

Rev07 – Dead or Alive Revelation 3:1-6

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Open your Bibles. Title of the message, “Dead or Alive.” Revelation Chapter 3, we are doing six big verses.

You know, one of the strangest polls, you know how they do these polls, these surveys, one of the strangest ones I see regularly, and I see this one all the time, is the one that asks people if they are Christians. Have you ever seen one of these polls to determine how many people in this country still say that they are Christian? Do you know that every time one of these polls is done that over eighty percent of the people in this country say they are Christians?

I’m thinking that if eighty percent of this country truly were Christians, that we wouldn’t be working so hard, so determinedly to annihilate God out of every corner of our culture. This country is committed to annihilating God from the culture. And yet when somebody calls them on the phone they say “Oh yeah, I’m a Christian.”

Just because eighty percent of this country says they are Christians, the Lord might not see them that way. Being a Christian, by definition, means that you have the very life of Christ in you. Hear that. A little Christ. Initially used as a detrimental term. That little Christ is like Christ in miniature. They have the life of Christ in them. That’s how we define a Christian.

And so if someone thinks that they are a Christian in this country but they don’t actually have the life of Jesus Christ living in them, they may think that they are alive, but they may actually be dead. That’s the truth. And it’s truer for us. At least more importantly true for us personally. And so today, let’s pray that God would reveal to us whether we are truly alive or whether we think we are alive when actually we are spiritually dead. Let’s be open and have ears to hear what the Spirit would say to us. Amen!

Let’s pray. *Heavenly Father, we need you to reveal to us the condition of our own heart. We need for you to reveal to us the condition of our church. We need you to reveal to us if we have the sure signs of your life Jesus living in us. We need to know today that if there are those who think they are alive but are actually dead, we need to know if we are numbered among them or not. Lord it is better for us to know today than on that day. And so we open ourselves up to you and say “Show us. Show us where we are at personally.” And if we are truly spiritually dead today Lord, then give us life we pray. Draw us into new life today, in Jesus’ name, amen.*

Today we look at the church in Sardis. Sardis was an important and a wealthy city and came next on the circular route of the letter carrier that was circulating the seven letters around what we call today the country of Turkey, of which two-thirds of the New Testament was either written to or from what is now called Turkey. In Sardis there was a

gold rush, kind of like the gold rush of California. Literally gold. And because of the gold rush people clamored to get there. This is a cool bit of history. In Sardis the first all gold coin was minted. So there is Sardis' claim to fame.

The problem with Sardis is it was buried in pagan worship. It's like really, pagan worship again? Yes, again. It's almost like Jesus is trying to get a point across with every one of these churches either struggling with or being buried in pagan worship. The city was known for its cults. It had a lot of secret religious societies and secret cults and maybe it came from the wealth of the city and the gold and the paranoia that all came from.

But here's our point this message. In Sardis there was a massive temple to Artemis, the goddess of the goddesses. She was the queen goddess. There was a huge temple in Sardis just like there was in Ephesus. There is still today the remains of mother god worship in Sardis, where the young girls still worship a mother goddess there today for fertility and family things. So she is still there apparently.

Right next to the temple of Artemis there are the remains of a Christian church. Right next to the Christian church there are remains of a Jewish synagogue, today. And there seem to have been architecturally a connection between the Christian church, the Jewish synagogue and the pagan temple of Artemis. There are walkways between the remains. And so here is what we can surmise from that.

The Christian church, a Jewish temple and a pagan temple all co-existed in Sardis. They lived in peace and harmony and they all got along. And as just what you have heard that the world says that Jesus would say. Here is the problem with what the world says that Jesus would say – they are wrong. *They're wrong*. They don't know Jesus. They've created Jesus and they say, "Oh, Jesus would say can't all religions just get along. Can't we just co-exist?"

