

## THE CHURCH THAT GIVES GOD A BELLYACHE

TEXT:

**Revelation 3:14-20:**

**14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the Creation of God;**

**15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.**

**16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth.**

**17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:**

**18 I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.**

**19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.**

**20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.**

A lukewarm church is a breeding place for hypocrites and every false doctrine. Furthermore, there is no religion so dangerous as to go only half-way-into Christianity.

Jesus, in this text, is found speaking to us in the midst of the 7 churches as He is walking, inspecting, loving, rebuking, warning, judging, and reproving them. He loves the church and has redeemed it at an awful cost through His sacrifice on the Cross of Calvary. He gave Himself for it that He might present it as a glorious church to God:

**A lukewarm church is a breeding place for hypocrites and every false doctrine.**

**Ephesians 5:27b: that it [the Church] should be holy and without blemish.**

John's vision is of The Son of Man in the midst of the Churches:

**Revelation 1:12-16:**

**12 And I [the apostle John] turned to see the Voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw Seven Golden Candlesticks;**

**13 And in the midst of the Seven Candlesticks One like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.**

**14 His Head and His Hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His Eyes were as a flame of fire;**

**15 And His Feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His Voice as the sound of many waters.**

**16 And He had in His Right Hand Seven Stars: and out of His Mouth went a sharp two-edged Sword: and His Countenance was as the sun shineth in His Strength.**

The care and oversight of the Church belongs to Jesus, for He alone is worthy.

**Our Lord Jesus is a careful observer of His saints, and He knows their true condition better than they do themselves.**

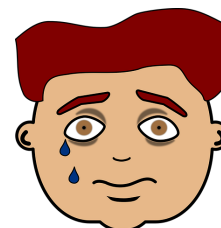
No one else knows the conditions in the church as Jesus does, for He continually walks among the saints. Our Lord Jesus is a careful observer of His saints, and He knows their true condition better than they do themselves. He is the True and Faithful Witness, and as He sees, He speaks:

**2 Chronicles 16:9a: For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth,**

In your undone and lukewarm condition, you may not like it that Jesus is here with us tonight, and He will tell all of us just what we need to know and what we must do. However, remember that Jesus is a tender lover, and in His Own Words:

**Revelation 3:19: As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.**

In the city of Pottsville, Pa., the broken end of a high voltage wire was lying upon the pavement, along which the engineer, Mr. Hildebrand, was walking – unmindful of the fact. Mr. Schlitzer saw the danger and yelled to warn him, but his voice was drowned out by the surrounding noise. Picking up a stone, he threw it and hit Mr. Hildebrand on the chest. Mr. Hildebrand looked up and avoided the wire just as he was about to step on it. With tears streaming down his face, he thanked Mr. Schlitzer for saving his life.



How Jesus loves us, dear hearts, and wants us all to make it in to Heaven.

**1 Peter 4:17b: For the time is come that judgment must begin at the**

**House of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel [Good News] of God?**

Jesus continues to review the Seven Churches:

**Revelation 3:15a: I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot:**

These are the most striking Words that ever fell from the lips of the Master. They lay hold upon every dull, sleeping, lukewarm professing Christian to jar them loose, lest they be vomited out of His mouth.

**Revelation 3:16: So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth.**



Nowhere else in the Bible is Jesus spoken of as being utterly nauseated. There are times when He was grieved — even angry — but here He is represented as being thoroughly sickened by the condition . . . of whom? Who are those which Christ is so displeased with? They are not infidels, atheists, the outspoken, daring sinners, or even deniers of His deity or rejectors of His Word.

There are many thousands of lost souls, sunk so deep in the mire of sin that they are hardened beyond mortal help, but there was not one beyond His sympathy and His tender compassion. Then who can these be? What is wrong?

It was an awful sin that Peter committed on the night of Christ's arrest and betrayal, especially after declaring so boldly that he was ready to go with Jesus both to prison and even unto death.

