

Revelation 3:1-6

My trip to visit my dad in Florida – Went to church Sunday morning – Only one in church with a Bible

The preacher talked for about 10 minutes using the Scripture readings printed in the bulletin

A man came up to me afterward and said, “The Church is Growing!” – I thought to myself, “Growing what?” – Tomatoes?

The church was dead

Sardis was a church that was dead

I. The Lord's Dire Warning

A) The Lord addresses the church at Sardis as the One holding the 7 Spirits (v. 1)

1) These are representative of the Holy Spirit – The One who gives spiritual life

a) Jesus is the giver of the Holy Spirit – The only One who can bring true spiritual life to a dead church

“If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through the Spirit who dwells in you.” (Rom. 8:11)

2) Jesus is also holding the 7 stars – These are the pastors of the churches – The key to bringing spiritual life

3) Immediately at the beginning Jesus presents Himself as the solution for this dead church – The Spirit of God

a) This is the need for all Christians of all time – The life of the Spirit of God in our hearts

Without the working and the inner life of the Spirit of God – Any church or person will end up dead spiritually

B) This is what happened to the church at Sardis (v. 1)

1) They had a name that they were alive

2) Perhaps they were associated with a great man or movement of God

Today that would be like Luther(an) – Methodist (Wesley) – Hauge – But now a name is all they had

Jesus tells them straight up that they are dead spiritually – **Had to be a stinging rebuke!**

3) The church at Sardis was not void of works – Jesus knew their deeds

a) They had good deeds for the Savior in the past (v. 2)

b) Now they had works that were about to die

c) This means that this church started out well as a true spiritual work – They had a good start

d) Most of what they now had was already spiritually dead – Some of the rest was about to die

Jesus says that He had not found their works **COMPLETED** in God's sight

In other words – Jesus gave them a work to do – and they started out upon that

But now they had come to a screeching halt – Spiritual life was waning

C) Reveals to us that Jesus looks beyond the mere outward activity to the very heart of the people in the church (v. 2)

Jesus knows what the standard is that is for life and work in the church – **I KNOW**

Jesus also weighs each person's work out in the sight of God

It isn't enough to be simply going through the motions of going to church and doing everything correct associated with church life

Are the people spiritually alive with the Spirit of God or not? – For Sardis, it was **NO!**

How is it that a spiritually alive church becomes spiritually dead?

1) Spiritual death happens when we deny that the Bible is the Word of God

“SO then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom. 10:17)

2) Spiritual death happens when people are deceived about salvation

“By grace are you saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of ovrks, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8-9)

When anything or any way is presented as how a person can get to heaven other than repenting of their sins and receiving Christ as their Savior – Then spiritual death comes

3) Spiritual death comes when sin is excused – People are deluded into thinking they can continue to live in sin with no repentance

“For if we goon sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries.” (Heb. 10:26-27)

4) Spiritual death comes when we have dead orthodoxy

You can have the correct doctrine without it being applied to people’s lives

Notice that Jesus didn’t correct this church for false teaching or gross sin – Like He did some of the others Their correct teaching was spiritually dead

II The Lord’s Earnest Admonition

A) **Jesus has no words of commendation for this church!** – That’s what He thinks about churches which lose their spiritual vitality

Instead – The Lord gives them His counsel on how to remedy this dire situation

1) **Wake Up! (v. 2)** – The people had fallen asleep in their spiritual lives

When you’re asleep – You not actively engaged in conversation or life

This is how Jesus described them – Asleep at the switch

2) **Strengthen that which remains (v. 2)**

This is the very last thing they had to cling to – The very basics of their Christian faith

In other words – The very foundation – Who God is – What Jesus has done – What it takes to have forgiveness of sins and eternal life

Because this was also at the brink of going to die as well

Then this church would be nothing more than a religious Lion’s Club

3) **Remember the Past (v. 3)** – What it was like when spiritual life used to abound

a) When there was growth into the likeness of Christ

b) When there was a passion for souls

c) When there was fellowship with the sufferings of Christ

Jesus describes it as **what they received** – Salvation from Him – **What they Heard** – God’s Word for accurate instruction on how to Live in Christ

4) **Repent (v. 3)**

Turn around from your dead form of lifeless religion back to Living Christianity that alters people and changes lives and glorifies God

B) Jesus also adds a very dire warning if they won’t wake up (v. 3) – You will be spiritually blind

1) You won’t know when the coming of Christ will happen

2) Jesus isn’t telling us that we can know the exact time of His coming

3) Rather, He is telling people like that won’t be ready to meet Him whenever that happens – Personal death or His personal return

To the soul who is spiritually alive and awake – The Scripture says, “And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him at His coming.” (1 John 2:28)

When you are spiritually asleep – You won’t be ready to meet Christ and will shrink away from Him

III The Lord's Gracious Reward

- A) Jesus commends the faithful few who are still alive in Sardis (v. 4) – Even in dead churches, there are true believers
- 1) In spite of most people in the church growing cold & dead – They have remained true
Jesus promises special blessings upon every believer who will remain true to Him – **Don't you want Jesus to look upon you this way?**

1) Dressed in white garments (vv. 4-5)

Look up passage from Isaiah?

- a) This is the robe of righteousness that we are clothed with – The absolute perfection of Jesus all our un-righteousness
- b) This special blessing means that we can stand absolutely perfect before God
We are covered over with Jesus righteousness and viewed as pure (white)

2) Not Having Our Name Erased out of the Book of Life (v. 5)

- a) This is the book that determines if you get to heaven or not
“And nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying shall ever come into [heaven], but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.” (Rev. 21:27)
- b) How sad and how tragic it will be when people once had their names written in it
But when Judgment day arrives – **IT HAS BEEN ERASED!!! – WHY?**

Because they lost the faith that they once had

Imagine to stand fully expectant to enter in – But Jesus can't find your name in His Book!

People who were once spiritually alive – Once knew the Lord – But waned into spiritually death

Imagine the feeling that will go through them! – Especially when it's too late to do anything about it

Faith in Jesus is not just a one-time decision – It is your whole life

3) Having Jesus Confess our Names Before God (v. 5)

Jesus told His disciples, “Everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven.” (Matt.)

To those who remain spiritually alive – Jesus will confess them before God on that great day

CONCLUSION

- A) Do we hear what the Spirit of God is saying to us as a church and as an individual?
- 1) The church at Sardis was a dead church – All they had was a name
 - 2) On the outside, everything was still working – Yet most of the people were spiritually dead
 - 3) Jesus solemnly warned those who remained this way:
 - a) Will not have the Robe of Righteousness
 - b) Will have their names erased from the Book of Life
 - c) Will be denied by Jesus before God

In other words – These religious, church going people were lost and heading for hell

Many of them earnest people – But still spiritually dead

Jesus didn't rebuke them for immorality or false teaching – But they were still dead

- B) What about us? – Are we a church of dead orthodoxy?

We have correct doctrine – With no spiritual life

- C) What about you? – Are you spiritually alive today? – Does Jesus live in your heart Now?

- 1) Have you confessed your sins and received Christ as your Savior?
- 2) Are you continuing your life in Him? – Or have you grown cold & dead spiritually
- 3) Is your spiritual life a past experience and not a present reality?