No! No. Jesus wasn't happy at all with Sardis. In fact, Sardis is the first church (and there is another one coming) where Jesus had absolutely nothing good to say about. Nada. Zip. Zilch. Nothing. They co-existed so well with the world; they fit in so well with the world, that just like the world that they fit so well into they were dead. And so when we say "Oh, let's not ruffle any feathers. Let's not rub the world wrong. If we'll just be like the world then maybe we can entice the world."

No! This is what Sardis did. They became so much like the world that Jesus said, "You are just as dead as the world." Co-existing with the world and dead as the world.

And so Jesus is going to tell them that, and he is going to tell them how to recover from it. The same thing has happened to much of the church today. The same thing could be happening to you and I personally. Jesus is writing this letter to us personally.

Sardis was the mediocre, social, in name only Christian church. And Jesus has a very strong word to them. He says that "You appear to be alive. You have a reputation for

being alive, but here's the breaking news. You're actually dead. And if you don't do something about it judgment is coming."

And as we begin to talk about judgment this message, just let me remind you Jesus is speaking to the church. He is speaking to the church. Here's why. Jesus is never impressed with our veneer, with our outside. He is never impressed with the actions that we go through. Jesus sees your heart. He knows. Every one of these letters he says, "I know." He knows your heart, he wants your heart and nothing less will do. *Nothing less will do.*

And so the message from Jesus to the dead church at Sardis is "Wake up!" To me it's like get the paddles, charge them to twelve hundred and shock the chest to get it going again. Wake up! There are some people in here who have had some heart attacks, I don't mean to send you back there.

Listen, it is like, "Hey they're dead. Get the paddles. Charge them up." That's what Jesus says, "Wake up!" And then he says "Recognize your condition. Repent of it and be revived."

This is such a great formula for living in Christ. Recognize your current condition, repent of it, and be revived to life.

Revelation 3:1.

Revelation 3:1 (esv)

1 "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: 'The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars . . .

It's important now Jesus introduces himself to every one of these churches, and to Sardis he says from the one ***who has the seven spirits of God***, who holds the seven spirits of God. That is a description of authority, that he holds the seven spirits of God. The seven spirits of God referred to in Isaiah and again later in Revelation refer to the sevenfold or complete or mature Holy Spirit.

So Jesus says to the dead church "From the one who holds the power of the Holy Spirit."

Get it? See, his description of himself is relative to what you need. Jesus says, "From the one ***who has the seven spirits of God***, the Holy Spirit, and the one who holds ***the seven stars***, that's the messengers or the leaders of the churches, either spiritual or physical, maybe even both, he says this is the one in complete authority and power that's writing to you."

Then in the second half of Revelation 3:1 Jesus says,

Revelation 3:1(b) - (esv)

1 . . . I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead.

Jesus says “I know.” Man, if we could just get that through our heads. Jesus knows. “Man I’ve got to clean up and look just right because somebody out there might know if I don’t.”

Listen; there is somebody who already knows. His name is Jesus. And all creatures are naked and open to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. We are already laid bare before him.

You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Guys when we have a religious veneer, when we have an outward coating, if you will, and we begin to think that we are actually spiritually alive because we *look* alive, because we look a certain way or we have achieved a certain thing, there is a chance that we may be deceiving ourselves with that desperately wicked heart that Jeremiah 17:9 says is in every one of us. The heart is wicked. Desperately wicked. Who can know it? Only God knows it.

And so don’t allow your wicked, deceitful heart to fool you into thinking that religion is life. It’s not. *It’s not.* There are so many churches, so many denominations, so many movements who have started with the power of the Spirit of God, our history is full of movements and denominations and revivals that started with the power of the spirit of God. But then often, in just a few generations, listen carefully if you’re familiar with the Calvary Chapel movement, often within just a few generations, what’s left is a reputation of that power. With our movement, the Calvary Chapel Movement, people talk about the good old days in the Calvary Chapel Movement like it gives them some credit with God. I cannot tell you how many people have felt it was necessary to inform me that they were in the tent with Chuck in the good old days. Listen, the Calvary Chapel Movement right now is fighting off this very thing. Are we actually alive or are we living like we were alive. Do we have a reputation of being alive, which is worthless, or are we alive today?

