



Thawing #6

“indifference”

Courage Church, Detroit, MI

Sunday February 12, 2017

We are closing our series out today on Thawing. And to be completely honest with everyone, I am really really glad that this series is over after today.

Don't get me wrong, I have gotten great feedback from people... I know that it struck a cord with a lot of you at various

times... but we covered some really hard topics, and it is stressful talking about some of those topics because as most of you know... this hasn't really been one of those fluffy, happy go lucky, everyone leaves feeling great series... Hopefully each week you left with a certain level of freedom that you found in Christ... but I know I personally was convicted by every one of these topics.

What we have been doing this entire series is talking about the things in life that cause the pipes to freeze... The things that get in the way of our destiny for Jesus.

Twice this winter already, in my kitchen, the pipe to the cold water in sink froze, and until it Thawed, the sink was useless. And when the water is frozen in the pipes, it expands, and had it expanded enough down there in the frigid cold crawl space, the pipe easily could have burst which would have created a much bigger mess than just a faucet that wasn't giving us any water. The frozen pipes made it so the sink couldn't do what it was supposed to do.

and we have been looking at the things in life that cause that to happen... they cause the pipes to freeze... they cause the flow to stop... progress to halt... The things in our lives that cause us to NOT do what we are supposed to do.

and if not dealt with, these are things that could really derail our lives... we started by talking about cowardice... fear... one of the most debilitating things in our world.

Then we got into Busyness, and how we fill our lives up with things that feed us but don't fill us... then we talked about control, we talked about disappointment, and last week we talked about isolation... and about how so many people, especially these days, isolate themselves if not only to themselves, then to a small group of people who think just like them and act like them and believe just like them... and shut out everyone who views the world through a different lens at all.

Today, we are ending the series by talking about indifference.

The definition of "indifference" is a "lack of interest, concern, or sympathy."

And I think, especially with the tone that we had to take last week with isolation, it is crucial that we dive into this one today. Because just like we said last week... our world is so broken. It is not as it should be... it is unjust.

And as people who bear the name of Jesus Christ, and as his literally body here on earth, we do NOT have the luxury of just not caring about what is going on in the world.

We don't have the luxury of being able to close our eyes when bad things happen. We don't have the luxury of NOT being ACTIVE in solving the evil's of this world.

Now, I do believe that everyone has a different calling. That is what make us a body. We may not all work to solve the same issues... NOT EVERYBODY can dedicate their entire lives to human trafficking, or an orphanage, or to the refugee crisis.

because there is only so much time in a day.

But the church does need people dedicating their lives to issues like that, and even if that is not you, doing nothing about anything is NOT an option.

and NOT CARING about even one issue that is close to God's heart, is just absolutely not an option, the church has to care about people... and that care has to translate into action because faith without works is dead.

so lets get into this thing shall we?

Open up your bibles to: Revelation 3:14-20

¹⁴ “And to the angel of the **church** in Laodicea write: ‘The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God’s creation.

¹⁵ “ **‘I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot.** Would that you were either cold or hot! ¹⁶ So, **because you are lukewarm,** and neither hot nor cold, **I will spit you out of my mouth.** ¹⁷ For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. ¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. ¹⁹ Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. ²⁰ **Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.**

Lets Pray.

Two of the most often misused passages of scripture in all the bible are included in the section that we just read. The first two verses, and the last verse. Pastor's LOVE to use these.

The first is the beginning... You are neither cold nor hot...

And the idea that is typically conveyed is that: You should be one or the other... and we associate hot or cold as being GOOD or BAD... and the teaching is typically that being lukewarm means you are somewhere in the middle of good and bad.

and with THAT framework we hear Jesus saying: you are lukewarm and because of that I will spit you out of my mouth!

and That leaves people thinking that Jesus would rather a person flat out deny him... not serve him at all, than to serve him, we could say: "half heartedly" - but what does that even mean?

like... if you are a born again Christian, and you fall into temptation, but you still love Jesus... are you lukewarm?

and before long it turns into this idea that Jesus would rather we flat out ran away from him and live in sin, than for us to keep running back to him, yet struggling in a certain area of our lives.

but think for just a moment about the character of God.

