

Oct 24, 10 Revelation 3:14-22

## KNOCK, KNOCK

If I began this sermon by saying “God is good” I know most of you would say, “all the time.” You would wait until I said, “And all the time” and you all would rousingly respond, “God is good!” And so he is this morning. Our loving and amazing God is good and wants to fill us with his grace, his power, his presence and of course his love, for this is truly the day the Lord has made, so let us rejoice and be glad in it for he has a message for us to hear, a message he hopes will fall on fresh ears.

Many, many years ago there was a TV program called ‘Laugh-in’ that I know some of you older ones remember. Like Saturday Night Live many actors and actresses found a future by being on that show. People like Goldie Hawn, for one, and Lilly Tomlin, and a few others whose name I can’t remember. That’s where they got their start. On the show there was a segment where there were windows where when opened a face could be seen. So with others hidden behind each window there would be a knock at the window and on the other side would come, “Who’s there?” and then the rest of the knock, knock joke would come. The world laughed with them weekly and throughout those years more and more ‘knock-knock’ jokes appeared. So you see, knock, knock jokes have been around a long, long time. So long that I just can’t think of any funny ones from the past, but every once in awhile a new old one pops up. And if I was brave enough to go through the sequence, which

I'm not, many of you would recall your own favorite ones. Some silly, some that don't make sense, some well, let's just say we all know a knock-knock joke or two.

Today, that is our subject. Not a knock-knock joke, but that there is someone knocking on the door, but not the door of your home, but the door of the seat of your emotions, the place where sins seem to spawn, the place where Jesus wants to live, the place where all things seem to begin and keep us going, the place where peace and joy can be found, and that is your hearts mixed in with all that worldly stuff.

Let me tell you a story about Jesus. One day Jesus came into town to check it out. He went up one street and down the other. Not many people stopped to welcome him to their community, nor did they pay any attention to him. Maybe they thought he was just a homeless person looking for a handout. He just went on his way going through the neighborhood seeing what kind of a community this was and if he would be welcomed. He checked out the stores, the schools, the local churches, the restaurants and well, you get the picture. As he continued on his way he decided to stop at a home or two. When he got to one house there were windows facing the long walk so the people inside could see who was coming. They spotted the stranger as he approached the door. One of the people inside recognized that it was Jesus from a picture he once saw and he hoped he wouldn't stop at his house because, he was having a few beers, glancing at a magazine that would not be appropriate, had the TV on to a show that he wouldn't want to watch with Jesus. So he kept peeking out the

window hoping this fellow would just go away. It became very quiet and they moved to another part of the house so that they could not be seen. And then it happened. The doorbell rang. Now what should they do? It rang again....and then again. He was pretty persistent, they thought. Should they answer? Should they tell him to go away, that they weren't interested in what he had to say? Maybe he didn't see the sign that said "No Solicitors!" Out of the silence came a knock, then another one, then another one.... then silence. The couple inside waited a few more moments, and then holding their breath they tiptoed into the living room where they could see Jesus. But this time, all they could see was his back. You see, he stopped ringing their bell; he stopped knocking on their door. He left the house where there was no room for him and went in search of another house that perhaps would invite him in for supper, or a piece of pie and coffee, or just for conversation. There was sadness in that couples eyes as confessed to each other that their lives were not prepared for Jesus to come and visit. They looked around and saw so many worldly things, but nothing religious. No worn-out Bible on the table, no pictures about their faith, nothing that would let anyone who entered know that at least sometime in their lives, they at least had attended church. Like the innkeeper who had no room for baby Jesus, these folks, this house had no room for Jesus the Savior.

So we turn to today's Scripture lesson because it is the final church in the saga of the churches in the book of Revelation. This church in Laodicea was a look warm church. You know, neither hot nor cold. It was the

kind of church that had lost its vision, lost its first love, lost its enthusiasm. Oh, they did some good things, took care of some people, they did some mission projects and all that, but something was missing and like the other churches we looked at a few months ago, God wasn't too pleased with them. He was getting close to snuffing out their candle. They had lost their light. They had lost their illumination. They had lost their brilliance to draw others to this place where Jesus could be found, faith could grow, and missions to the world could go on. Their flame was growing weaker and weaker, like when a candle runs out of oil, or has burned down to nothing. Since they were neither hot nor cold God was about to spit that church out of his mouth. Have you ever had warm water when you were looking for refreshing cold water? It tastes awful. Most people might take a sip and then cast it aside. With hot water you can make tea. With cold water you can have refreshing lemonade. But no one likes lukewarm water. It tastes yucky to say the least, and most people do spit it out.

