

I. 2008 Extreme Commitment Pastor Gee Sprague January 13, 2008

- A. There are a lot of people out there who can tell you how best to live yourself. Everyone is entitled to their opinion, but let's look at how some famous people handled the age old question of "Why did the chicken cross the road?"
1. DR. PHIL: The problem we have here is that this chicken won't realize that he must first deal with the problem on 'THIS' side of the road before it goes after the problem on the 'OTHER SIDE' of the road. What we need to do is help him realize how stupid he's acting by not taking on his 'CURRENT' problems before adding 'NEW' problems.
 2. OPRAH: Well, I understand that the chicken is having problems, which is why he wants to cross this road so bad. So instead of having the chicken learn from his mistakes and take falls, which is a part of life, I'm going to give this chicken a car so that he can just drive across the road and not live his life like the rest of the chickens.
 3. ANDERSON COOPER - CNN: We have reason to believe there is a chicken, but we have not yet been allowed to have access to the other side of the road.
 4. NANCY GRACE: That chicken crossed the road because he's GUILTY! You can see it in his eyes and the way he walks.
 5. MARTHA STEWART: No one called me to warn me which way that chicken was going. I had a standing order at the Farmer's Market to sell my eggs when the price dropped to a certain level. No little bird gave me any insider information.
 6. DR SEUSS: Did the chicken cross the road? Did he cross it with a toad? Yes, the chicken crossed the road, but why it crossed I've not been told.
 7. GRANDPA: In my day we didn't ask why the chicken crossed the road. Somebody told us the chicken crossed the road, and that was good enough.
 8. BARBARA WALTERS: Isn't that interesting? In a few moments, we will be listening to the chicken tell, for the first time, the heart warming story of how it experienced a serious case of molting, and went on to accomplish its life long dream of crossing the road.
 9. BILL GATES: I have just released eChicken2009, which will not only cross roads, but will lay eggs, file your important documents, and balance your check book. Internet Explorer is an integral part of eChicken This new platform is much more stable and will never cra...#@&&^(C% reboot.
 10. ALBERT EINSTEIN: Did the chicken really cross the road, or did the road move beneath the chicken?
 11. BILL CLINTON: I did not cross the road with THAT chicken. What is your definition of chicken?
 12. AL GORE: I invented the chicken!
 13. COLONEL SANDERS: Did I miss one?
 14. DICK CHENEY: Where's my gun?

B. Last week we talked about Jesus' opinion of two churches: Sardis and Philadelphia. Today we are going to look at another church and see Jesus' thoughts on their condition.

C. Revelation 3:14-22 (NRSV) *"And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the origin of God's creation: {15} 'I know your works; you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were either cold or hot. {16} So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth. {17} For you say, 'I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing.' You do not realize that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. {18} Therefore I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire so that you may be rich; and white robes to clothe you and to keep the shame of your nakedness from being seen; and salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. {19} I reprove and discipline those whom I love. Be earnest, therefore, and repent. {20} Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me. {21} To the one who conquers I will give a place with me on my throne, just as I*

myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. {22} Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches."

D.We like extremes

E.Extreme Sports are amazing.

1. My first skateboard was an old wooden plank my dad had in his scrap wood pile that we cut and shaped to about 30 inches long 5 inches wide base that I then took an old pair of roller skates apart and nailed them to the bottom and then we looked for the steepest driveway in the neighborhood.
2. I grew up on a lake in Orlando and my buddies and I spent a lot of afternoons after school and summer days skiing.
 - a. You were a god if you could Slalom ski or ski barefoot.
 - b. Nobody was catching air and doing rollovers and 360s on wakeboards.
3. What a kid can do on a bicycle, roller blades, or snow ski's is simply amazing.

F.Human nature likes extremes.

G.Obviously so does Jesus!

II. **Jesus likes Extremes!**

A.Revelation 3:14-(NRSV) *"And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the origin of God's creation: {15} "I know your works; you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were either cold or hot. {16} So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth.*

B.Laodicea was situated in a location where there was no natural water source.

C.Just North was Hieropolis where there was a Hot Springs.

D.South east was Colossae, where the water source was a cold Spring.

E.Any water that came to Laodicea would be neither hot or cold, but lukewarm

F.Laodicea's reputation was not good.

G.Any coffee drinkers here?

1. There are two ways that people like coffee. Hot or cold.
2. I don't know many people who like lukewarm coffee.
3. Lee Lyon likes it hot
 - a. Show the insulated Carafe for the Coffee Maker.

H.I don't drink a lot of ice, cold types of coffee.

1. About 15 years ago, before Starbucks had conquered the world, we went out to like an Ale House Sports restaurant to watch the Florida Georgia Game.
2. One of our friends was home from college during his freshmen year.
3. You know how freshmen always return, more cosmopolitan.
4. The waiter was this big guy, who looked like he should be on the defensive line for the Gators.
5. He asked him, "do you have iced coffee?"
6. The waiter looked a little baffled, then he answered, "We got ice, we got Coffee! Yeh, we got iced coffee."
7. There are some things that I do like cold, milk.
8. I like 33 degree milk, actually with a thin coat of ice.