The bible in one place says that He is faithful even when we aren't... (2 Tim. 2:13)

Even when we don't have faith, he is still faithful to us, because he cannot deny himself.

In Romans 8 Paul tells us that NOTHING can separate us from the love of God... and in Ephesians 2 he tells us that "even when we were dead in our trespasses, we were made us alive together with Christ."

When Jesus teaches us how to pray, the first thing that he gives us in the Lord's prayer is he says, start with this: Our Father, who art in heaven.

The bible describes God as our Father. and from the perspective of a Father, and for anyone in this place who IS a Father, you know... if your child strays from your teaching... if they leave your house the way that the prodigal son left his Father's house and went away and squandered everything... at no point do you say "I would rather they weren't my child at all."

No... you love them... you pray for them every day believing that one day they will come home, you watch every single day hoping that you spot them

in the distance and when they do finally come home, you will run and meet them half way and you throw a party because they are back.

and the bible uses that parable, the parable of the prodigal son, to describe the way that he loves his children... even the ones who run.

I believe that the overall narrative of the bible and the way that it describes the heart of God forces us to take a closer look at this concept in Revelation before we jump to the conclusion that so many have jumped to. and we will come back to that in a few minutes...

The second verse in this section that is very often misused is the verse at the end: Behold, I stand at the door and knock... if anyone hears my voice and opens the door I will come in to him and eat with him and he with me...

We love to use this during altar calls... I have probably done it... and its not like it is super harmful to do that, but it *is* out of context. This verse is not about people who don't know Christ... this is not a salvation verse... this is a verse that was given specifically TO THE CHURCH.

Jesus tells the church in Laodicea that he is standing at their door and he is knocking... and where this verse is so incredibly full of hope, here is what is so incredibly convicting about it:

The only way that Jesus would need to knock on the doors of a church, is if the church's doors were closed.

and I think there is significance to that.

I think that a bigger question that Jesus' words here raises to *this* church, is why was the door closed in the first place?

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A little bit of a history lesson for you:

John, in Revelation writes these letters to seven churches in Asia Minor, which is what we now know as Turkey.

John is writing this from an island off of Asia Minor called “Patmos” - but if you were reading along in your bible you probably noticed that these letters are written in red...

Because even though John is written the letters, it is Jesus speaking.

Revelation 1:9-11 says that John was completely in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and he literally heard an audible voice LIKE A TRUMPET saying to write these words to these seven churches.

and to six of the seven churches, Jesus sort of does the really pastoral thing...he rebukes and praises them all at the same time. He tells them something they are doing right, and he condemns something that is bad.

For example, to Ephesus he says “I know that you have endured patiently” (Revelation 2:3-4) BUT THIS I HAVE AGAINST YOU... you have abandoned your first love!

And he does something like that with all of the first six, But when he gets to this church in Laodicea, he doesn’t have ANYTHING good to say!

The question is, why?

Laodicea was a trade city... part of what was known as a “Tri-City” area, with Colossae and Hierapolis.



Now, Ephesus was the most important cultural and religious center in Asia at that time - and As you can see, if you are traveling to Ephesus from the East, you had to go through Laodicea. It was a huge trade city and it was known for its extreme wealth, its financial centers, its clothing factories, and it

had a very famous medical school. The Doctors there were so famous, that their names were printed on the coins.

There was a popular eye powder called the Phrygian (Fridge-e-en) eye powder... that was developed by them that was highly sought after.

It in some ways resembled Laish, the city that we talked about last week... from their own perspective, Laodicea needed nothing.

they had it all... In 60 A.D. a huge earthquake hit the Tri-City area, and all but destroyed Colossae and Hierapolis... and Laodicea also suffered enormous damage but they refused the help of the Roman empire to come help them rebuild. It would be like today, after we got hit in the Rockaways with Super Storm Sandy, saying that we refuse the assistance of FEMA, who sent a constant flow of support for months and months during the aftermath.

