a. How is the faith of these Christians clear? Actions of faith appear to be increasing: Kindness to others, service.

b. List the works of love, faith, service, and patient endurance show at our church by individual members or groups: _____

6. The Condemnation (2:20-23)

a. Who was Jezebel? (see 1 Kings 16:29-18 and 2 Kings 9): Lead people to worship Baal. She was power-crazed

b. What are some "Jezebels" facing the church today? _____

c. What is the Lord's attitude toward compromising practices? He will not accept compromise. He is in control.

7. The Correction (2:24-25)

a. What is the correction that is required? (see also verse 21) Repent and change

b. According to verse 25, those not participating in such activity can fight it off and come out victorious by holding fast to what they have. What is it they (and we) have? How do we "hold fast to" (or "get a firm grip on") it? _____ Faith in Jesus. The Holy spirit does it for us. Word and Sacrament, attending worship, being a part of God's Church.

8. The Call and Challenge (2:26-29)

a. Evaluate life and the church in light of God's Word.

1. These verses pull form Psalm 2:8-9 where the coming Messiah's reign over the heathen is prophesied. Christ gives to His own (the conquerors) the very thing others thought they lacked. What does He give to His faithful? Why that? Authority with Him in heaven. Jesus has the authority to give us this promise.

b. How is it that we become conquerors? ___God give it.__ _His promises is eternal._____

c. The second thing given is “the morning star.” Look at Revelation 22:16. What is the bright morning star? _____ __Jesus_____

d. How can such promises bring help, comfort, and encouragement to people in similar situations today? _God cares for us in every circumstance._____

6. A prayer for God's blessing upon His Church:

   Almighty God, grant to Your Church Your Holy Spirit and the wisdom which comes down from heaven that your Word may not be bound but have free course and be preached to the joy and edifying of Christ's holy people, that in steadfast faith we may serve You and in the confession of Your name abide to the end; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

F. To the Church in Sardis (3:1-6)

1. The Church (3:1)



   1. Sardis was known around the world for dyed wool fabrics; it is said that the dying of fabrics was invented there. Electrum, a kind of bronze metal, was first produced here. Gold dust had been found and once was plentiful in the Pactolus *{pack-TOL-us}* stream that flowed through Sardis. History records gold and silver coins were first minted at Sardis.
   2. The city of Sardis had an interesting past. It was located on a major Roman trade route about halfway between Thatira and Philadelphia. Actually, Sardis consisted of two towns, one located on a plateau and the other in the fertile valley below. The city on the plateau was virtually inaccessible, but, because the people of Sardis failed to keep watch, the city was overrun twice in its history by enemies utilizing surprise attacks at night. *(Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me?")*
   3. Question for reflection:
      1. Is this a danger for our church today?
   4. As is the case with other churches in Revelation, nothing is known about the founding and early growth of the church at Sardis beyond what is contained in this letter.
   5. This letter suggests a degree of religious and moral laziness had crept into church. There was no specific heresy, no persecution, no suffering.
      1. Perhaps they were so secure in their life-style that there was no reason to attack them.
      2. Perhaps they had all the forms of Christian life, but were empty shells, only outwardly religious.

3. Some commentaries call them the "sleeping saints of Sardis." To this church the risen Christ writes one of the most harsh of the seven letters in Revelation.

6. What picture of the Christ is given here? _____
Authority, all knowing

7. What message is conveyed? _____
Shape up / Jesus has the right to tell us what to do

8. The meaning of the "seven spirits" is _____
Seven gifts of the Holy Spirit Note 1:4 Jesus gives it.

2. The Condemnation (3:2)

1. What is the concern expressed about this church? _____
The church is dying spiritually

2. What is the relationship between faith and works according to James 2:14-16? _____
Real faith generates good deeds

3. What do you think about this definition of faith from Luther? *"Faith is a divine work in us which transforms us and gives us a new birth from God (John 1:13) and kills the Old Adam… Oh, it is a living, busy, active and mighty thing, this faith: it cannot but be ever doing good. Faith does not ask if there are good works to be done, but has them done before one can ask and is ever a-doing. But whoever does not do such works is a man without faith: he goes groping about in search of faith and good works and knows neither what faith nor good works are."* _____
_____

4. What is the remedy suggested in this verse for "deadness"?
Wake up. Start acting out the faith.

5. Is this needed in the Church today?
Our congregation today? Why?

J. Some things to think about in light of Revelation 2 and 3

1. Which of Jesus' condemnations or warnings strikes closest to the heart of the Church today?
_____
_____
_____

2. How do the divisions in the Church of John's day compare with the things that divide the Church today?
_____
_____
_____