**Matthew 26:33-35:**



**33 Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended.**

**34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice.**

**35 Peter said unto Him, Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee. Likewise also said all the disciple**

But he did not follow through on his boast. Confronted by a little, worldly brunette with those dark brown eyes, his loyalty to Christ faded into denial, not just once, but again and again.

**Luke 22:54-62:**

**54 Then took they Him [Christ], and led Him, and brought Him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off.**

**55 And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them.**

**56 But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with Him.**



**57 And he denied Him, saying, Woman, I know Him not.**

**58 And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, man, I am not.**

**59 And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with Him: for he is a Galilean.**



**60 And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.**

**61 And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the Word of the Lord, how He had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice.**

**62 And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.**



Peter just happened to look around, and when he saw Jesus looking at Him with eyes filling with tears and a heart pierced, Peter went out and wept bitterly. There was no disgust in Jesus' look, nor did Jesus scorn him.

This is the same way Jesus dealt with the immoral woman that the Pharisees brought and threw at Jesus feet one day. She was a woman of blasted character. She had been a streetwalker, seeking the "good life" in which she enticed many to moral ruin and damnation. But Christ was not disgusted with her. He looked upon her with compassion and gave her a message of hope.

**John 8:11b: Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more.**

Who is the object of Christ's utter contempt? None other than lukewarm Christians, born-again saints. Do I hear you say, "Bless God, I am saved, sanctified, baptized in the Holy Ghost, I have need of nothing more."

**Revelation 3:17: I am rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing. And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, poor, blind, and naked:**

This message did not come to out-and-out sinners, for they have never been in touch with Christ. They have never known His redeeming grace. One who is not a follower of Christ can never wither as Christ's followers sometimes do.

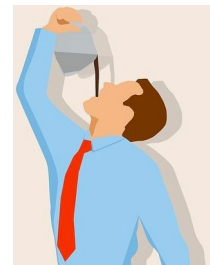
**John 15:6: If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.**

Christ actually declares that He prefers one to be a sinner, despising the Bible, insulting God, and refusing to believe, rather than to be one who is saved but becomes lukewarm:

**Revelation 3:16: Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My Mouth.**

Of course, you might feel better to be lukewarm than to be a lost sinner going to Hell. However, along these lines is the same thought which you might put into these words: "I would rather be a virgin with a lamp gone out than not one at all." But the end of both is dreadful, and that of the lukewarm is more dangerously precarious, for such a one is a hindrance to the Gospel of Christ, damning our souls.

People do not want Christ for what they see in you who are lukewarm! There is no joy, no proof of the reality of Christ in you — the Hope of glory — for you drag the Gospel down to dead, cold formalism, to lukewarm, sickening disgust to those who are lost without Christ. You may never know how Christ feels unless you have had to drink lukewarm water when your mouth is parched and you are very thirsty. There is no refreshing, no rejuvenation, and no help for your deep thirst.



Have you noticed the effect a lukewarm atmosphere has on food? It hastens the food to become spoiled, and no one can eat it because it will make them sick. Likewise, a lukewarm church will become the incubator of the devil to hatch false doctrines and hypocrites, making them spiritually sick.

We have preachers with many degrees after their names — enough to choke a cow — some pestering rather than pastoring beautiful churches, but Jesus sees what is in their hearts.

### **Two men prayed — What was the difference?**

Jesus told us about two men who went to the temple to pray. One of them was a respectable man and the other was an outcast. One of them was honest and the

other was a grafter. Yet on a certain Sabbath morning, both of these men went to temple.

**Luke 18:9-14:** [The Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican]

**9 And He spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:**



**10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.**

**11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.**

**12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.**

**13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.**

**14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.**

The Pharisee was so pleased with himself, but he had a lukewarm soul. That is why he left as he came — with no song and no joy. He felt he needed nothing, therefore sought nothing, and got nothing. He never got to first base with God. His prayer most likely hit the ceiling and bounced back.

