churches in Revelation.

1. The words of Jesus that John records here appear to be a mixture of sorrow and anger. Jesus takes a very dim view of the apathy of the Laodicean church, ‘neither one thing or the other’ to the point that they are so distasteful that ‘I am going to spit you out’, almost vomit.

1a. What clues do we find to indicate the main source of this distaste?

1b. Apparently, the smug, well-off attitude of the town has rubbed off on the Christians. How influenced do you think churches are by the community and location that surround them?

1c. A Church being influenced by and responding to the local community is a good thing, isn't it?

2. Verse 18 -19. Note that despite Jesus' anger/disappointment with them, He is always looking to draw them back to himself. Thinking of the influences of financial security.

2a. Can you think of ways that money (too much/too little) influences faith?

2b. What about money in the church. What barriers, if any, are caused by money?

2c. Thinking of our theme – One body, one Spirit – in what ways can the church ensure that there are no financial barriers to joining or continuing membership of the church?

3. Verse 20. It is strange, perhaps, that this one church (of the 7 churches) in real trouble draws this most intimate and loving promise. Much has been said about this verse, not least in association to Holman Hunt's painting. Rather than picturing Jesus standing at the door, let's picture 'I will come in and eat with him, and he with me'.

3a. What qualities and attributes do you associate with the ideal family meal, the 'breaking of bread'?

3b. What implications are there for the church to be drawn from this?

**Read Ephesians 4: 1- 6**

4. Now read again from our Revelation passage verse 21. Pause and consider the unity urged by the Ephesians passage and the promised prize from Revelation.