Hear now God's word of warning...of challenge...of preparation....words of love for us his children. You see, we are the church that he is talking to. As the hymn goes, "I am the church, you are the church, and we are the church together. All who follow Jesus all around the world; yes we're the church together." As the concluding verse says, *"Everyone who has ears should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches."* **READ**

Our focus this morning is on verse 20, *“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and eat with you, and you will eat with me.”*

Let’s say Jesus just happened to pop into the town of Williamsville and maybe even attend this church. Let’s say he came to worship this morning in modern day clothing. Do we have any new visitors this morning? Could they be Jesus in disguise? Oh, we know he is already here in some way, but I mean what if the real Jesus attended this church. Would you make room for him in your pew? Would you give him your hymnal while you reached for another? Would you introduce yourself and tell him how glad you were that he came to visit your church? What would you tell him about your church? Would you introduce him to those sitting beside you? Would you invite him to stay for coffee fellowship and to the Huddle House for lunch? Or would you ignore him, be afraid to let him come to close to you?

Hear another story. One day Jesus entered a town much like Williamsville on his way to Jericho. No one knew he was coming, there was no big parade, and no signs telling the people Jesus were coming. He just showed up. It just happened to be on the road to where he was going. However, as he entered the town the word spread fast that Jesus was coming down the road. The shop owners got busy cleaning their stores. The little cafés got some tea and cakes ready in case he was hungry and stopped by their places. Everyone was excited

because the man they had heard about was coming to town. Who would have thought this little town would be on his agenda to visit. Maybe he would touch those who were ill. Maybe he would tell a few stories about God to them. Maybe some kind of miracle would happen this day. So the word spread and there was excitement in the air as people came out of the woodwork and lined the streets watching for the man who they heard transformed one person after the other. There were happy smiles, and kids giggling waiting to see Jesus hoping he would hand out candy. No, this wasn't a political thing, so no candy. Since they had no loud speakers, nor email, or twitter, or cell phones, or texting, the word of mouth was the only communications they had. One man went up and down the street yelling "Jesus is coming. Jesus is coming." I guess we might say he was the Paul Revere of his time. On the corner of one street, set back a little was a long line of people grumbling because it was the day that they had to pay their taxes. Sitting at a table was a small man with his bodyguards who each month sat there checking a list making sure Rome got what it was suppose to have, the King of Israel got his share, and of course, he padded the bill so he could have money for himself, plus put some away for a trip to Destin Florida or Orlando to go to Disney World for the winter. The town crier came to pass the word that Jesus was coming so most of the people in line left to go see this man they had heard about. The dreaded tax collector closed up shop because first of all, no more business...second he too wanted to see what this Jesus looked like. He heard the stories as well how Jesus healed people, gave sight, people who were crippled walked again, how

people who lost their way found the way, those who had lost hope found new hope through listening, believing and following him. He heard how this man and his disciples fed many with just a couple of fish and a few loaves of bread, why he even heard he forgave people for their sins. They were taught only God could do that! He wanted to see this man for himself. So he followed the crowd and saw them line the street yelling their praises. He tried to cut in, but no one would make room for him when he tried. You see, he was a hated man because as far as these folks were concerned he was a crook. Zacchaeus didn't give up though and kept walking until finally he almost gave up. Being two and three rows deep and being a short man, well he couldn't see over anyone. If he jumped in the air, he might catch a glimpse of Jesus and his disciples, but it was only the top of their heads he would see. What he wanted was to look into the face of Jesus for himself. Something was drawing him to Jesus this day. Zach spots a sycamore tree and the branches were strong, and well he wasn't too big so he thought to himself maybe if he climbed the tree he could be above the crowd. Sure enough, he climbed the tree, scooted out on a branch and wrapped his legs and arms around the limb and watched for Jesus. "There he is" he heard someone say. And just then, Zach poked his head out a little further between the branches and leaves to see Jesus who was just about upon them. But then there was a surprise. Jesus stopped the parade. He stopped and brushed his disciples aside so he could walk over to the tree on which Zach had attached himself. With a smile on his face Jesus looks up at Zach and says, "Wow! You did this so you could