3. Do you feel Jesus was too harsh in His demand for faithfulness under persecution? Would you make the same demand if our government today were to insist that we worship it?
_____
_____
_____

4. Is there a difference between insisting Christians be faithful and insisting that Christians be morally pure?
_____
_____
_____

5. How has this study of these letters helped you in your Christian walk of faith?
_____
_____

3. The Correction (3:3-4)
    1. The correction required is to:
        1. Remember
        2. Obey
        3. Repent
    2. Note well the warning attached (Is this serious?) There is real judgment.
    3. To the faithful few there is the promise of walking with Christ dressed in white. What does this mean? How are they worthy? Because of their faith in Jesus

4. The Call and Challenge (3:5-6)
    1. What is the "book of life"? (See: Revelation 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27; also, Philippians 4:3; Psalm 69:28; 139:16; Isaiah 4:3; Daniel 12:1; Malachi 3:16 Ephesians 1:3-6) A reference to all believers

Church	Commendations	Condemnations	Promise
Ephesus "The orthodox church"	good works; patience; sound doctrine; church discipline; hatred of evil (2:2-3,6)	loss of love; backsliding (2:4-5) Promises to overcomers	heavenly food (2:7)
Smyrna "The poor, rich church"	spiritual endurance; heavenly treasure (2:9-10)	Sins & weaknesses rebuked: no reproof Promises to overcomers	a crown of life (2:10)
Pergamum "The church with bad environment"	perseverance in evil environment (2:13)	Sins & weaknesses rebuked: tolerance of wrong doctrines and heretics (2:14-15)	hidden spiritual blessings; divine food; a new name (2:17)
Thyatira "The church of the evil prophetess"	love; spiritual service; faith and patience (2:19)	lax discipline; tolerance of a corrupt prophetess (2:20-23)	spiritual authority and illumination (2:26-28)
Sardis "The dying church"	none for most members; some commended for purity (3:4)	extreme formalism; spiritual death imminent; inactivity (3:1)	a robe of righteousness; heavenly record and recognition (3:5)
Philadelphia "The weak but loyal church"	keeping of "My Word" testimony (3:8)	Sins & weaknesses rebuked: none recorded	to become spiritual pillars; bearing a divine inscription (3:12)
Laodicea "The rich, poor church"	none recorded	lukewarmness; spiritual conceit; no conscious poverty; spiritual blindness (3:15-17)	divine fellowship; spiritual enthronement (3:21)

G. To the Church in Philadelphia (3:7-13)

1. The Church (3:7)
    1. Located 28 miles southeast of Sardis, the city of Philadelphia became an important commercial city, because it was located as a border town on the bank of the Cogamus River. It was also situated in a large volcanic plain, making the soil very productive, excellent for growing grapes. The city was so proud of its wine and its wine festivals that the head of Bacchus, the wine god, was put on Philadelphia's coins.
    2. The city of Philadelphia was founded between 159-138 B.C., for the specific purpose of spreading the Greek culture and language to the regions of Lydia and Phyrgia. History records that when the Turks and Mohammedinism flooded across Asia Minor, the city of Philadelphia resisted and for centuries was the only free Greek Christian city among a pagan people. Philadelphia was the last stronghold of Asian Christianity.
    3. As is the case with other churches in Revelation, nothing is known about the founding and early growth of the Church at Philadelphia beyond what is contained in this letter. It was apparently the youngest of the churches in Revelation and receives the tenderest and highest praise from the risen Christ. There is no rebuke. It is a small church, but it is faithful. The problem is not one of emperor worship, but rather Jews who have rejected Jesus as the Christ and are upset over the proclamation of Jesus Christ by these Christians in the area of Philadelphia.
    4. What picture of the Christ is given here? _____
    Holy and true, Holds key of David, Opens doors
    5. What message is conveyed? Jesus says He is the Savior. Encouragement to continue to believe.