Guys listen; it was miraculous what happen in the 1970’s. It was. It was supernatural what happened in the 70’s. But here I s the news we have got to get a grasp on. Unlike some of us, God is not stuck in the 70’s. He just isn’t. He is not wearing bell bottoms and leather and long hair. He just isn’t there. God lives in today. *God lives in today.* And if we are living in the 70’s then we are living in the reputation of being alive. And if all we have is a reputation of being alive, then there is a very good chance that we are actually dead. And we need hear that. *We need to hear that.*

I’ve been following Jesus Christ with a passion since April 29, 1979. I started by walking away from a career that I loved. It was bad. We broke all our records. We left the area to get away from everything. Just out of control Jesus freak stuff. And guess what? It doesn’t matter today. My question to myself today is: Am I sold out today? Am I loving Jesus Christ today? Because what happened in the past doesn’t matter. *It doesn’t matter.* If Jesus Christ’s life is in me today then it should move me *today.*

Here's what William Barclay says. ***'A church is in danger of death when it begins to worship its own past'***

Calvary Chapel listen up. The 1970's were pretty cool, groovy, boss. Jesus Christ lives in today. Join him in what he is doing today and do not rely on a reputation of being alive. And just as that is true for churches and movements it's true for us personally.

So here is the question. Do we truly have the life of Jesus Christ living in us or do we have some kind of a veneer, some type of a reputation of that? Paul warns Timothy of this in 2 Timothy Chapter 3. I am just going to read parts of this.

2 Timothy 3:1-5 (NLT)

1 . . . in the last days there will be very difficult times.

2 For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God..., They will consider nothing sacred.

3 ...They will be cruel and hate what is good.

4 They will... be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God.

5 They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that!

They will act religious but will reject the power that could actually transform their lives. Paul warns Timothy to *stay away* from people like that. "But Jesus," you might point out. "You hung out with sinners. You were always somewhere with sinners." Yeah but, how much did he hang out with the Pharisees? They had to sneak to see him at night, in John Chapter 3. There were some.

Paul tells Timothy "Stay away from people who act religious but deny the power that could actually change their lives."

Paul is giving Timothy good counsel. They have an appearance of being alive but they are actually dead. Don't let them rub off on you or you'll start thinking that your religion makes you okay with God. That somehow what you have done on the outside makes you okay with God. Listen, God wants his life to live in you. He wants his power to transform you. He wants you to be a new creation. He wants you to walk in the light. He wants you to come out from among the world and be separate. He wants you to bring him honor and glory. He wants you to be a representative, a reflection of him. He doesn't want you to just think you are cleaned up and good enough to go, and it's okay that you are full of dead men's bones.

It's so easy to fool ourselves, let's just make it really clear. We are not Christians because we live in this country. We are not Christians because we used to go to a particular church. You're not a Christian because you go to a church now or because you go to a church later. And you are not a Christian because you went forward at a Harvest Crusade

ten years ago. None of that makes you a Christian. You're a Christian if you have the life of Jesus Christ living in you today. Amen!

Can you see the life of Christ in you? Let me give you some signs.

#1) You depend on him. You don't ask him to improve your desires; you're depending on and clinging to him.

#2) You trust him. You actually acknowledge that he is Lord and he knows best and you trust him. You walk by faith and not by sight.

#3) You see his life transform your life. Every year you should be able to say am I more like Jesus today than I was a year ago? Do I see more of his life in me today than I saw a year ago!

You're supposed to see that the power of the Creator God inside you actually is transforming you. It actually has an impact and effect on your life. You're actually beginning to look more like him and less like yourself. Read Galatians 5:16-23. You'll see the fruit of the flesh and the fruit of the spirit. And you just tell yourself: the more I'm like the fruit of the spirit, the more Jesus in me. The more like the fruit of the flesh the less Jesus in me. We need to see the life of Christ in us today.

