

Series: What Jesus Knows About His Church

Today: "The Church in Sardis" # 5

"The Dead Church"

Rev 3:1-6 Sun PM

In Revelation 2-3 the focus is on seven churches- these churches should be viewed historically, practically, and prophetically. They are prophetic of the different ages in the church age.

Today we examine the fifth church at Sardis thru the eyes of Jesus. Sardis is the church of liberalism from 1400-1600 or 1800 A.D. Let me say 2 things here-

Oliver Green says, "Thyatira is the church before the reformation in Papal Rome, Rome is in control. Sardis is the condition of the church after the reformation- Protestantism and liberalism. They run together today and are trying to merge together.

Notice how Jesus introduces Himself [v.1a]. "*Seven Spirits and seven stars*" This refers to the seven-fold ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus [Isaiah 11:2], and the seven stars refers to his control.

TT- What did Jesus **know** about this church?

I. Jesus Knew Their lifeless profession and incomplete works (v. 1).

1. What is a dead church? Dead doctrinally!

We would define a dead church as closing the doors, or by the number of people in the church, or a Church where there seems to be no joy. If there are many people or activities we would say they were alive.

Is the church proclaiming Jesus and the gospel? Is the church supporting missions? Does the church teach the Word of God? Does the church observe the ordinances of the church? Is the worship services God-centered? Does the church pray? Do they evangelize?

The world regarded them as an effective church, but Jesus pronounced this church as dead. The churches spiritual reputation exceeded reality, as its members showed no sign of spiritual life. What did Jesus mean? How does this happen?

(1). By replacing the truth with the false [v. 3a]. They become more concerned with form than substance, a social gospel rather than the spiritual Gospel.

(2). By replacing righteousness with sin- The church that tolerates sin in its membership and dies little by little.

2. What are the signs of a dying or dead church? **Warren Weirsbe** notes four signs of this church.

(1). *They slumbered in the Word* [v. 3].

(2). *They slumbered in the work.*

They lost their reason for existence, and become formal and routine with ritualism. They start projects and do not complete them because they live in past glory, with no passion or pursuit for the future.

(3). They slumbered in their witness.

They had a good reputation in the world because the world was not threatened by them or desired them. Why? The sinner gospel is replaced by a social gospel.

(4). *They slumbered in their walk.* They become corrupted by the world. Their works or lives are no righteous- stained, spotted, and spoiled with sin and worldliness.

They forget their heavenly calling and holy character. They slumber as they become like the world, and liked by the world.

II. Jesus Knew their prognosis and promise (vs. 2-6).

1. Wake up [vs. 2-3a].

Watch [v. 2a, 3b]. Talking to the dead he says be vigilant for the coming judgment.

Strengthen [v. 2b]. Talking to the faithful remnant he says for them to build up and wake the ones about to die.

Remember [v.3a]. Remember your salvation and get back to first things first, the basics.

Hold fast [v. 3b]. Hold fast to sound doctrine and don't be shaken by false doctrine. Take a self-examination, judge yourselves, and awake to the problem, or Jesus will judge you.

2. Clean up- [v. 3c]. Repent

3. Look up [vs. 4-6].

Those who are saved [Overcomers- I John 4:4-5], are marked by righteous acts of purity and holiness. He gives the remnant 2 promises-

(1). Holiness [v. 4-5a].

The word "few" means "slight" or "small." They were the unspotted spiritual among the lost or carnal. Their garments were undefiled, referring to an undefiled character [Jude 23b]. They were in contrast to the defiled.

Rev19:8, “And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.”

(2). Security [v.5b].

In Sardis the city kept a census and if a person committed a crime against the state or died, he was no longer a citizen. His name was removed from the city register.

To the believer this is a promise not a threat. This verse does not imply losing salvation but not losing salvation. Jesus is saying, “I will not blot your name out of the book of life,” even if the city does.

Jesus is not saying he will but that he will not! This verse emphasizes the security of the faithful

Matt. 10:32, “Whosoever, therefore, shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father, who is in heaven.”