They said “we got this on our own.”

So to the church in the city that had it all, Look at what Jesus says in verse 15-16...

¹⁵ “ **I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot.** Would that you were either cold or hot! ¹⁶ So, **because you are lukewarm,** and neither hot nor cold, **I will spit you out of my mouth.**”

Now, what is Jesus saying?

Look at the map again. You see the “Tri-City” area and the one in the middle is Laodicea, whom the letter is written to.

Now, Laodicea’s neighbors to the North of them, Hierapolis, was famous for what was known as their “Hot Springs.” Here is a picture taken from Laodicea that shows the Hot Springs off in the distance, about 6 miles North.



People would travel from all over to sit in these natural baths of hot water, which were both relaxing as well as therapeutic. If someone had sores or sicknesses, the minerals in these waters would bring them comfort and in some cases, healing.

Now, there also were springs of water in Colossae, the city to the South of Laodicea. And can you guess what types of springs these were?

Cold Springs!

Beautiful Springs of refreshing cold water streaming in their mountains.

Now, when Rome took over basically the entire known world, they created something called Aqueducts that would funnel and carry water from the cities that had water into the cities that didn't, and Laodicea just so happens to be a city where there are no large bodies of water around... So with no water supply of its own, they would pipe water from the Hot Springs of Hierapolis and from the Cold Mountain Streams of Colossae, into Laodicea.

Now, when you take hot water, and you mix it with cold water... what do you have?

You have lukewarm water.

So as you can see, everything that Jesus lays out for them would have had a context that they immediately applied to it... they knew exactly what these terms meant... but As always, he masterfully used something that they would have recognized, to call them out on something *that they needed to change*.

The church in Laodicea would NOT have heard this as "you should either be really good, or really bad"

Because it wasn't that God saying "I would rather you be the WORST kind of person, than a person who is trying or even who knows what is right and doesn't do it... The Apostle Paul said that EVEN HE did that! he always did

the things he didn't want to do... and he didn't do the things that he knew that he should do. (Romans 7:19)

This is how the church of Laodicea would have heard this:

People go one town North of us, to Hierapolis, when they are hurting, or when they need comfort. and they sit in those baths, and they are comforted... they are healed... they are blessed.

People rely on the town South of us, Colossae, when they need refreshing. When they need cold water.

Hierapolis has something that heals people...
Colossae has something that refreshes people...

But you guys whole world is about yourselves. You don't meet needs... you don't help people... your entire lives are about what you can get *for* you.

You have blessings coming in from both directions and nothing going out.

Why else would Jesus describe them this way in verse 17?:

For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and *I need nothing*, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, **poor**, **blind**, and **naked**.

To a group of people who thought they had it all, Jesus says to them: you are poor!

To a place known for its clothing factories... he says you are naked!

To a place known for an eye medicine that they had produced Jesus says
YOU ARE BLIND.

Because even the things that they did produce, like the medicine, they produced because of what it produced for them. Wealth. Comfort. The need for nothing.

They were the poster child of comfort which is a nicer way to say “they were indifferent.” As long as their world was okay... they were fine.

but when I think of Laodicea, do you know what city in the bible I think of?

This may surprise you... I think of Sodom.

That sinful place that Abraham argued with God about whether or not it should be destroyed, and eventually God committed that if He could find even ten righteous people there, then he would spare the entire place. (Genesis 18).

and people use the story of Sodom and Gomorrah as a means to throw stones at people living immoral lives because the bible, in all fairness, does describe it as a place where a LOT of incredibly immoral things went on... things that God considered an abomination... it was a very dark place.

and the tragedy is that in the end not even ten righteous could be found, and it was destroyed. and people like to use this story and say that it is “The Old Testament” and it’s PRE-JESUS... It is PRE-GRACE. So we reconcile it that way... but did you know, that the thing that God ultimately found Sodom guilty of, is the very same thing that even Jesus speaks so harshly of, that He says He will have to send people away to hell for?