Jesus is addressing a life and death issue here and he is sending a solemn warning. We need to hear him. But listen, Jesus came to give hope. He came to give life. And so every time there is a warning, Jesus gives hope. And here it is in verse 2. Here is his answer.

Revelation 3:2 (esv)

2 Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God.

WAKE UP! This is eternal life and death hanging in the balance. Wake up! Present tense commands in this verse, which means it's imperative and it's continual. Wake up and stay awake. It's literally "be being awake." Be sober, be awake. Be alert. Wake up! And strengthen and continue to strengthen. Always be strengthening what little spiritual life remains in you. Sometimes we get so sucked into the world that all we are doing is repeating a twenty second prayer for the benefit of our kids at dinner. Listen, whatever you have in you. Wake up and strengthen it. If Jesus Christ has his life in you and it's flickering, fan that flame, man. Wake up and strengthen what remains and is about to die.

Here's what Peter says

2 Peter 3:9 (esv)

9 The Lord is . . . patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

Here's the deal, guys. God must judge sin. Jesus is talking to the church and he is saying judgment is coming. But here's the good news. He is patient. And he will warn you, and

warn you, and warn you, and he will call you and he will woo you. He will do everything he can and then the judgment will come. Jesus will give you ample opportunity to wake up. You've got to be willing. You've got to say, "Lord, I'm willing to be awake. To live awake. I'm willing to open up my life and to allow you to shine the light in the dark places."

And then we've got to be willing to repent from those things that have drawn us away from Christ and return to him.

And Jesus says even more here in verse 2 ***I haven't found ANYTHING in you that is COMPLETE (Mature) in the Sight of God.*** Jesus is saying, "Look. There's a little spark of something in there, but trust me you're not ready to meet God. You've got a little something in there, maybe you went to Sunday School when you were a kid, but you're not ready. You're not ready to meet your maker."

You're not ready. You've got to fan that flame. Wake up and strengthen what little spiritual life you have. Write these verses down and read them later.

Philippians 2:12 says work out your salvation with fear and trembling. Work it out.

2 Timothy 1:6 says fan into flame what God has given you. What God has put in your life, man, fan it into a flame.

2 Peter 1:10 says be diligent to make your call and election sure.

Do you hear it? Work out your salvation. Fan into flame what God has given you. Be diligent to make your call and election sure. Guys, if this warning is to us personally, we've got to hear it. We've got to say "Lord, thank you. Thank you for pointing it out to me. Lord I commit, I surrender. Lord I make a covenant with you to strengthen what little spiritual life remains in me." It's our only hope.

Jesus tells you how to do it in verse 3. The answer is always in the next verse.

Revelation 3:3 (esv)

3 Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent . . .

Step number two – keep it. Step number three – repent. Remember, keep it, repent. More continual, present tense commands. Be remembering. It's always be remembering. What Jesus is saying is set your mind on what you have received and heard. Always be setting your mind on what you have received and heard.

Colossians 3:1-2 says

COL 3:1-2 - *If you've been raised with Christ, [Be] seek[ing] the things that are above . . . Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth*

If indeed you have truly received Christ, then be seeking the things above. Be setting your mind on things above, not on things of the earth. That's what Jesus is saying here

first. If the piercing of the word of God has hit you then the first thing you do is remember. Set your mind on what you have received and what you have heard about the life of Jesus Christ. Remember. Don't fizzle out, don't end up dead thinking that you are alive and figuring out when it is too late that you are dead. Be setting your mind on what you have received and heard about the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Number two, he says keep it. It means to safeguard it to protect it, to put a garrison around it. Protect what you have received and heard about Jesus Christ. Set your mind on it, and then guard it and make sure that it's not taken away from you by some stupid TV show. Remember, set your mind on things of Christ and guard it.

