

V. Sardis Walking Dead Church

- Ephesus: A church that loves Jesus enough to sit with Him
- Smyrna: A church that dies to self. Martyrs for Jesus/others
- Pergamos: A church that protects/defends true doctrine
- Thyatira: A church that respects God's authority structure

Sardis: A church that is Alive

Revelation 3:1 "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, 'These things says **He who has the seven Spirits** of God and the **seven stars**:

... "I know your works, that **you have a name** that you are alive, **but you are dead**. 2 Be **watchful**, and **strengthen** the things which remain, that are ready to die, for **I have not found your works perfect before God**. 3 **Remember** therefore how you have **received and heard**; **hold fast** and **repent**. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and **you will not know what hour I will come upon you**. 4 You have a **few names** even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for **they are worthy**. 5 He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. 6 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." "

Jesus Word to the Church of Sardis
Jesus who has the Seven Spirits/Seven Stars

- **Commendations:** Few still undefiled
- **Criticisms:** Dead church/Dead works
- **Cure...**Need of a Resurrection by the Spirit of God
 1. Watch
 2. Strengthen
 3. Remember
 4. Hold fast
 5. Repent

Sardis: Walking Dead Church
Reputation of being Alive...But dead to Me

- Q.** What leads to a dead church? **A.** Not yielding to/Cooperating w/God's Spirit
Q. How is a dead church resurrected? By listening **for** God/**To** God/Obedying God

Sardis thought they were okay doing good stuff...

We are not to get the impression that Sardis was a defunct affair with the building a wreck, the members scattered, the pastor ready to resign. It was a busy church with meetings every night, committees galore, wheels within wheels, promotion and publicity, something going on all the time. It had a reputation of being a live, wide-awake, ongoing concern. [Havner]

- Jesus says it is dead...because the work it was doing was flawed/flammable

1 Corinthians 3:11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, **yet so as through fire.**

IOWs Good stuff is not always God stuff
God stuff is what we do led by God's Spirit

Your famous but dead...

Sardis was a perfect model of inoffensive Christianity. Their problem was not scandalous wickedness, but a decent death. Their image said "alive," but in substance they were dead.

You think you're alive because others say you're alive
I say you're dead...Disconnected from Me the Vine

John 15:5 I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

The big something they were doing was less than nothing in the eyes of God
IOWs You're faking a relationship w/Me. Walking dead. Fake it till you make it wont work...

Jesus the Great Physician

Orders Five Resurrection Prescriptions to raise a Dead Church

3:2-3 Watch, Strengthen, Remember, Hold Fast and Repent

- **Resurrection Prescription #1: Watch**

2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.

Be watchful
IOWs Live in expectation of the imminent return of Jesus

Titus 2:12 ...we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and **glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ**, 14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from **every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.**

Our Blessed Hope: Glorious appearing of Jesus coming for His bride
Jesus return is our motivation for good works/ To live a consistently pure life

1 John 3:2 ... but we know that when [Jesus] is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 3 And everyone who has **this hope in Him purifies himself**, just as He is pure.

- Resurrection Prescription #1: Watch
- **Resurrection Prescription #2: Strengthen**

Strengthen what you've not yet defiled v.4
IOWs Exercise things you absolutely know are of Jesus

- Drop all dead *flesh initiated* programs/ideas: They kill churches
- **Strengthen Basics:** Word, Fellowship, Communion, Prayer [God stuff for sure]

Acts 2:42 ... they continued steadfastly in the **apostles' doctrine** [Word of God] and **fellowship**, in the **breaking of bread** [Communion], and in **prayers**.

- **Be Strengthen by the Undeniable Biblical Truths of God**
 1. Salvation by Grace alone through Faith alone in Jesus alone
 2. Inherency of Scripture
 3. Depravity of Man/Sufficiency of Jesus Blood
 4. Deity of Christ
 5. Immutability of God...Authority of Scripture...

Sola Scriptura: Latin term meaning "by Scripture alone." The Bible is the sole infallible source of Christian authority, belief, and practice. The Bible is the ultimate standard against which all other teachings, traditions, and experiences must be measured. Period.

Jesus desire for you? Let Me strengthen the good that is ready to die

Matthew 12:20 ... "a battered reed he **will not break off**, and a smoldering wick **he will not put out**, until he leads justice to **victory**."