Ezekiel 16:49

“Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy.”

See here is the bigger issue: We always separate the world into these divides that say “it is us here... and it is them, there.” and they do these awful things, sexual immorality, whatever it is... so THEY ARE LIKE SODOM. but not us... and I am not making LIGHT of those things, everything that the bible said was going on in Sodom was VERY sinful. But here is what I can’t understand about Christians...

The church has forever prided itself on what it doesn't do.... it doesn't drink alcohol, it doesn't have sex before marriage... it doesn't do drugs... But the bible is so incredibly clear (IT COULD NOT BE MORE CLEAR) that the church will be judged for what it DOESN'T DO.

Sodom did a lot of wicked things, but their *guilt*... the thing that God had against them, the reason that the judgment came...is the same reason that Jesus spoke so harshly of them and time and time again in the red letters. They didn't take care of the needy when they had all that was needed to do so.

It is the same thing we read about in Matthew 25, when Jesus has to turn away the ones on his left because they didn't take care of the poor... they didn't welcome the stranger, they didn't serve the least of these.

Matthew 25:45-46:

“Truly, I say to you, as you **did not** do it to one of **the least of these**, you did not do it to me.’ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

If this doesn't stir you awake to your indifference to the broken world around you, then the truth is, NOTHING WILL.

It is the same thing we read about with the Rich man and Lazarus. (Luke 16:19) - this rich man who the bibles say every single day he ate these amazing meals, knowing that there was a poor man named Lazarus sitting at his gate going hungry, just hoping to get the crumbs from what fell from the rich man's table. and then Jesus explains that both men die... and when they die, the poor man is carried up by angels, to Abraham's side...

and the rich man who ignored the poor is sent to hell. and even as he is being tormented, he looks up, and he sees that poor man standing next to Abraham and this is what the rich man says... even now, after getting his punishment, he still doesn't get it... even from hell he still thinks that he is better than the poor man, and so he asks Abraham to send tell the poor man to dip the end of his finger in some water and to come and cool his tongue, for he is in anguish.

Can you even imagine that?

Not even going to hell was enough for this man to realize that people are what matters. He spent his whole life eating elaborate meals while someone he saw every single day starved to death. And even from hell he is expecting Lazarus to come and serve him... but do you know Abraham tells him?

“between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.” (Luke 16:26)

It is almost like indifference is one thing that can literally destroy our eternity.

It is the same thing we read about (Luke 12:18) with the rich young ruler whose land produced plentifully, and he said “I will go and tear down my barns because they aren’t big enough to store up everything that I have and I will build barns and bigger barns.”

and God said to him: Fool! “This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?”

He spent his whole life acquiring things that are meaningless.

It is the same thing that Jesus has against the church in Laodicea. The one church that he found *no* good in that was worth speaking of.

The harshest judgments are ALWAYS reserved for the people who have it all, and ignore the needs that are all around them.

Which is why indifference is such a big deal.

There are things that the bible makes just so incredibly clear that we, as Christians, as a body, can NOT ignore.

One of them is the stranger.

Which has been a very hot button item recently in our world... we can't be indifferent about the issue of strangers... from the beginning of the Old Testament to the end of the new, the bible makes it very clear that you will be judged by the way that you treat people who come to you for help.

But I think in all of the politics of it all, something gets lost and "we the church" seem to forget that it is our job to be a home for the broken and a home for the stranger who is trying to make it in a foreign land.

There is no denying the churches role in the refugee crisis.

but I think that the reason that it gets so off balanced is because people spend so much time telling others what to do, that they never have time to ask the question:

What can I do?

To make a difference in this issue that is obviously so close to Jesus' heart?

Guys... I am so sick of politics. I really hoped that by now they would be over... I get it... I understand the fight... I do... and truthfully... I don't care if you are a republican or a democrat... or a green party or a libertarian... or none of the above, this goes across the board and reaches the most difficult to navigate issues, from taking in strangers, to abortion, to the way that we treat the poor: if your life doesn't *err* on the side of people, you are on the wrong side.

and the side that you are truly on, will be reflected by the way that you live your life... by your actions.