Last step. Repent. It means to turn from the things that are drawing you away from Christ and move to Christ. It is a running from the things of destruction and of death and running to Christ. It is running from spiritual death and running to spiritual life. And you know the difference. *You know the difference.* Repent.

Remember what you know. Set your mind on what you've received and heard of Jesus Christ. Guard it. Protect it. Safeguard it. And repent from the things that are drawing you away from it. He who has ears to hear let him hear what the spirit says.

If that's us, we've got to do it. And we've got to do it *now*. We've got to do it now. Jesus is patient, but we will never know when our time to repent is up.

Continuing in the second half of verse 3:

Revelation 3:3(b) (esv)

3 . . . If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.

This is not referring to the rapture. This is referring to sudden judgment upon people who think they are spiritually alive. That's what that is. This is about sudden judgment with no prior warning. ***I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.***

Interesting little historical tie in. Sardis sat way up on a hill and it had sheer cliffs on three sides. And so they thought their city was really safe, all they did was watch the one access point to the city. Twice in the history of Sardis that city was overtaken by the enemies who snuck up those sheer cliffs in the middle of the night and brought judgment, if you will, upon the city. And so there is a very good chance that Jesus is referring to this.

We've got the "Thief in The Night" film (speaking of the 70's) stuck in our mind and we think oh, that's talking about the rapture. It's not. He may very well be referring to the

city's own history of experiencing judgment like a thief, sneaking in over the cliffs. That's how Jesus will come.

Serious words of warning for a church that has the name of Jesus on the outside but has no life of Jesus on the inside. May we receive the same warning.

Moving on to the rough, prophetic interpretation approach of the letters, the historicist approach, modified, for those of you who know what those words mean. Most scholars who see this rough kind of prophetic overview of the church ages in the seven letters put Sardis right at the time of the reformation. The church was dead in 1500 A.D., the very early years of 1500. It was dead. It had the name of Jesus but it had no evangelism whatsoever and no missions work whatsoever. The people were not allowed to read the Word of God. It was kept from them. It was a dark and a dead time right at the moment of the reformation.

But listen, you proud Protestants. There is also just as accurate a prophetic look at the death of Protestant movements. Did you know you only have to look at Europe as a whole, but Great Britain specifically that group of countries that we call Great Britain? Do you know 150 years ago, that wasn't that long ago, that area, England, Great Britain was the launch point for the work of Christ in the world? 200 years ago, for sure. Do you know that today less than six percent of the people in Great Britain attend any church service at all? Less than six percent. Secularism has taken over those European countries. And the movement of God that brought us so many great preachers and so much incredible missions work – it is dead. The five thousand seat auditorium that was built for Spurgeon, they are lucky if they get a hundred people in that building today. So don't be pointing at the Catholics in the Middle Ages.

Every Christian movement is subject to this warning. Every Christian movement is subject to thinking they are alive when they are actually dead. Every Christian movement. *Every one*. It's because our tendency is to clean up the outside and still live for ourselves on the inside. And the more we do that, the less we have the life of Christ in us. And so the warning from Christ again, if you think you're alive because of how you look or because of your reputation, think again because you might actually be dead.

Are you ready for some good news? Last message we saw in Thyatira a faithful remnant. And we see the same thing in Sardis. We are going to continue to see the faithful remnant all through the book of Revelation.

Revelation 3:4 says,

Revelation 3:4 (esv)

4 Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy.

Listen, no matter how dark, no matter how much death, there is always – God makes sure of it – there is always a faithful remnant. Always. God ensures that there is a faithful remnant, people who are truly sold out to him, who are truly serving him and are truly carrying the torch, no matter how dark the time, no matter how dark the place. Here is my prayer, my exhortation, my plea with you. No matter how dark the times get, no matter how difficult they get, may we be part of the faithful remnant. Amen! Make a commitment right now.

