We mustn’t get shocked by the title of this sermon. I’m calling the atheist’s heart good just for a certain reason and a disposition their heart is having. (Even though it might sound awkward and we know that obviously no person’s heart is good).

Sometimes the heart of these persons might have a better disposition even than some other persons that we might be thinking are good or are walking with the Lord. Do you know that God loves the atheists and He would love to work in their hearts? He gave His life for them. Let us see a verse in Revelations 3:14-18

“And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and the true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: **“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth.** Because you say, ‘ I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’-and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked-I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.“

Many times when reading this verse we think that is having to do with people standing half way with God and half way with the world (and in part might be right), but who can be saved then? Because this one is usually a struggle we find quite often even amongst believers sometimes speaking about decisions that we go trough sometimes or situations we face daily and of course God can give us everything needed for us to face and overcome this moments but coming back to the verse and seeing the harsh way God is expressing Himself against being lukewarm makes me to think about it. What else can it mean?

Reading the whole passage, (something that most of the times we need to do) we see verse 3:17 “Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing‘ – and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked….“

So here we see that the passage of the scripture keeps on speaking about the same person that was called lukewarm in the previous verse. Therefore we conclude that the one being lukewarm is actually the one that thinks that he is having something from God and is already saying: “I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing“. And this definitely is not liked by God, especially when that person didn’t realize he is poor and blind, he is in a need. But how could he, after having an opinion for himself that he is already fine. That’s the danger of it. And that’s why is so difficult for God to work there.

This is where it comes in, the first of the beatitudes spoken on the mountain: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:3

And not by chance it starts with this one. And obviously is speaking about people acknowledging their need of God. This explains why Jesus’ attitude was so harsh toward the scribes and the Pharisees. The religious people from that era. The ones thinking that are already fine, that don’t need a Savior. You can see the conversation He was having with them in Matthew 23. Not seeing any other way to reach them He addressed them in a quite hard manner, so that in some way He can let them think in their condition. And having the same kind of attitude they were having, can turn also us into religious persons. And sometimes is so hard to reach out this kind of people. Even for God.

Yes, it might sound strange that God can not reach someone, but it is true. How difficult is to explain to someone who thinks that he is completely fine, that he needs God. Especially to the one who thinks he is pleasing God already. That’s why the verse says “because you are lukewarm, I will vomit you.“ He wished for him to be hot or cold at least. Being hot, because a person is hot for God, is warmed by His presence. His fire is burning in his heart. Or cold for example. This is theone that clearly knows of not having anything from God and the one who openly doesn’t believe. In this way it will be easier for him to acknowledge that he doesn’t have anything and could say: ‘God, set your fire in me, I need you, warm me, please!’

But what about the one that thinks he is already warm? Not much hope for him. He won’t look for solution to the problem he thinks is not having. Unless something happens obviously to make him think about it. Remember Jesus’s conversations with the religious leaders at that time like the Pharisees, Sadducees etc. . He was always harsh with them. He many times called them hypocrites. We can see He wasn’t so happy with them.

So we can see that He is more upset with someone that is religious in the wrong way than with those who don’t believe and with the common sinners. A difference to us for example who many times tolerate people, because it looks like they agree with us and are having appearance of being religious. We would rather prefer them than sinners, non believers like atheists for example. Also because common people who don’t believe, don’t identify or don’t agree with us. While Jesus was compassionate with those people. I am not saying that we need to engage or accept what they do or the way they think, but to be compassionate with them. Obviously they will also perish if they don’t repent, if they don’t accept His message and I’m not saying we won’t find difficulties with them, but I personally had profound conversations with atheists about creation, accepting Jesus or faith. Topics that many times is hard to have with someone who might be thinking he is well, especially if he thinks he is spiritually rich already.

God loves working in the lost person’s heart. He came for those people. It is not that the other ones are not like that, but they just can’t see it.

To an atheist can be even compared a person who doesn’t believe in the Christianity and rejects it. In part he can be also referred as cold, not as an atheist who doesn’t believe completely, but still similar, because he also doesn’t relate himself to the Christianity and needs a miracle.

Why Christianity? Because the Christianity is one of the few religions that speaks about forgiveness. That speaks about us having a debt with God, that we can not pay. We need to depend on Him for that. He had to die and pay for us on the cross. And this is what’s really going on. Many other people or religions (not to speak bad) are promoting what man can do for his salvation. How many works, or charitable deeds he can do to please God. Things that also a christian does of course, but only after being saved, to show the love of God to the others. That’s why as well, this person is called christian, because his life is founded in Christ and His work on the cross. The work through which this person is saved.

We always think and have the concept that the good guys are those who are quickly disposed to listen to the gospel or follow it, while Jesus Himself said that He came for those who are sick, He came for the sinners. And the word tells us that the seeds fallen on rocky places are those who when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. (Luke 8:13) It is a deeper soil that we are looking for. And what takes for an atheist to believe is a miracle, because if such a person comes to believe one day, it will be for real. And it is a miracle we are looking for. “To believe” is a miracle. This is what faith is about.