Dawn and I shot a music video for a friend of ours a few months ago, and I have been trying to carve out the time to edit it for him and we have been working on it... but the song is about Detroit and one thing that he says really really stuck out to me...

he says "More talk and less walk won't bring about change." (Sareem Poems)

Change is about the action steps that you are willing to take to see it happen.

Politics not going to save you, and it is not going to solve the problems that are dominating our world right now. The world will change when you are ready to change yours.

If people come to you, needing you... and you reject them when it is within your power and ability to help them... That is called SIN. Its a VERY BIG SIN. And I am telling you, you don't want to find yourself to the left of Jesus on judgment day. and that is how you get there.

I know that we here in this place know how we should be treating other people. I know we are sticking up for people... and our voices matter. Don't ever let anyone tell you otherwise... in fact the bible says that we should be a voice for the voiceless. (Proverbs 31:8)

but our voices must never be louder than our lives.

Another issue that is impossible to ignore is the issue of orphans, and the issue of widows. You may NOT have all the solutions for it but you can NOT ignore it.

Look at this verse in the Old Testament: (Deuteronomy 27:19)

Cursed be anyone who perverts the justice due to the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

I love that... ALL THE PEOPLE SAY, "AMEN!" I feel like it is almost being sung by a choir or something.

James, who was the brother of Jesus Christ, *defines* religion as "taking care of widows and orphans in their affliction and keeping yourself blameless before the world."

Two thirds of what it means to be a religious person in the way that we SHOULD be religious, is taking care of the least of these.

Meaning that these are issues the church can NOT close their doors to.

We the church can NOT - NOT DO the very things that the bible *commands* us to do, and yet still call ourselves the church.

There aren't many things that are spoken of in the bible more harshly than a person who doesn't take care of the widow. I could talk for hours on this one subject alone but am not going there this morning. But just know, IT IS VERY IMPORTANT. But lets look for a moment at orphans... at the Fatherless.



You probably have seen this image going around online, showing the number of children in the foster care system waiting for a home, compared to the number of churches in each state. Churches in black... Kids in blue.

I remember Dawn and I sitting down with Pastor Kevin and Renee, probably close to a year ago and Pastor Kevin was sharing with me how this was so close to his heart, and the ways that Mount Hope was partnering with organizations to be a part of the solution... and even then, he so passionately said to us "if just a third of the churches in our state would have someone step up here, this entire problem would be fixed overnight.

If in Michigan alone there are 3 churches for every one foster child who needs a good home... and if that is a problem that could be that quickly solved by the body of Christ having only 1/3 of its churches taking on ONE CHILD, and yet it hasn't, THEN THE CHURCH SHOULD BE ASHAMED OF ITSELF!

For one, we should be coming up with solutions as corporate bodies... and Pastor Kevin and I have been talking about ways that we can do that and ways that churches can equip the families who feel called to this... but even on an individual level... is there really not one person in any of these

churches that God has directly spoken to and put it on their heart to help in this way? Or have we just gotten really good and blocking out that still small voice because in order to change someone else's life, it means we have to change ours.

But this I have against you, church in Detroit... there are three times as many churches as there are orphans in your state waiting to be cared for, yet they are being ignored.

I know that there are a LOT of issues that we could talk about, we could go all day, some just as important as these... some more important than the next... and I know that everyone is called to play different roles in the body of Christ and when each of the unique bricks that are our lives come together, that is how we form the reflection of Jesus here on earth. But if your life is not moving more and more in the direction of generosity, then you are moving in the wrong direction.

If you want to have the loudest voice than MAY IT BE YOUR LIFE.

May it be the way that we serve our communities with our lives... with our time, and our efforts, and our gifts.

The church in Laodicea was indifferent to the hurting world, offering NOTHING when it HAD EVERYTHING.

And Jesus is telling them, "use your gifts for other people!" Speak out, stand up, and take action.

So Jesus diagnoses the problem, and then He begins to give them the cure.