see me? Zach, how about climbing down from that tree and let's go to your house for something to eat. I got some Good News I want to share with you." Zacchaeus almost fell from the tree in his haste to join Jesus on the walk to his house. Following the meal, Jesus looks over at Zach and kind of puts his hand on his heart and does a knocking kind of knock while saying, "What's in there, Zach? What's going on with your life? You got any room for me there? How about opening the door to your heart and letting me in so that I can transform your life. How about letting me clean all that yucky stuff you got there, all the anger, all the disappointments, all the thievery you've done. Let me have at it so I can make you a better person and instead of being a hated person, you will be loved, for you will be a new person through faith in me." As Jesus kept knocking on his heart, not forcing the door open, just gentle knocking, not pounding as if to break in, Zach's heart began to melt as he turned the handle to the door he kept locked to his faith for many, many years and with tears in his eyes he invited Jesus to come in to sup with him forever. And when he did, forgiveness came, and a total transformation overcame him and he promised Jesus he would pay back those whom he cheated, In fact, he would give them back not just what he took from them but give them 4 times more. The new joyful Zach opened his door and set up a table as Jesus went on his way. hilariously Zach took out his list of names he had cheated to pay them back, and thus he began to live a new life in Jesus. For salvation had come to this house. Repentance, a turning to Jesus happened and the little man of the town became the biggest man heading for the Kingdom of God.

Knock; knock “Who’s there?” “It’s Jesus,” comes back the reply. “What do you want?” “I want to come into your heart and show you a better way to live your life. I want to heal your hurts. I want to prepare you for eternity. I want to make you my child. I want to give you salvation. Will you open the door to your heart for me?”

Knock, knock. “Who is it?” “It’s God!” “What do you want?” “I want you to believe in my son so that you can find peace within. I too want to live in your heart through my son. I want to help prepare you for eternity. I want to be your God so that I can give you blessings after blessings. Will you open the door to your heart so I can come and sup with you around the table of grace as I offer you forgiveness and a new life through my son Jesus?”

Knock, knock. “Now who’s there?” “It’s just the Holy Spirit. May I come in too? I want to come and stay with you so that I can teach you the correct way to live and I too can prepare you for eternity. I will be with you always and if you let me, I will take control and show you a better life. I will comfort you when you hurt, I will heal you when you’re ill, I will give you courage when you face difficult things, I will challenge you to walk the walk not just talk the talk, and I will be your guide forever and ever if you surrender the reigns to me.” “But guys, I’ve done some horrible stuff, said some horrible things, and I have drifted..... No! I have willingly turned

my back on you. There is too much garbage in my heart, too many hurts...too many disappointments...too much anger.” “No, no,” said Jesus. “I died that you can have a new heart. God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit will transplant my heart for your wounded heart and you will be made new. Will you open the door for us today?”

Hear God’s word again as the messenger speaks to the church.... “I correct and punish those whom I love. So be eager to do right, and change your hearts and live. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and eat with you and you will eat with me.”

And now we come back to today. You see, Jesus is really here, so is God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. They invite those who have ears who hear to come and receive a life full of blessings and hope, a new life where forgiveness can be found when one repents, a new life of hope and joy knowing that those who believe will find peace in a place we call heaven where we will walk the streets of gold, and there will be eternal joy. The Trinity, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit offer that free gift to anyone today who is not afraid to receive.

Since the beginning of this service Jesus has silently been knocking and waiting to invited in. Don’t turn him away. He got work to do in there perhaps to get rid of disappointments, or resentments or a whole bunch of

baggage that has been piling up. Just open the door and allow him in.....today. For you see, you might not get another chance....this is the day that the Lord has made just for you.

Anyone willing this morning? I can tell you this....you will never regret responding to his invitation.

I hear Jesus knocking on someone's heart this morning for some reason. He's hungry and he has brought nourishment for your soul. Will you open the door today?