



Rumble, Rumble, Rattle ... *Kalunk!*

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There are some things in life that are seemingly inexplicable. You try and try to figure them out, and then you just take them for granted, and finally just laugh at them and go on. I am thinking specifically of our refrigerator.

In the old days (my childhood), I recall that people called them an *icebox*. And it's precisely the ice making function of our refrigerator that speaks to this phenomenon of things being inexplicable, but accepted (tolerated), and then laughed at! We purchased our refrigerator in 1999, nearly 12 years ago. It was not a fancy side-by-side model, or one with a unit in the door that dispenses water and ice upon demand. No, it was just a "plain-Jane" model with no frills. But, it did have an ice maker in the freezer compartment. To us, that was pretty nice and very convenient, saving us the "onerous chore" of cracking the ice trays and refilling them so often. For about five years, it made ice for us like clockwork. When the tray was filled with cubes, the bail would make contact and discontinue making cubes; when it was low, the bail would trigger the mechanism to manufacture more cubes. Wonderful. To borrow a phrase coined by creationist Ken Ham, "It's designed to do what it does do, and what it does do, it does do well."

Then we had a lightning storm one night in the summer of 2004, and that ice maker has never been the same since. It stopped producing ice, and two or three months later, it began making ice once again! But, it made a few trays of ice and then stopped again. We thought it was just

a strange anomaly, and that surely it was truly dead this time. Then, some time later, it started making ice again! We were thankful again for the ice and began to get accustomed to not filling ice trays ... and—you guessed it—it conked out again! I guess we just did not want to pay for it to be repaired; after all, it was kind of a luxury and there were better uses for the money. So we lived with it. Sometimes in the quiet of the night, while lying in bed, we would hear "rumble, rumble, rattle ... *kalunk*." We would look at each other and laugh, and say, "There goes the ice maker again!"

We couldn't figure it out. We were just happy when it dumped ice in the tray, and learned not to rely on it! This went on for several years. It seemed like the intervals between making ice were getting longer and longer. For the last two years, it only made a tray of ice about every three to six months! About two months ago, it got really consistent—it actually made ice for about four days in a row! We were impressed! Could it be that the temperamental ice maker had finally worked out its kinks and was here to stay? Of course not! On day five, we got up and discovered that we had one giant 3" x 9" x 12" ice cube! During the night, the water had continued to flow into the unit and filled the entire ice container. It only stopped when it did because the reverse osmosis unit on our water softener ran out of pressure.

And maybe the Lord intervened also! So, we called the plumber and had the water to the refrigerator disconnected with a shut off valve. Now, it's back to cracking the old fashioned trays by hand and refilling them. It's not really "onerous" after all.

Well, surely there is a spiritual application to this story. As I thought about that undependable ice maker unit, I couldn't help but liken it to church members who are a bit that way. And I include myself here as well.

It just seems that some brothers or sisters can be counted on consistently for carrying out the work of the church. If you need a brother to bring a message, certain brothers are known to be reliable. Others may or may not be counted on. If there is a work bee, certain brothers are always there, others are hit and miss, and others rarely (if ever) help out. When there is cleaning at the church, or

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a meal to be prepared for special occasions, certain sisters can be counted on, while others cannot. Whatever the Christian endeavor may be—witnessing, hospitality, visitation—some brothers and sisters are like new, dependable icemakers ... and some are like ours.

In Revelations 3:14-16, we read the admonition to the church at Laodicea: *“These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.”*

When some brothers are *hot*, they are a ball of fire, full of zeal! Then they kind of disappear for a while, and after a time, here they come again! Just when you think you can count on them to be zealous for the Lord, they cool off. Just like our ice maker, they are not dependable.

There are many reasons for this, I suppose. Perhaps the brother has unconfessed sin in his life, and does not feel comfortable around his brothers. Perhaps he does not desire the accountability that comes with being part of a body. Perhaps he is merely performing in his flesh, rather than *servicing* from a converted heart. Some brothers and sisters want the benefits of a group of believers (i.e., to help *them* when they need help) but do not want to reciprocate. Whatever the reason, they experience seasons of *lukewarmness*, and this is not pleasing to God.

Well, I think about how we would lie in bed and hear that occasional “rumble, rumble, rattle ... *kalunk*” and shake our heads in wonder. Oh sure, we were happy for the little dab of ice we would enjoy. But, we knew far too well that it would soon be gone again, and we could not rely upon it longterm. We just praised God that we had it for a while. Is that our disposition towards these lukewarm brothers? Are we satisfied to just take what they choose to give and be grateful?

With the ice maker, it was no big deal. We could take it or leave it. But with human souls, it is a much different matter. There is much more at stake here. I am afraid what we do most often is just talk about them to other believers. We muse about their erratic walk with Christ. And we are happy when they catch fire again. But someday, if we continue to do nothing, that ice tray will fill up like one solid chunk of ice, and we will disconnect the water.

When we see lukewarm, erratic behavior in our brothers or sisters, we need to take steps to strengthen them in the faith, lest we lose them altogether. Then, once again, they will “do what they are designed to do” ... glorify God, bring others to Christ, and “strengthen the brethren.”

Lu. 22:32 ~