Verse 18:

I counsel you to buy from me **gold refined by fire**, so that you may be rich, and **white garments** so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and **salve to anoint your eyes**, so that you may see.

Lets look at the advice of Jesus... he starts by saying I counsel you to buy from me **gold refined by fire**:

Trial by fire IS the Christian life. Going through things that test your faith ARE what demonstrates the things you truly HAVE FAITH in. Refinement is the process of removing impurities from an object, and God has this way of using trials to do that in our lives... and here is why... because trials demand responses... They demand reactions.

You will respond, one way or another.

When the world gets to a place where it is as broken as I think we can all agree ours currently is... we don't go through it just so we can highlight the problems... we go through it so we can separate the dross from the fine metal... we go through it so the best can rise to the occasion and actually find answers to the worlds hardest problems.

But if you ARE the answer... and yet you are refusing to be the answer, then you are the problem.

Indifference IS the problem.

What the church needs even more than voices, is feet.

Hear this church! In Ephesians 6, when Paul tells us to put on the WHOLE armor of God... he tells us the pick up the sword of the Spirit which is God's word... we know this passage...

and in it he talks about the gospel of Jesus Christ and he refers to it as "the gospel of PEACE." Something we all want in our world. Peace.

But the bible says that only one thing will truly bring us peace and that is Jesus Christ... but do you know what piece of armor Paul lists here that we have been given for carrying the gospel of peace into our broken world?

Shoes. (Ephesians 6:15)

Putting FEET TO YOUR FAITH does that.

Putting FEET to your pain, and the things in life that you think are not just...

Paul is saying that the gospel moves forward when you stop JUST being angry about it, and you start being active about it. That is what Thawing from indifference truly looks like... you come to this point when you realize that you can't expect anyone to do anything that you won't do yourself, so you start being the changes that you know our world needs... and see if a little love catches on.

So the letter to Laodicea says: I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and **white garments** so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen.

white garments

Here is what is so significant about white garments. In the book of Revelation, white robes symbolize a life cleansed by the blood of Jesus. The book of Isaiah says it this way, (Isaiah 1:18) "though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow"

Jesus wants this church to know that it is not too late... that he loves them, and that the work that he did on the cross is enough to cleanse them of all of the unrighteousness that they have been living in, and spreading...

Like I said earlier... the church should be ashamed... for the way we haven't done what we are supposed to do... the church in Laodicea is no different... Jesus just says, let's cover that shame with a white robe, because I am making all things new... and I can do a whole lot more with a church that has been cleansed, that sees their sins and acknowledges their sins, and moves BEYOND their sins..

than with one who is selfishly keeping to themselves and not making any difference in their world.

The last thing that Jesus says here, is: and **salve to anoint your eyes**, so that you may see.

Salve is a remedy... an ointment that you would put on your eyes to sooth irritation.

It was the very medicine that Laodicea's medical school was known for creating. Jesus is telling them... you need medicine... and I have it. And here it is:

Verse 19:

Those whom **I love**, I reprove and discipline, so be *zealous* and repent.

Let that sink in.

Jesus tells them... even in the midst of all of these things that you guys have gotten wrong... you are still the church. You are still the only hope for the world... and that is why I am coming down on you so hard today because those whom I love, I **REPROVE** (which means - I show them that they **ARE GUILTY**)... and I discipline them.

Because if we keep going through our lives blind, thinking that we can see... then what is going to happen is we are going to fail to be church... and the whole time we are going to think we are being the church, because on Sunday's we **HAVE CHURCH**.

And if you think that you can have your world and not share it with anyone else, then because I love you, I have to tell you, that you are guilty.

and just saying that you believe you should do something different does **NOT** make you less guilty.

Until you actually do something different, you are not different.

The Bono's, who led us in worship today, they are very close friends of ours... Amazing people, amazing pastors here in Detroit, we are trying to find more and more ways to work together because our visions are so similar. I love having them here!

I have watched this family. And I believe so much in them.