The other man was burdened with his guilt, felt the ugliness of his sin and offense, and gnawing agony was in his soul. The Lord tells us that this man **“went down to his house justified”**.

May God waken our churches to get back to the old-time, red-hot, Gospel-preaching, praying, living, and feeling conviction for sin; for most Christians are lukewarm when it comes to holiness. They want to be respectable, but not holy.

**Most  
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to holiness.**

**Luke 11:39: And the LORD said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of revenging [extortion] and wickedness.**

How many do you know who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness and purity of heart? Whose heart-cry is to be like Christ Jesus? I am not here to dilute the Bible to make you feel comfortable with every message. I must give you the loving warning from Him Who cares and loves you with an everlasting love.

Many of you are lukewarm in your praying — the kind that is lame, functionless, weak, and with no tears. Mostly it is a form — a ritual — and not an enjoyment. Remember, if you do not enjoy Jesus on your knees, you will never enjoy Him on your feet.

**If you do not enjoy Jesus on your knees, you will never enjoy Him on your feet.**

If you take a good look at the saints in the New Testament, you will find that they fasted and prayed, even into the wee hours of the night. But those in the 20<sup>th</sup> century who profess Christ hardly pray 15 minutes a day. That is the reason souls are not saved, churches are not powerful for God, and so many of you have turned to the world for your pleasures and entertainment.

The devil will always find somebody around to rear and buck at this kind of preaching, for he wants to discourage you from having a revival. Jesus counts our weak praying, dry-eyed mockery, and empty worship as disgusting and sickening, and He will spew thee out of His mouth (Revelation 3:16).

Lukewarmness can be detected by watching how obedient Church members are to the commandments of Jesus. The ones who are sold out to Him are His true disciples.

**The ones who are sold out to Him are His true disciples.**

***Matthew 16:24: If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.***

**To deny self would mean to be as Jesus was in this world — refusing to please or pet our flesh.**

***1 Peter 2:11: Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;***

***Romans 8:5; 8; 12-13:***

***5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.***

***8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.***

***12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.***

***13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.***

**You can tell where you are in God by the things you follow after, what you are always thinking about, and what you spend your time doing.**

Sinners would not be much impressed with the religion of most of us full-Gospel folk. Did you say you would die for Christ? Well, how will a man die for Christ who will not even spend a minute with Him? Some have never been insulted as Christians — they have never been spit upon or had rotten eggs thrown at them, because they are lukewarm and they make no trouble for sin or the devil.

Some of you will not give up ungodly friendships and love affairs for Jesus because you have not the love of God in your heart. Many of you will not risk your job for Christ, or reprove the ungodly for using the Name of your Lord in vain.



**If you really mean to be a true Christ follower, you will not be satisfied until you are red-hot-on-fire for God.**

Many who profess to be Christians are not made of the stuff that sinners throw stones at, or tie to the stake and burn, or persecute unto strange cities, for many never lost a night's sleep nor missed a meal for the sake of Jesus. Modern, lukewarm church members are not the kind that are thrown in lion's den, or into fiery furnaces, nor do their faces shine as Stephen's did when he was being stoned by the Christ-hating mob. Can they give up their cigarettes, pipe, snuff, for the pleasures of Christ who died on the Cross? Does Jesus mean that much to them?

May God forgive those of us who are lukewarm preachers. Too many do not want to hurt people's feelings, but those people will be in everlasting torment because of our smooth sayings which come from the pulpit. Who do you want to make feel bad, Brethren, the Lord Jesus, or those who are sinning against Him?

