

Christ Wants You Either Hot or Cold

Tim Conway | *illbehonest.com*

I met with a brother the other day and I was talking to him on just this very subject and I got home and I started studying for this, and I saw many of the same things I told him, I see Christ telling this church right now. And I realized, there's a number of you, undoubtedly in this church that need to hear this. We all need to hear this. Listen, as I say these things, you look at your own life. We don't need to think about others, we need to think about ourselves here. But what I see is this...

Well, it reminds me of Bunyan. In *Pilgrim's Progress*, he talked about Mr. Facing Both Ways. You remember a guy like that? He had two faces. You look at him this way, and it looked like he was looking at you; and you come around back behind him, and it looked like he had a face. It's like those Indians that used to wear the masks on the back of their heads. I'm talking about the Indians in India. They would wear masks on the back of their heads. They'd be out there in the tea fields, and they'd wear a mask on the back of their heads to make it look like they were looking both ways, so that when a tiger would come, he would see that face looking at him, and he wouldn't come after them. Because tigers are smart, and they'll stalk you from behind. But they'd wear a mask on the back of their heads, so it would ward off the tigers. I guess it worked.

But you know what? That's great if you're working the tea plantations, over by where John works. But that's not great if you're a Christian! If you're Mr. Facing Both Ways. You've got these people in the church, that they can howl and bark with the wolves, just as much as bleat with the sheep. They've got no backbone. The wind blows one way and they go that way. The wind blows the other way and they go that way. They don't stand for anything. They're in the workplace, and they'll laugh and smile at the smut there, and then come into the church and smile with the same tongue, the same lips, they'll sing the hymns and they'll sing the trash. They're going both ways.

And what Jesus is saying is that it makes Me sick. He says I would rather you were cold. I would rather you were against Me. I would rather you were decidedly not claiming to be a Christian, decidedly for the world, decidedly for the devil. Stop playing the middle ground. And some of you are that way. You come to church, but you're divided; you're facing both ways, and you don't have any backbone. You basically go the way the wind blows. You sway over here, you sway over there. You do nothing well in life. Because a person like this, they're not a good Christian, because they're lukewarm. They're not sold out, they're not hot.

Listen, if this is true, give yourself to it with a whole heart. Quit playing games. The reality is this, I never could figure this out. I guess God didn't bring me down this road, but I could never figure it out. When I was lost, I lived in my sin, I had fun, I climbed mountains, and I rafted rivers, and I got stuff, and I drank, and I lived it up, and it was fun! And I gave myself to it with a vengeance. But when I saw what Christ was, I said, no, I want that. And I want Him with a vengeance. And I want to be sold out. And you know what, if what He is, what He says He is, what He offers, if it's true, isn't that worth having, wholeheartedly?

I mean, I just don't understand people that want to play the middle ground. Look! If sports are better than Christ, then sell out for it and quit with Christ. I'd rather you were cold. If a woman's body is better than Christ, then sell out for it, go get all you can, and quit playing the game! If money is better, go after it. If the world is better and drink is better and drugs are better - sell out for it. Go after it! Get all you can! Live it up, because this is all you've got!

And if Christ is better than all that, then go after Him with abandon! All out! Sold out! Listen, that's what Christ wants. He says be decided. Quit playing these silly games where you claim to be this, but in your heart, you're really this. And you do nothing well. You're not being a Christian well. You're not serving the world well. You go out in the world, and you claim to be this Christian, and they know you go to church on Sundays, they see through it, but you're a sell out. You're not really one of them. My wife talks about the fact that her friends had to come and pick her up from church to take her out to the beach to go drink. I mean, what was that? That's the kind of thing that makes Him sick! Trying to play between the lines here. Doing nothing well. You're lukewarm. You're lukewarm to everything. You're lukewarm to the world. You're lukewarm to the devil. You're lukewarm to Christ. And He says it sickens Him. Just quit!

I hope you see this. Look: these people are in trouble. What you have to realize is this, He says if you continue in this way, I'm going to spit you out of My mouth. I'm going to vomit you out of My mouth. You can take that and turn that into: "that means I'm going to heaven." If I'm lukewarm, that says I'm going there. You can make that conclusion if you want, but I don't think that's what it means. I think being spit out of His mouth is something you and I ought to realize is not good. And that's He's saying to these Laodiceans, if you continue in that path you are in, it will not end well. It is an unacceptable state, it sickens Me, and I will vomit you out. Being vomited out of Christ's mouth, I can hardly imagine, is any kind of symbolic representation of getting to heaven. Not in what I know of Scripture and symbolism. That is bad. That is not good.

And some of you are not sold out for Christ. You're running with the world and you know it. You'll come into church on Sundays, but your heart is after the world. And listen, if that's what you want, quit playing the games and go after it with all the gusto. Just go! And be a good party-er, be a good worldling. Stop Mr. Facing Both Ways, and listen, people like this, they can come in, they can sing "It Is Well" with their soul, but it is not well with your soul.