Listen. It's a tremendous blessing us being here in this church, because we don't have to make anybody happy but Jesus. And I'm telling you right now if you don't make that solemn commitment to be a part of the faithful remnant you will get picked off. And you will find yourself on the wrong side of judgment. And my only responsibility is to do everything I can to tell you that. Make a stand for Jesus Christ because difficult days are coming.

The phrase "***have not soiled their garments***" is illustrative of the time, still to a certain point we can see it today. During this time people were not allowed to enter into Christian gatherings in their work clothes. Much like we have seen in our culture over the years. And so if you came to worship and you were wearing dirty clothes from working you would not be allowed in. That is what Jesus is referring to.

In contrast to those who are not allowed to worship, Jesus says I have a few names, a faithful remnant who will walk with me in white. *Who will walk with me in white*. Ten times in the Book of Revelation our righteousness is illustrated by the color white or clothing that is white. That's speaking of our righteousness. ***They will walk with me in white***, in righteousness.

But hear me when I say that is the righteousness of Jesus Christ alone. You don't have any righteousness. What you call your own righteousness Jesus calls filthy rags. His life in you is your righteousness and we've got to be clear on this. The only way we are righteous, the only way we are seen in white is because we have the life of Jesus Christ in us. And so we receive that by faith. We don't earn our righteousness, or act righteous, or clean up to be righteous. It's the life of Christ in us that is righteous and Jesus says those who have the life of Christ will walk with me in white, in righteousness.

And then at the end he says ***for they are worthy***. Not a worthiness you earn. Not a worthiness you paint on or put on. The worthiness of the life of Jesus Christ in you. It's the life of Christ in you that gives you his righteousness – it's his righteousness. And so his life in you is righteousness. It is the only righteousness. Your worthiness is not your

worthiness; it's the worthiness of the life of Christ in you. Do you see how important it is to make sure that you have the life of Christ in you? It's everything. *It's everything*. God does not grad on the curve. You are not righteous because you think you are better than someone else. You're not worthy because you think you're better than someone else. It's either the life of Christ or it is death.

The good news continues in Revelation 3:5.

Revelation 3:5 (esv)

5 The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life . . .

There's some good news! Maybe you don't know what the book of life is. The book of life is the record of all those who have been saved. All those who are saved. God is always in the present tense, always in today. And those who are saved their names are written in *the* book of life. We'll see it again.

Here's what you need to hear. Please hear me. Do not extrapolate, do not flip this assurance on its head and make it a warning that it is not. There is no place in the Bible that in any way infers that you could at one time have your name in the book of life and then have it blotted out. That is a, if you will, a doctrine, a theology that comes from flipping primarily this verse on its head.

Let me give you some historical background. Sardis was the capitol city for that part of the Roman Empire. Listen carefully. In Sardis, the records of citizenship for that entire area were kept. And so here is what they did when someone was under the condemnation of capital punishment. They would bring them out to the city square and they would open up the citizenship records and they would blot their name out of the citizenship records and then they would behead them. That's how it worked in Sardis.

And so Jesus Christ is saying to the faithful, this will never happen to you. What you have seen happen in your own city square where people's names have been blotted out of the citizenship record before they are beheaded, it will never happen to you. It's a strong assurance that if your name is truly in the book of life, it will stay there. How does it get there? As far as you're concerned, the book of life is actually outside of time, so let me just separate God's existence outside of time with your existence inside this time continuum.

The day that you are truly saved, truly born again, when you surrender your life to Jesus Christ and you receive him in full faith and trust and make him Lord, your name is written in the book of life on that day and it never comes out. Why? Because God didn't write your name in pencil. He wrote it in the blood of his own son. And it is not going to get blotted out. The question is, is it there? *Is it there?* If it's there it's going to stay there. If it's not there and you think it's there, you're going to be really sorry when you find out.

The life of Christ in us give us the righteousness to stand before God. The life of Christ in us is what puts our name in the book of life. And so you need to say, not did I slip up a finger, not did I repeat a prayer, not did I have someone sprinkle water on my head. You need to say is there evidence of the life of Jesus Christ in me. And if there is, I am good to go. Bring it on. I can't wait to see my Lord. I can't wait!

