

## Approaching Ministry With Passion Revelation 3:14-19

### Introduction:

1. Here in our text, Jesus is addressing the church at Laodicea. Let's read verses 14-16.
2. Do you get the idea that Jesus is not pleased with this church? Notice how in verse 19 Jesus commands, "...*be zealous therefore, and repent.*"
  - Zealous means "intense; to be hot; to glow"
  - A synonym for zealous would be "fervent." Romans 12:11
3. In other words, God desires that His children possess an attitude of fervency, and He desires that we approach whatever service we do in His work with passion.
4. If I am passionate about something it means that I have an intense, driving feeling for it. This was the problem at Laodicea – they lacked passion.
5. It is so easy to lose your passion as you serve in the Lord's work. For example, Walk through Bethlehem (WTB) is on everybody's mind right now. But this is the 10<sup>th</sup> year we have done this ministry. Many of you have served in it for years.
6. We can end up approaching this ministry with a ho-hum, careless, and somewhat lackadaisical attitude. God's desire is that we approach our ministry with such passion that it would be like the first year we ever did it. Why is this so crucial?

### **First, because it is clearly God's will for you to approach ministry with passion. vs. 15, 19; cf. Romans 12:11**

1. Verse 15 – "*I would...*" Verse 19 – "*Be zealous...*" Romans 12:11 – "*be fervent in spirit...*"
2. Passion is not a divine suggestion. It is a divine mandate. God wants you to approach ministry for Him with red hot, fired up, fervent passion.
3. All of us can naturally tend to get complacent. It is part of that sin nature and sinful tendencies that we all have. So we must view our complacency as a sin, pray about it, and overcome it through Christ.
4. Why? Because it is God's will that you approach ministry with passion.

### **Second, because God knows the true state of your heart – vs. 15a**

1. Jesus says, "*I know thy works...*" As you sit here right now God knows the true state of your heart and He knows every thought that's crossed your mind. Psalm 19:14
2. We can fool other people around us, but God knows the true passion level of your heart. He knows with what kind of heart you approach your ministry.
3. We may even deceive ourselves into thinking that we are passionate when we really are not. In verse 18 Jesus told them to anoint their eyes with eye salve. He wanted them to see themselves as they really were.
4. **Illustration:** Have you ever had somebody take your picture and you thought you looked good, and then you saw the picture and you said, "Did I really look like *that*?"
5. Maybe our spiritual eyes need to be opened to see our hearts as they truly are.

### **Third, because God detests lukewarm Christianity – vs. 16**

1. In rather descriptive language, Jesus is stating the fact that it truly grieves His heart when He sees one of His children riding the fence, coasting along with a non-passionate spirit. 1 Corinthians 10:21-22
2. The Bible attests to the truth that you can't be lukewarm and please God.
  - Lot tried to serve God and live in Sodom. He lost his wife and kids.
  - Esau sought to receive the blessing but also wanted that bowl of soup.
  - Achan attempted to fight the Lord's battles and take the accursed thing.
  - King Saul tried to serve God and not totally obey God. He lost his throne and died in disgrace.
  - The rich young ruler tried to gain eternal life and keep all his wealth.
  - Judas Iscariot attempted to kiss the Son and betray Him.
  - Ananias and Sapphira sought to give charitably to God and live a lie.
  - Demas tried to serve God and love Satan's world system.
3. What is the lesson? We either have to get passionate for God or serve the devil. We cannot teeter-totter in between. God detests that. Joshua 24:15

### **Fourth, because nothing can substitute passion – vs. 17**

1. This church was very wealthy and thought they had need of nothing. But God saw that despite their money, gold, and material wealth, they desperately needed passion for God.
2. Neither their money nor anything else could substitute that burning passion for God.
3. Your position in the church, your respect by others in the church, what you do in the church, etc. does not substitute a passion for God.
4. We can have a first-class presentation of WTB this year – the best singing, the best acting, the best script, the best tour guides, the best camel, and the best cookies in town – but it does not substitute that passion that we desperately need as we serve God. We can't just go through the motions and think that this is okay. We must be passionate!

### **Fifth, because of the example of Jesus Christ – vs. 14**

1. Jesus is called, "*The Amen, the Faithful and true witness...*" Jesus had an all-consuming passion to please the Father (John 4:34). More important to Him than eating was to do the will of the Father and finish His work. What passion and zeal.
  - He lived and breathed to please the Father. The very essence of His life was to be a servant to the Father and accomplish His will. He was consumed with it and never wavered from it.
2. Jesus' primary motivation in going to the cross was to please the Father and do His will. Luke 22:42

3. Your service for God cannot come first and foremost to please me, or your L.I.F.E. Group leader, your ministry leader, your mom and dad, or from the people you're ministering to.
4. Your passion must spring forth from a desire to please God, the One who loves you with an everlasting love, has saved you from eternal death and damnation, made you His child, and blessed you with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

**In Conclusion:**

1. As we approach WTB this year, be honest with yourself – where is your passion level?
2. On a scale of 1 to 10, where is it? Remember, we can go through the motions and put on WTB, but if our heart and soul is not in it, we are no better than the church of Laodicea. We must approach ministry for God with a true passion for God.
3. Let's pray, let's be fervent, and let's be zealous for our God!