You know, as I was looking at this thing, I would ask myself sometimes how does this differ from Ephesus? Ephesus lost its first love. These people are lukewarm. I think about losing first love, doesn't that mean that I'm growing a little cold towards Christ. There's a lukewarmness. I mean, yes, we could look at that way, but you know what the big differences are here? Those people over there, they were not weary, they were not tiring out, they were biblically discerning, they were people that were pressing on. Twice, they were told that they were enduring people, they were patiently enduring. These are people that have a lot of good works. These are people that are pressing on for His name's sake. Yes, it's true, that Christ didn't like the fact that the level of their intimacy had fallen off a little bit, and it was a serious thing, but listen, when you compare that over against Laodicea, Laodicea has nothing good said about it, and Ephesus had a tremendous amount of good said about it. You know what the problem is? These people are lukewarm when it comes to weariness. They're lukewarm when it comes to patience. They're lukewarm when it comes to doing good. They're lukewarm when it comes to attending the services. They're lukewarm when it comes to attending the prayer

meetings. They're lukewarm when it comes to prayer and fasting. They're lukewarm when it comes to giving. They're lukewarm when it comes to evangelizing. They're lukewarm when it comes to reading their Bible. They're just lukewarm. They're just not committed to anything. It's sad. Once in awhile they might get in the Word, but half the time they're giving themselves to the things of the world. They're split. They're Mr. Facing Both Ways. And they don't do anything well.

The Ephesians were doing lots well. They had fallen off with their intimacy with Christ, and they needed that restored, but these people are in bad shape. And Jesus says to them, look, you think you're rich, you think you're doing well, you think you're ok, you think everything is alright, you think you have no need, but He says to them, you are wretched, you are miserable, you are blind, you are naked, brethren, those are terms for lost people. Those are terms for people going to hell. Those are terms for people in trouble. Lukewarmness is an indication of lostness. That's what you see here in this letter. It's serious. Very serious to be vomited.

Brethren, Jesus wants you hot or cold. You say, really? Jesus wants me cold? He'd rather have you that than lukewarm. He's saying, show your colors. Just show them. Be committed to something in life. I mean, if you're going to give yourself to something, give yourself wholeheartedly to it. I think sometimes about the text there where Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15 he says, if the resurrection - we sang about that glorious song about the resurrection. Brethren, if that resurrection we sang about isn't true, the Christian of all people is most miserable. Isn't that what Paul taught?

However, the resurrection is true. We of all people are not most miserable. We are if the resurrection isn't true, but the resurrection is true, so we of all people are the most to be envied. But you know who the actual people are in this world most to be pitied? Most miserable of all? It's Mr. Facing Both Ways. Because he doesn't do anything well. He doesn't play the Christian part well, because the true Christians smell him out. They're always aware, there's something unspiritual, unsound about him. They can see through him. Look, you don't have to be around a person long before you figure out what they love. True Christians have a nose for sniffing that out. So they don't really fit in well with the church, and they don't fit entirely well with the world, because they're always playing the part of a Christian.

They're like Ruby's friends: Come with us all the time! Why is it we always have to interrupt our thing and take you home at a certain time? I mean, here we are drinking on the beach and we've got to go pick you up from church. Just come with us all the time, that's what your heart is. Well, she had to do that to appease her father. It's that half-hearted thing. Of all people, you're most miserable. You know why? You try to play the part of a Christian, and you didn't do it well, you try to play the part of a worldling, but even there you kind of had a foul smell about you, because you associated with the Scriptures and with God's people, with the church, with Christ. And in the end you're going to lose your soul. I mean, the guy that just sold out abandoned, let's eat and drink, for tomorrow we die! Right? That's what they said in Scripture. They just sold out! I mean, come on, if sin is worth abandoning Christ for, if you'd rather have sin, quit playing the little church deal, because if you do that, you're going to get spit out of His mouth. Be cold. If that's what your inclination is, do it with your whole heart.

If you've truly looked at Christ, and you've said, this is it. I have found the desire of my heart. I see in Him forgiveness. That's what I want. I see in Him something altogether lovely, and altogether desirable. I see in what He did on that cross, that is for me, that is perfect. I want to follow Him. I want to follow Him to the end. Then do it well. That's what Jesus is saying. Be hot! Or be cold, but don't be in the middle, because He can't stand it. Brethren, if this is true, if it is, then isn't it worth our all? Brothers, sisters, let us be men, let us be women, let us be decided, all for Christ or all for the world. Don't play games. Don't sing songs claiming Christ is all, and then go out and live a different way. Because your words give you away. They're a dead giveaway. Brethren, decided! Be decided! If truly the things that the world offer are better, then give yourself to them, and quit it. Quit playing.