Continuing in verse 5. Jesus says,

Revelation 3:5(b) says (esv)

5 . . . [&] I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.

Matthew 10:32 says “. . . whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.

I will confess his name before my father. The word “confess” means to “*honor, or to speak as an introduction.*” To speak as an introduction. Really? Jesus Christ the judge, the ruler, the creator and ruler and judge of the universe is going to introduce you to all of heaven? That's a pretty big deal. And all you have to do is confess his name here for him to confess your name there. Who thinks that's a good trade-off? Amen!

“Yeah but my family will think I am a Jesus freak!”

“You know, we never talk about religion or politics. So I'm going to have to not confess his name here.”

You might want to reconsider and balance the scales there. Jesus said “I didn't come to bring peace; I came to bring a sword.” Jesus Christ divides. The world co-exists. Choose wisely.

Revelation 3:6.

Revelation 3:6 (esv)

6 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

The only question is do we have an ear to hear?

You're saved by God's grace; you are saved through your faith. None of it is your effort. It is all from him. It is all the work of God. But if you will have an ear, he will do the work in you. He will never deny you the ear to hear if you desire to have an ear to hear. Do you have an ear to hear what the Spirit says to the church? Do you have an ear to hear what the Holy Spirit is saying to you personally?

The simplest way I can summarize the message is: If you think you are okay with God because you are a religious, cleaned-up good person, wake up. Get the defibrillator and wake up! You do not want to go into eternity thinking, well God will accept me because I am a pretty good person. How little can you know God? How much do you not know

God to think that he is going to accept you because you are a pretty good person? Is it better to hear it today or on that day? Today, I assure you.

Matthew 7:22–23 (esv)

22 On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’

23 And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

Jesus doesn’t want your religious activities. They are filthy rags of self righteousness. He wants your heart. He wants to absolutely crucify that self life, sinful, prideful, egotistical life. He wants to crush it and he wants to live in place of it. He wants your life. It’s all he will accept. He wants to give you his new life in exchange for your dead life. That’s it. In the end, I promise you that is the only thing that will determine whether you are alive or dead. It’s do you have the life of Christ in you?

If you’re not sure, Jesus gives you the “recipe” in verse 3.

#1) Set your mind, be remembering what you’ve received and heard about Jesus Christ. Set your mind on it.

#2) Guard it. Protect it. Keep it safe in your heart.

#3) And then repent of what is drawing you away. Run from the things that are taking you away from God and run to God himself.

He who has ears to hear let him hear what the Spirit says.

Let’s pray. Lord, it’s so frightening because we don’t just get to check a box and say, oh, we’re going to heaven because we checked a box. We don’t get to just slip up a finger and repeat a prayer and walk down an aisle. Why do we never see that in the Bible? Because you want to live in us, Lord. You want to replace our life with your life. And you want there to be fruit from that. Lord you want there to be evidence that your life is actually in us. And so you never give us that easy religious way out. And so Lord, today we pray that we would hear what your Spirit says. Do we have your life in us? If not tell us now, show us now, convict us now, and we will surrender to you now. We’ll bow to you now so that we don’t have to be part of that forced bowing. Where your Word says on that day every knee will bow. Lord we choose to bow now. We surrender to you now.

I just want you to pray to surrender your life to Jesus Christ right now. Just tell him right now, *Lord, I’m scared. I’m scared that I might have a reputation of being a Christian but I might actually be dead. I might still be dead in my trespasses and sins. I don’t know if your life is in me or not. I want to know, Lord. I am asking and seeking and knocking. Please pour your life into me. Come into my life Lord. Be my Lord; fill me with your Holy Spirit, with your power. Transform me so that I can see in my life, your life in me and living through me. I surrender to you. Make me alive. In Jesus’ name, amen.*