Jesus provides faith to see Spiritual blindness

2. The Correction (3:19-20)
    1. Why is God at times harsh with His people?
    He loves them and wants them to repent
    2. What characteristics of Jesus come through in these verses?
    Love, patience, persistence, inviting, discipline, faithfulness
    3. How does the door open? (See: Romans 1:16; Philippians 1:6, 2:13; 1 Corinthians 12:3). Note the sequence of events in: Romans 10:14-17) God opens the door by faith when we hear the Word.
    4. Why does Jesus speak about eating with those who open the door? Fellowship with God.
3. The Call and Challenge 3:21
    1. What are the rewards to those conquering complacency and lukewarmness? Reign with Jesus

I. A Summary of the Seven Letters to the Church

9. What is meant by "beginning of God's creation"?
(See: John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16-17)
Origin and source Lord over, ruler

1. The Condemnation (3:15-18)
    1. Why the severity of God here. What is God's purpose in being so harsh?
God is desperate for us to repent and return to Him
    2. Note 3:19-21 need to be read together with these verses. Why? God rebukes and disciplines those He loves.
    3. What is meant by the statement, "would that you were cold or hot"? If 'cold' then in need of mission/care. If 'hot' praised and working the mission.
    4. Note God's counsel:
        1. "buy gold refined in the fire"
(See: 1 Peter 1:3-7; James 1:2-4) Gold becomes refined and pure by 'trial'
        5. "buy…white garments"
(See: Matthew 22:11-14; Revelation 7:9-17)
Put on Christ-faith covers our sins
        6. "buy…salve…that you may see"
(See: Isaiah 35:3-5; Luke 7:22)

6. A literal translation of "the true one" is "the real or genuine one, not an imitation; the opposite of that which is unreal." What would this say to the people of Philadelphia?
He is the only one who can truly help
7. What does it say to the people of our day?
8. See Isaiah 22:20ff What is the meaning of the phrase "key of David"? Keys of the kingdom

2. The Commendation (3:8-10)
    1. What is the "open door"? Is there an "open door" today?
There is a door of opportunity to proclaim Jesus
    2. In spite of the fact this church was not large this group of believers had been very busy. What had they done?
Mission work in the city. Done in patient love

3. The Correction (3:11)
    1. What is the warning? Percecution is coming. Remain faithful
    2. What is the promise? Christ is coming soon. Hang on the trial will end.
    3. What is the word of comfort? The reward, eternal life is for the faithful
    4. Why is it important that the Christian and the Church keep a focus to the future? Challenges will come. Be prepared for them. Trust God.

4. The Call and Challenge (3:12)

1. What is the hope that is offered?
    1. Pillar in the Temple. Permanent, forever.
    2. Never let go.
    3. Bare God's name. Belong to God.
    4. New Jerusalem
    5. Jesus name.

H. To the Church in Laodicia (3:14-22)

1. The Church (3:14)
    1. Located southeast of Philadelphia, Laodicia was founded in 250 B.C. by Antiochus of Syria. The city was named after his wife Laodice. Besides being the capitol of the region of Phyrgia Laodicea was a rich city, renowned as a center of commerce, banking, and cloth manufacturing. As a cloth manufacturing center, Laodicia was famous for especially carpets and garments woven from the soft wool of black sheep. Laodicia was also famous for its medical school were they had developed a remedy for weak eyes.
    2. Laodicea was a busy city because it was strategically located at the convergence of three main roads in Asia Minor. It was a very wealthy city. When the city was destroyed by an earthquake in 60 A.D., it refused financial aid from the government in rebuilding the city. The people rebuilt on their own. In the surrounding area there was a very large Jewish population.
    3. Laodicea, however, had one major problem. All of its water supply had to come via underground aqueduct from springs six miles away. By the time the cold water flowed through the aqueduct system to the city, the water was lukewarm; the

same true for hot water. It was a problem referred to in the letter to the church in Laodicia.

4. Colossians 4:12-17 gives some hints as to the development of the church at Laodicea. Epaphras was probably the founder of this church. There may have been a lose relationship between the churches in Colossae and Laodicea. Paul wrote a letter from Rome to the church in Laodicea, but it has been lost. Very early Church documents name Archippus as being the first bishop of Laodicea.
5. In Revelation Jesus spoke His most severe condemnation for the church at Laodicea. Here was a church located in an affluent, prosperous and self-sufficient society. One would expect great things from a people so blessed by the Lord. To the contrary, the Laodicean church gave only a half-hearted response. Complacency had set in. They lacked such important things as desire, warmth, enthusiasm, and a sense of urgency about matters of the Church. Christ attempts to heat up this lukewarm church.
6. Is this concern evident in churches today?

    _____

    _____

7. What is the meaning of Jesus being called the "Amen"? (See: 2 Corinthians 1:18-20)

    _____

    _____

8. What else is Jesus called? How does this fit with the tone of the letter? Faithful, True, the beginning of God's creation

    _____