We hardly have many John the Baptist preachers left today. He boldly told Herod the tetrarch [a ruler of a part of the Roman Empire] who had married his brother Philip's wife, that was unlawful for him to have her:

**Matthew 14:3-10:**

***3 For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife.***

***4 For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her.***

***5 And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.***

***6 But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod.***

***7 Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask.***

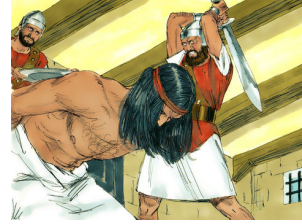
***8 And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger.***





**9 And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her.**

**10 And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison.**

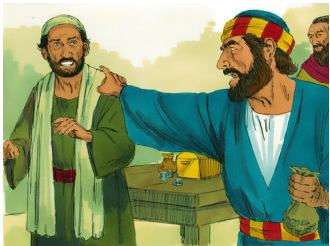


We don't rebuke those like Ananias and Sapphira who sold a possession, but kept back part of the price, thereby lying to the Holy Spirit. Yet we will gladly extend the right hand of fellowship for those dollars.

**Acts 5:1-11:**

**1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,**

**2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.**



**3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?**

**4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but**

**unto God.**

**5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost [died]: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.**

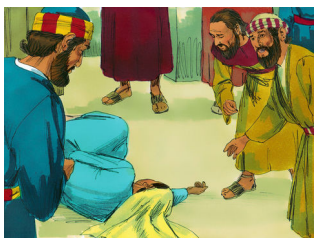
**6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.**



**7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.**

**8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.**

**9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.**



**10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.**

**11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.**

How many of you are willing workers to build a bigger congregation and make an impression for the District and receive a pat on the back from Headquarters – but for Christ, you will do little. It is not hard to herd some of you to a social, a party, or out for supper, but how many will speak to a soul about Christ. Our preaching does not break the hard hearts; it does not move us, so how can it move the lost!

Many are lukewarm in the reading of their Bibles. Many are lazy about searching the Scriptures – no heart hungers for the Word of Life, the Heavenly manna. Many know more about the American professional boxer, Cassius Clay, than they do about Samson; more about Mutt and Jeff from the comic strip, than Paul and Silas. Many can remember street addresses, telephone numbers, dates, baseball scores, and popular worldly songs, but can't remember the Word of God.

When the newspaper, the detective story, and the magazines take the place of God's Word, it is a sure sign that the heart is lukewarm. It is proof that the Lord has been crowded out, and that many are backslidden.

**What is wrong with the lukewarm? There is no earnestness, no fervent spirit, and no enthusiasm for the building up of the church. This half-hearted dedication paralyzes the church and robs us of our spiritual strength.**

What must a lukewarm Christian do to become hot for God? First, find out what cooled off. Here it is: *"I am rich, increased in goods, and have need of nothing. I am saved, sanctified, filled with the Spirit, need nothing, get nothing."*

***Revelation 3:17: Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:***

Do not flatter yourself and cheat your soul by thinking that you will make it to Heaven in this condition.

Thank God, there is a remedy. "Be zealous, therefore and repent." This is the hardest thing we can ever do, but it is the *only thing* to bring us back to God and set us on fire.

Then come the wonderful Promises of blessings from Christ, with further instructions which must be heeded.

***Revelation 3:18: I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.***

What a pity that the Church should ever have been cut away from her primitive

**Do not flatter yourself and cheat your soul by thinking that you will make it to Heaven in this condition.**

beauty. But such is the experienced we find — purity and power being deluded and disoriented to corruption and infidelity. This fulfills the saying of the Prophet Joel:

**Joel 1:4: That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten.**

Here is the nudist church:

**Revelation 3:18b: that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.**

Sin originated nudism in the Garden of Eden, and wherever it is found today, rebellion against God is at the root. It must be terrible to be exposed in the flesh, but it is **suicide to be naked, spiritually**. Like Samson, many saints who have fallen into sin are now “grinding in the mill”, stripped of the beauty, the anointing, and the fire of the Spirit.



If you treat the Lord Jesus as the Children of Israel did, you will have their experiences. Blindness will happen to you, and instead of the blessings there will be curses. Instead of joy there will be sorrow. Instead of victory, there will be defeat. Those who say God will not deal with the lukewarm the way He dealt with Israel are saying He has changed and does not look on sin as He used to.

