

Summary

This sermon examines the letter to the church in Sardis from Revelation 3:1-6, focusing on a church that appeared alive but was spiritually dead. The church in Sardis had a reputation for being vibrant and active, but Jesus declared them dead. They were living off the legacy and endowment of previous generations without genuine spiritual life of their own. They had the appearance of ministry—activity, history, and a good reputation—but lacked true spiritual vitality. Jesus describes this as a church in slumber, going through the motions with no real pulse. They had shifted from being mission-focused to maintenance-focused, becoming insular rather than outward-looking. Their deeds were "unfinished" in God's sight. Jesus urgently commands them to "Wake up!" This isn't fear-mongering but a loving warning from someone who sees where their current path leads. He calls them to: Remember what they received and heard from previous faithful generations; Hold fast to those teachings and examples; and to repent and change direction. Despite the dire diagnosis, there's hope because Jesus is "the resurrection and the life" who excels at making dead things come alive. A faithful few in Sardis hadn't compromised, and Jesus promises that those who overcome will be dressed in white and have their names remain in the book of life. This message applies to all churches and individuals who may be sleepwalking through their faith—maintaining routines without passion, surviving without truly living for Christ's mission.

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1. **What does it mean to have "a reputation of being alive" but actually be dead spiritually?** Can you think of examples where outward appearance doesn't match inward reality?
 2. **The sermon describes a church life cycle: mission-focused → relationship-building → internal focus → maintenance mode.** Where do you see our church/community in this cycle? What signs would indicate we're becoming more insular?
 3. **Jesus says the church's deeds were "unfinished."** What do you think makes deeds "finished" or "unfinished" in God's sight? How is this different from simply being busy with church activities?
 4. **The message emphasizes "Wake up!" as a loving warning, not fear-mongering.** How can we tell the difference between healthy spiritual urgency and manipulative fear tactics?
 5. **What does it look like practically to "remember what you have received and heard"?** How can we honor the faith of previous generations while avoiding simply coasting on their legacy?
 6. **The sermon mentions living off an "endowment for which nobody was continuing to make sacrifices."** What sacrifices is God calling you/us to make for the mission of the church today?
 7. **Jesus acknowledges "a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes."** What encouragement do you take from knowing that faithfulness matters even when surrounded by compromise or complacency?
 8. **How does understanding that "Jesus excels at making dead things come alive" change how we view seemingly hopeless situations** in our own lives or church?
 9. **The sermon states we weren't created merely to exist and survive, but for something more.** What "more" do you sense God calling you toward? What would need to change to pursue that?
 10. **Reflect personally: Are there areas where you're "slumbering"**—going through religious routines without genuine spiritual vitality? What would "waking up" look like in those areas?