- **Resurrection Prescriptions for a Dead Church:**
 1. **#1** Watch in expectancy for Jesus: Motivation for good works
 2. **#2** Strengthen what you have: Solid truths. No dead programs
 3. **#3 Remember...**

3 Remember therefore how you have **received** and **heard...**

Remember when you first heard the Word of God

1 Thessalonians 2:13 [We] ...thank God without ceasing, because **when you received the word of God** which you heard from us, **you welcomed it** not as the word of men, but **as it is in truth, the word of God**, which also **effectively works in you who believe**.

Remember when you Heard how you Received His Holy Spirit

Ephesians 1:13 In Him [Jesus] you also trusted, after you **heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation**; in whom also, having believed, you were **sealed** with the Holy Spirit of promise...

Remember how it happened: Not trying harder/figuring out how to get close to God
You Heard, Believed, Received, Sealed w/Holy Spirit...Your were free

- **Stop trying** to help Jesus w/your own great ideas, Coming up w/stuff to do for Him.
Stop

Galatians 3:2b ... Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith... 5 Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, *does He do it* by the works of the law, or by **the hearing of faith?**

Stop doing stuff/start listening to what the Spirit is saying...
IOWs God's Word must me mixed with faith to hear and to do

Hebrews 4:2 ... the word which they heard did not profit them, **not being mixed with faith** in those who heard it.

Hebrews 11:6 ...without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.
Remember?

The heart of a church stops beating when members stop listening to the Spirit
Jesus calls each of us to *listen for God*, listen **to God**...then do *what He says*

Jesus offers His Spirit to man
He ready/willing to freely give His Holy Spirit to any/all who ask

Luke 11:13 ... how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

- **Spirit for Physical Life**

Genesis 2:7 ...the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life ; and man became a living being.

- **Spirit for Spiritual Life**

John 20:21 ... Jesus breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit".

- **Spirit for a Powerful Life**

Luke 24:49 ... I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power [Dunamis] from on high."

- **Spirit for a Courageous Life**

2 Timothy 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power [dunamis] and of love and of a sound mind. [IOWs Our spirit animated by God's Spirit/Power]

- **Spirit for a Victorious Life** [Obeying the Spirit's leading]

James 4:15b [We are not to just do, but say] If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.

Psalm 37:5 Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, And **He shall bring it to pass.**

God seems to have a delightful way of upsetting the plans we have made when we have not taken Him into account. We get ourselves into circumstances that were not chosen by God, and suddenly we realize that we have been **making our plans without Him**— that we have not even considered Him to be a **vital, living** factor in the planning of our lives. And yet the only thing that will keep us from even the possibility of worrying is to bring God in as the greatest factor in all of our planning. [Chambers]

Pray often/consistently for power/direction from on high
The Holy Spirit is the difference between a life/death Church/Individual

▪ **Resurrection Prescriptions for a Dead Church:**

1. **#1** Watch in expectancy for Jesus: Motivation for good works
2. **#2** Strengthen what you have: Rock Solid truths. No dead programs.
3. **#3** Remember: How you received the Spirit by hearing then do what He says
4. **#4 Hold fast...**

3b... hold fast.

When you feel your faith fading...Hold fast to *what you know is good*
God, God's Word, Godly Examples

1 Thessalonians 5:21 ...hold fast what is good.

- Hold fast to the God the **Father**

Joshua 22:5 [Instructions from Joshua] ...love the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, to keep His commandments, to **hold fast to Him**, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul."

- Hold fast to the God the **Son**

Colossians 2:19 Hold fast to the Head [Jesus], from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.

- Hold Fast to **God's Word**

1 Corinthians 15:1 ... hold fast that word which I preached to you...

Philippians 2:16 ...hold fast the word of life...

- Hold fast to **Godly Examples**

Hebrews 13:7 Remember your leaders who spoke the Word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and **imitate their faith**

2 Timothy 1:13 Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me...

Philippians 3:17 ...join in following my example, and **note those who so walk**, as you have us for a pattern.

- Hold fast to your own precious **Testimony of Faith**:

Hebrews 4:14 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us **hold fast our confession...**

Hebrews 10:23 Let us **hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering**, for He who promised is faithful.

