

## Be Strong #29

### Oxymoron

Oxymoron! Isn't that an interesting word---conjoining, contradictory terms. What are your favorite oxymorons? Here are a few – deafening silence, alone together, liquid gas, seriously funny, pretty ugly, freezer burn, rolling stop, and my personal favorite, jumbo shrimp. But what about this word combination---*lukewarm Christian*? Have you ever thought of that as an oxymoron? The only time in scripture that the word “lukewarm” is used is Revelation 3:15-18, *“I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm – neither hot nor cold – I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put in your eyes, so you can see.”*

Jesus is dictating to John, letters to the Revelation churches, but when he gets to Laodicea he calls them lukewarm. They are a group of people who meet at a synagogue or a church building, but they are not a church anymore. A church is a group of baptized followers of Christ; they were not. There was a time when they were genuine believers, but over time, they left the faith because of misguided theology and the world's influence.

The main street church in Laodicea was filled with lost religious people, and Jesus was repulsed by their apostate behavior – outward profession, but inward rebellion. How could that be? Aren't all religious people who go to protestant churches in America Christian? Not really. In fact, Jesus said in Matthew 7:17-20 that it is possible to be a regular church attendee, a Tallowood member, and not have a relationship with Christ. It's possible that a person at Tallowood could be counting on what they did in the past and their religious activity today to secure a place in heaven someday. Just because a person hears the message of Christ, prays a prayer of acceptance and is baptized, does not confirm their place in heaven someday. The test of a genuine follower of Christ is fruit. The fact is that it is impossible to be a non-fruit-bearing Christian (another oxymoron). This is true based on Jesus' parable of the soils. Check it out in Matthew 13:3-9 and 18-23. Only those that have Christ inside will produce spiritual fruit. What fruit? It's the fruit of the spirit described in Galatians 5:22-23, love, joy, peace, etc.

What about you? Does the spirit of God live in you? Is He manifesting his life through you or are you a really good religious person that makes going to church a priority because it's the right thing to do? Do you walk with Christ everyday allowing him to lead you in decisions or do you rarely think about him past noon on Sunday? Being a genuine transformed follower of Christ is a relationship, not an acquaintance. Children of God will often talk with their heavenly father. He speaks and we obey. The enemy, Satan, would love nothing more than for churches today to be filled with people who think that their eternity is secure in heaven just because of a prayer they prayed as a six year old that did not transform their lives. The Lord says to examine yourselves (2 Corinthians 13:5). Don't ask someone else what they think, ask God. Be sure! For your sake and for your children's sake. They need parents who walk with Christ and set an example for them to follow. May the word of Paul be your words to your children, “Follow me as I follow Christ,” (1 Corinthians 11:1). Be strong in the Lord and remember you are the parent!  
In His Joy!

Jerome  
Ephesians 2:10