

WAKE UP!

Revelation 3:1-6

Sardis was a city in decline; her past wealth and splendor greatly deteriorated. Set atop a mountain surrounded by steep cliffs with a single, narrow approach, Sardis had been considered impregnable, but had twice been conquered because of its arrogance and lack of watchfulness.

Sardis was devoted to the worship of the mother-goddess Cybele. Ironically, a white, clean robe was required to participate in worship characterized by orgies and debaucheries of the basest nature.

❖ Comfort & Approval

None

☒ Critique

✓ You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead (1)

Filled with activity and programs, the Church of Sardis had the reputation of being spiritually alive. But Jesus, the One who knows, declares they are “dead”. In Scripture, death refers to separation as well as the absence of life. For unbelievers, death means separation from relationship with God. But for believers, death is sometimes used as a symbol for carnality, for being out of fellowship with God, separated from Christ as the source of the abundant life. The Church of Sardis was spiritually carnal and working from the energy of their own resources rather than from the resources of Jesus (the Word and the Holy Spirit).

A church is in danger of death:

- when it begins to worship its own past or history, its reputation or name, or the names in the church,
- when it is more concerned with forms than with function and life,
- when it is more concerned with numbers and noses, than with the spiritual quality of life it is producing in its people,
- when it is more involved with management than with ministry or with the physical over the spiritual.

✓ Your works are not complete (2)

Their works lacked the proper source and motive. They were not Spirit produced. They were imperfect either in quality (works of the flesh) or they were imperfect in content.

✚ Counsel

- ✓ Wake up and strengthen what remains (2)
- ✓ Remember what you received and heard (3)
- ✓ Keep it and repent (3)

This is a call for the church to repent from its Word-less, Spirit-less works and to get back into fellowship with Jesus and start walking in the Spirit and in the light of the Word.

⊖ Chastisement

I will come against you like a thief (3)

Alluding to the city's past, Jesus warns that if they do not *wake up* He will come against them in discipline.

✂ To the One Who Conquers

✓ The conquerors will be clothed in white garments (4-5a)

The one positive in this letter – the few members of the church who had not “soiled their garments” – are promised they will walk with Christ in white. Walking with Jesus in white is a reward for personal righteousness or deeds of righteousness produced in the life of the believer by the Holy Spirit.

✓ The conquerors will not be blotted out of the book of life (5b)

Using the figure of speech known as *litotes* (a positive point made by denying its opposite), Jesus is not dealing with the issue of losing salvation; rather, He is celebrating the security of the believer, especially that of the conqueror

✓ The conquerors will be confessed (praised) by Jesus before the Father and His angels (5c)

This refers to the reward the overcomer will experience in the form of a special acknowledgment or public recognition for faithfulness.

(1) The means for living the Christian life is a knowledge and a careful application of the Word through the various ministries of the Spirit.

(2) The signs of a successful church, one truly empowered by the Spirit is not names, noses, and numbers, but Christlikeness. How much do we of Grace Church demonstrate the Savior in our personal lives, in our families, in our values, priorities, ministry, etc.? Activities and reputations by themselves are never a proof of true spirituality.

(3) God is always faithful to reward His people for their faithfulness to Him. Salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone, but rewards are Jesus' response to those who walk in faith and obedience to Him.