Our Testimony is a very powerful weapon against Satan
Why? It's irrefutable

Revelation 12:11 ... [Satan was defeated] **by the blood of the Lamb** and by the **word of their testimony...**

Hold fast to the what is good

- **Prescriptions for a Dead Church to live again:**
 1. **#1** Watch in expectancy for Jesus: Motivation for good works
 2. **#2** Strengthen what you have: Solid truths. No dead programs.
 3. **#3** Remember: How you received the Spirit by hearing then do what He says
 4. **#4** Hold fast: What is good God, God's Word, Godly Examples, Our Testimony
 5. **#5 Repent**: Turn from just doing things...your great ideas

3c... and repent.

Sardis thought they were alive: No Salvation/Sanctification/Restoration
Jesus command: Repent/Turn from your dead works

Listen **for** God/**To** God/**Obey** His Holy Spirit. My Sheep hear My voice
This is how the remnant church functions and thrives waiting for Jesus

3d... Therefore, if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.

If you will not watch i.e. If you don't care that I am coming back
I will come upon you!

- Sardis was already known for sleeping on the job...
- Thought themselves militarily impregnable but in...
 1. **549 BC.** Median soldier scaled the walls as the guard slept [Thief in night]
 2. **218 BC.** Cretan slipped over the wall as sentries were again careless

If you don't repent of dead works I will come upon you as a thief
Unexpectedly...IOWs You won't know what hit you/Ice Cold water

The Rapture not a surprise but a joy to the remnant church
Those who keeps His Word/Look up

1 Thessalonians 5:2 ...you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night... **4** But you, brethren, **are not in darkness**, so that this Day should **overtake you as a thief**.

If we are keeping His Word we *will be* watching for His return C.f. v 2

1 John 2:28 ... little children, abide in Him, that **when He appears**, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

- Where is your loyalty? Get it straight today. Is it...
 1. Friends telling you how alive you are when you're not or...
 2. Jesus/Your relationship w/him based on love motivated obedience...

Road to Heaven is Narrow. Really Narrow

4 You have a **few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments**; and they shall walk with Me in white, for **they are worthy**.

- **Few Not Defiled:**
 1. A few who are lit. "Not touching death"
 2. A few not walking in their dead works
 3. A few not clothed in "filthy rags" i.e. Self-centered motives/Wrong heart

Our nicest works apart from Christ?
Unclean thing/filthy rags in the sight of a Holy God

Isaiah 64:6 ...we are all like an **unclean thing**, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.

Works that glorify God? Spirit Initiated/Empowered/Implemented

- **Garments of Defilement:** Deeds apart from Jesus. Do-gooders/Fixers/Helpers. Stop
- **Garments of Purity:** Good works initiated, led, empowered/completed by Spirit

Revelation 19:8 ...to [the Bride of Christ] it was granted to be **arrayed in fine linen**, clean and bright, for the fine linen **is the righteous acts of the saints**.

- **Righteous acts of the Saints:** Simply the good done **by God** through us

Those in Christ are 100% Positionally righteous in Christ

Isaiah 61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has **clothed me with the garments of salvation**, He has covered me with **the robe of righteousness**, ... as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

100% Positionally righteous... But how righteous are we practically?

IOWs How much of what you do is truly Spirit initiated? 10%. Why?

The pure can have **greater intimacy** with God not because they have earned it, but because they are simply **more interested in the things of God**. God promises to reward that interest: *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.* [Guzik]

They shall walk with Me...

⁵ He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life

1 John 5:4 ...whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is **the victory that has overcome the world—our faith**. **5** Who is he who overcomes the world, but **he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?**

Overcomers are written in the Book of Life

Luke 10:20 ...do not rejoice that the spirits are subject to you but rather rejoice because your **names are written in heaven...**

Will you be in Jesus role call from the Book of Life?

5b... but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

1 John 2:1b ...And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. **2** And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

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

▪ **Resurrection Prescriptions**

1. **Watch** in expectancy for Jesus: Motivation for good works
2. **Strengthen** what you have: Solid truths. No dead programs.
3. **Remember** how you received the Spirit by hearing then do what He says
4. **Hold fast** to what you know is good
5. **Repent** from dead works...

A church is *not necessarily alive* because their name is famous. A church is not *necessarily alive even* if they preach the Word of God. A church is alive when born-again believers yield completely to/cooperate with God's Holy Spirit. When each individual listens *for God*, listens *to God* and *obeys the voice of God*, the congregation as a whole can/will freely move with the Holy Spirit to accomplish His work in the churches and the world. [NJC]

We desire to be a congregation the is alive in the eyes of God
We repent of all fleshly deeds and will seek the Spirit of God in all that we do