It makes the Lord sick at His stomach as He is looking around here today with all these lukewarm, indifferent church members. They have not enough power to move a sitting hen, and they just go to church and sit like they were in a cast.

The Church of Laodicea is making lukewarm people — the last church listed at the close of the church age,

**2 Timothy 3:5a: Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof:**

This will be the last-day doctrine — a departing from the faith:

**1 Timothy 4:1b: in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils;**

**2 Thessalonians 2:3a: Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first,**

You may think I am severely rebuking you, but it is only because I love you. Had I hated you, I would have let you go to your ruination. Better is a frown of a friend than a flattering smile of an enemy. We have been saved from many destructive actions by God's rebuke and chastening. If it were not for the revelation of God's Word, most of us would be utterly puzzled and unable to explain why afflictions

come our way, as in the case of Job. Often we think that if God lifts His chastening rod and afflicts us, it is in wrath, but our text solves this riddle. Jesus clearly tells us:

***Revelation 3:19a: As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten . . .***

God pulls the reins a little tighter on His loved ones, for there is a tendency for us to play fast and loose, and to lust after the flesh. God therefore rebukes His children thru His Word, His witnesses, and by the World, as in the case of Samson. It is so easy to play around with sin when we become idle and indifferent to the things of God. This is the lukewarmness that makes Jesus sick, and He will spew thee out, except you repent.

**It is so easy to play around with sin when we become idle and indifferent to the things of God.**

Jesus always comes to nip sinful heart-motives in the bud. We can hardly realize all the treacherous, fleshly habits that only He sees and knows, which He often causes us to discover by painful chastening and rebukes. We feel it would be like plucking out an eye to depart from a cherished habit, but He knows it would break our walk with Him.

***Revelation 3:20a: Behold, I stand at the door, and knock:***

I am willing to come in, reluctant to stay out. Oh, hear Him knocking, to awaken you sleeping virgins. If any man — any individual — will open the door! Only you can do this, for He will not force His way in. What a wonderful offer of love — of real friendship and companionship which He yearns to have with you, but you have shut Him out by a lukewarm heart. ***“If any man hear My voice”***. Oh, how pitiful it is when His voice is drowned out by other calls.



***Revelation 3:15b -16:***

***15b I . . . would thou wert cold or hot***

***16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I WILL SPEW THEE OUT OF MY MOUTH.***

One night while having a testimony meeting, a brother rose in the audience and said: *“I am a Methodist. A Methodist is like a buckwheat cake. They’re fine when they’re hot, but when they are cold, they aren’t worth a cuss.”* This set off an old African-American preacher who got up and added, *“Brethren, I am one of those Methodist buckwheat cakes — but the good Lord left me on the griddle until I got good and brown.”*

That’s where we all need to be — on the griddle until we’re good and hot for the

things of the Lord.

What is lukewarm? One who is half-hearted, shallow, spiritually flabby, and soft on sin. How many who are lukewarm hunger and thirst after righteousness? None. They do not hate iniquity, nor do they labor fervently in prayer.

***Colossians 4:12: Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the Will of God.***

No sweat, no tears.

The lukewarm are weak in Scriptural holiness. They love the world and the things of the world too much to live separated unto God. They turn to it for pleasure and satisfaction, for they are too far from God to find it in Him.

The lukewarm are weak in Scriptural holiness.

The Lukewarm do not deny themselves, nor take up their cross to follow Jesus as He has said to do. **To take up the cross means we refuse to please the flesh.** The Bible says:

***1 Peter 2:11b: . . . abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;***

But the carnal — the lukewarm — ignore, resent, and twist this Scripture around to live after the flesh. They sow to the flesh, and they shall of the flesh reap corruption.

Jesus told the Laodiceans what a flop they were spiritually. They were lukewarm and blinded to their true condition. They needed to be told, warned, and rebuked; and this is what Jesus did.

He loves us too much to allow us to go on deceived in our own self-righteousness.

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