9. I have heard that people like a warm glass of milk, but nobody likes it lukewarm.

I.I think the Christian faith needs to be lived at extreme altitudes, higher risks, hot or cold, but not lukewarm.

J.Even though our Salvation is based on grace, not on our works or ability to keep the law.

K.Jesus is looking for people who will live out their relationship with Extreme Faith, making extreme commitments.

L.**90% is** _____

M.Bill Hybels has established a mantra at Willow Creek Church.

1. From time to time he will ask the congregation, "What is 90% commitment?"

2. They answer: **10% short**

N.Too many of us are getting by on 20, 30, 40, or 50% commitment.

O.Extreme Commitment is 100%

III. The Church at Laodicea needed an **Extreme Makeover!**

A.Laodicea was a city that was known for its wealth. It was a center of banking, much like Jacksonville.

B.There were two items that were produced in the area for which they had quite a reputation and fueled the Laodicean economy.

1. The clothing industry was booming.

a. The sheep from the area produced a high quality wool that was known worldwide

2. It was also known for manufacturing a salve for the eyes.

C.Now listen to the rebuke that the risen Jesus gives this church and their community.

D.*{17} For you say, 'I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing.' You do not realize that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. {18} Therefore I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire so that you may be rich; and white robes to clothe you and to keep the shame of your nakedness from being seen; and salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. {19} I reprove and discipline those whom I love. Be earnest, therefore, and repent.*

E.Jesus holds His spiritual mirror up to the church and says you are *poor, blind, and naked*.

F.You may have a booming economy but you are spiritually poor.

G.You may produce a medicine to soothe and heal your physical eyes, but you are spiritually blind.

H.You may produce and wear designer high-priced clothes, but you are naked.

I.Jesus invites the people to invest in His kingdom, to be clothed in His righteousness, and to have their spiritual eyes healed so they can really see.

J.(William Barclay and Warren Wiersbe commentaries on Rev 3)

IV. Extreme commitment comes from Extreme _____!

A.*{20} Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me.*

B.This is one of the most quoted verses from the New Testament.

C.There is a great picture that was painted by Holman Hunt, and has inspired many other artists and can be seen often captured in stain glass that shows Jesus standing at a door knocking.

D.When you look closer, you notice that there is no outside door handle.

E.The door has to be opened from inside.

F.The Laodiceans had closed their hearts to Jesus, but Jesus had not closed His to them.

G. Matthew 6:21 (NRSV) *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

H. Tim Sanders, *Love is the Killer App*, p. 159 "Compassion creates commitment--....."

I. Extreme commitment comes from Extreme Love!

V. **Extreme Victory**

A. Mamo Waldi of Ethiopia won the 1968 Olympic Marathon. During the next hour the remaining field would trickle over the finish. As the last few thousand spectators began preparing to leave, they heard police sirens and whistles through the gate entering the stadium. The attention turned to that gate. A sole figure, wearing the colors of Tanzania, came limping into the stadium. His name was John Steven Aquari. He was the last man to finish the marathon in 1968. His leg was blood and bandaged from a bad fall early in the race. Now, it was all he could do to limp his way around the track. The crowd stood and applauded as he completed that last lap.

When he finally crossed the finish line, one man dared ask the question all were wondering. "You are badly injured. Why didn't you quit? Why didn't you give up?"

Aquari, with quiet dignity said, "My country did not send me seven thousand miles to start this race. My country sent me to finish."

So it is with God. God didn't just send you to start this race. He didn't just send you to perform a lukewarm task or to have a lukewarm relationship with Him. We have been sent to be faithful, to have a life that is extremely, 100% committed to Jesus, 90% is not, giving up is not acceptable. -- Craig Brian Larson, "Strong to the Finish," Preaching Today, Tape No. 155.

B. {21} *To the one who conquers I will give a place with me on my throne, just as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. {22} Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches."*

VI. 2008 Covenant Card

A. Financial Covenant is for your accountability.

B. Our Fiscal year is presently April to March.

1. Our next year's budget will be dictated more by this quarter's giving, not the amount you wrote on the card.
2. The amount you wrote on the card represents a commitment that you are making.
3. To give systematically and on a regular basis.
4. To give first fruits, not what is left over.
5. To trust.
6. To becoming a percentage giver.
7. Ultimately to become a tither, 10% of your income.

C. *John Wesley's Covenant: I am no longer my own, but yours. Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will; put me to doing, put me to suffering; let me be employed for you or laid aside for you, exalted for you or brought low for you; let me be full, let me be empty; let me have all things, let me have nothing; I freely and heartily yield all things to your pleasure and disposal. And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are mine, and I am yours. So be it. And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.*