I have seen as they have taken in missionaries and let them stay in their home for months, even years at a time.

I have seen as they have let entire families moving to Detroit stay in their home for several months while they got their footing in our city. Families that they hadn't even met before they moved in... all the while raising **FOUR KIDS OF THEIR OWN!**

I have seen the way that they help the poor.

and even when maybe they don't see the way that God is moving in their life, they still make themselves available so God can move through them, on behalf someone else. And that is what the GOSPEL looks like.

But they don't need to *say* that... I never hear them say it... but I see it. I see them doing it. and because I see them doing it... if I ever did hear them **SAY IT...** I would listen so intently to every word that they say. Because their daily lives speak of the justice that I know that they believe in. And I want my life to look like that.

John says it this way... **LITTLE CHILDREN...** let us not love in word or talk but in deed and truth. (1 John 3:18)

Let us put feet to our love. Get moving. Get active.

and Jesus, after he gives that church its discipline because he loves them... he says to them: **BE zealous.** That is your cure. Be zealous and repent.

This is what it means to be **zealous**: to be or become marked by active interest, passion, and enthusiasm for something, often a cause of faith.

Do you remember what it means to be *indifferent*? a "lack of interest, concern, or sympathy." You are looking at its opposite.

Jesus is telling the Church in Laodicea... find your cause.

Find what it is that you were created to do. That was what Laodicea hadn't done... they had everything, but they didn't have a purpose. And Jesus rebukes them, and says "get out of your comfort... feel the way the world hurts... and let it refine your lives, and let it refine your church... but always remember YOU BELONG TO ME... you are clothed in white... now... FIND YOUR CAUSE.

Because there is something amazing that you were created to do in our world, and you will never find it in the confounds of your lukewarm church, that thinks that it needs nothing... but really it just does nothing.

Church we are it. If we don't move, why would anybody else?

Look at the very last thing that Jesus says here... and I hope, like I said at the beginning, that you are able to see this verse through fresh eyes this morning.

Verse 20:

²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

The church... Christians... the ones who bear the name of Christ and whose entire mission is to the further his message into our broken world...

Jesus gets to the church... he walks up the steps, and the doors are closed to him.

In all of our fear, busyness, disappointment, and isolation... and in all of the ways that we try and stay IN CONTROL of our lives...

in all of the ways that we didn't act like Jesus... or create space for Jesus...

We have SHUT JESUS OUT.

Because whatever you do unto the least of these, you do unto me.
(Matthew 25:40)

and for every person that we have shut out of our lives, because it is easier without them... we have shut out our Lord and Savior.

Because whatever you DO NOT do unto the least of these... you DO NOT DO unto me. (Matthew 25:45)

But BECAUSE HE IS GOD... and he is SO FULL OF GRACE, and SO FULL OF MERCY... when he gets to this door that maybe we slammed in his face a thousand times...

what does He do?

He starts knocking.

and he keeps knocking and knocking and knocking...

until one day we finally see, wow... we really aren't doing what we are supposed to do... and suddenly, we hear the door... we hear the knock... He had been knocking the whole time... but for the first time in a while, we actually heard it.

and we run to the door and we open it.

But the question THEN BECOMES, when we open the door, and see Jesus standing there, wanting to come in for dinner... will we know that it is Him? Based on everything else about our lives...

Whatever you do unto the LEAST OF THESE, you do unto me.

Think about the rich man and Lazarus... The rich man ate AMAZING meals, meal after meal after meal every single day while Lazarus laid hungry... and I can't help but think... IF YOU HAD JUST INVITED LAZARUS TO DINNER... could that have been the difference in your eternity?

Think about it... the rich man in the story, he recognized Abraham... he knew the promise... but there was a chasm separating them, and that chasm was the greed that filled his life.

Whatever you don't do for the least of these... you don't do unto me.

So as we end this series about Thawing, may we start to hear the knock again... and when we open that door, and we see someone who maybe we don't know is Jesus...

may we say "come in... lets have dinner." Because there is more than enough food here for all of us to eat.