

# To the church in Tempe

A study on Revelation 1-3

3

## Letter 4 sent to the church in Thyatira: A church with emotional tendency

Read Revelation 2:18-29 (EHV).

To the messenger of the church in Thyatira write:

The Son of God, whose eyes are like fiery flames and whose feet are like polished bronze, says this:

<sup>19</sup>I know your works and love and faith and service, as well as your patient endurance, and that you are doing more now than you did at first.

<sup>20</sup>But I have this against you: You allow that woman Jezebel, the one who calls herself a prophetess, to deceive my servants and to teach them to commit sexual immorality and eat things offered to idols. <sup>21</sup>I gave her time to repent, but she is not willing to repent of her sexual immorality. <sup>22</sup>Look, I am going to throw her onto a bed and throw those who commit adultery with her into great suffering, if they do not repent of her works. <sup>23</sup>And I will put her children to death. And all the churches will know that I am the one who searches hearts and minds, and that I will give to each of you according to your works.

<sup>24</sup>To the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold to this teaching, who do not know Satan's "deep things," as they call them, I say that I will not lay any other burden on you. <sup>25</sup>Only hold fast to what you have until I come.

<sup>26</sup>To the one who is victorious and continues to do my works until the end, I will give him authority over the nations, <sup>27</sup>and he will rule them with an iron staff and shatter them like clay pots, <sup>28</sup>just as I myself have received authority from my Father. I will also give him the morning star.

<sup>29</sup>Whoever has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

*The apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 : "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize."*

How does that passage connect with ruling and the morning star which Jesus promises?

## Summarize: What does Jesus want in a church?

Jesus wants a church that holds on to and preaches a powerful and enlightening

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## Letter 5 sent to the church in Sardis: A church about to die

**Read Revelation 3:1-6 (EHV).**

To the messenger of the church in Sardis write:

The one who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars says this:

I know your works. You have a reputation for being alive, but you are dead. <sup>2</sup>Wake up, and strengthen what is left, which is about to die, for I have found that your works are not complete in the sight of my God. <sup>3</sup>Therefore remember what you received and heard. Hold on to it and repent! If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come upon you.

<sup>4</sup>Yet you have a few names in Sardis, people who have not defiled their clothes. They will walk with me in white clothing, for they are worthy.

<sup>5</sup>The one who is victorious in this way will be clothed in white clothing. I certainly will not erase his name from the Book of Life, and I will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.

<sup>6</sup>Whoever has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

How might a church “have a reputation of being alive,” but really be “dead”?

What measuring tool does Jesus use to gauge the “liveliness” of a congregation?

What comfort do the following *promises* give to you?

- The one who is victorious in this way will be clothed in white clothing.
- I certainly will not erase his name from the Book of Life.
- I will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.

Unlike the other congregations mentioned so far, the church at Sardis had not experienced any persecution. How might this have contributed to their decline?

**Summarize: What does Jesus want in a church?**

Jesus wants a church that looks at herself \_\_\_\_\_.

## Letter 6 sent to the church in Philadelphia: A church with an open door

**Read Revelation 3:7-13 (EHV).**

To the messenger of the church in Philadelphia write:

The Holy One, the one who is true, the one who has the key of David, the one who opens and no one can shut, and who shuts and no one can open, says this:

<sup>8</sup> I know your works. Look, I have set before you an open door, which no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. <sup>9</sup> Look, I will make those who are from the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not but are lying – look, I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and make them realize that I have loved you. <sup>10</sup> Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will also keep you from the hour of testing, which is about to come over the whole inhabited world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

<sup>11</sup> I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have so that no one takes your crown.

<sup>12</sup> The one who is victorious I will make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he will never leave it again. I will also write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God – the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God – and my new name.

<sup>13</sup> Whoever has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

For what does Jesus commend the church in Philadelphia?

What is the “open door” that God has placed before us?

What are we tempted to do in these latter days?

What did Jesus mean when he said that he would write the name of “my God, the name of the city of my God, and my new name” on these Christians?

**Summarize: What does Jesus want in a church?**

Jesus wants a church that recognizes that Jesus \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ for mission \_\_\_\_\_.

## Letter 7 sent to the church in Laodicea: A church that was sickening to Jesus

**Read Revelation 3:14-22 (EHV).**

To the messenger of the church in Laodicea write:

The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation, says this:

<sup>15</sup> I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. If only you were cold or hot! <sup>16</sup> So, because you are lukewarm and not hot or cold, I am about to spit you out of my mouth. <sup>17</sup> You say, "I am rich. I have become very wealthy and need nothing." But you do not know that you are miserable, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. <sup>18</sup> I advise you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments, so that you may be clothed and the shame of your nakedness may not become public, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see.

<sup>19</sup> I rebuke and discipline those whom I love. So take this seriously and repent.

<sup>20</sup> Look, I stand at the door and I am knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will go in with him and dine with him, and he with me. <sup>21</sup> 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.

<sup>22</sup> Whoever has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Why was Jesus ready to spit this church out of his mouth?

What was the church "passionate" about? Why?

What does this lead you to repent of?

Why is it so good for us to see our desperate needs (miserable, pitiful, poor, blind and naked)?

When is Jesus' promise "*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*" most comforting for you?

**Summarize: What does Jesus want in a church?**

Jesus wants a church that is not \_\_\_\_\_.

Look at the summary of the letters to the seven churches below. As you think about Emmanuel Lutheran Church, what would Jesus write to us about our ministries?

- What is good (encouragements)?
- What is bad (corrections)?
- What promises would he give?

## Summary of the letters to the seven churches

Jesus wants a church that

- **does not forsake her first love.** All actions are based on love for Jesus.
- **remains faithful in the face of persecution.** We are willing to suffer for Jesus.
- **is concerned about her teaching and her members.** Exercise discipline against false doctrine.
- **holds on to and preaches a powerful and enlightening word.** He wants us to have love and doctrinal “soundness.”
- **looks at herself honestly.** He wants us to “wake up” so we are actively and eagerly serving him.
- **recognizes that Jesus opens doors for mission opportunities.** He wants us to faithfully proclaim his Word.
- **is not apathetic.** He wants us to realize our weaknesses and our desperate need for him.

How has this study confirmed your remarks of what you look for in a church?

How has this study caused you to repent of what you look for in a church?

How has this study confirmed or caused you to change your remarks regarding:

- What must *never* change at Emmanuel Lutheran Church?
  
- What *may* change at Emmanuel Lutheran Church?
  
- What *must* change at Emmanuel Lutheran Church?

<b>Never change</b>	<b>May change</b>	<b>Must change</b>
The teaching of God’s Word The administration of the sacraments The mission of Christ The passion and commitment to support Christian education	Hymnals Adiaphora – things neither commanded nor forbidden in Scripture Facilities People Service times Pastors Form and organization Activities Membership	Fellowship hall Technology Membership – our hearts Anything sinful Lukewarmness to what is happening in our world Greater engagement with the world

We have heard Jesus say, “*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*” What is your plan to regularly hear what the Spirit says to you?

- Yearly Plan
  
- Monthly Plan
  
- Weekly Plan
  
- Daily Plan

Who in your life will help you fulfill those plans? \_\_\_\_\_