

The Profession of a Sleeping Church

Title: The Church That Was Dead And Didn't Know it.

Text: Revelation 3:1-6

The liveliest thing in the world is a live church. A church that is super-charged with spiritual power, a church that is winning the lost and blessing the saved, a church whose members live daily for God's glory, ~~a church whose members are not afraid to live by faith~~ ^{This kind of church} a church whose services are a high spiritual adventure, ~~is~~ a joy and a blessing to Almighty God. But the deadest thing in the world is a dead church. Its buildings may be magnificent, it may have all the required services and go through all the forms, but if it is not on fire for God ~~and the people do know how to live by faith~~ and for a lost world, it is a stench in the nostrils of God. Such a church was Sardis. This church had a name to live, but it was dead. It was dead but its members didn't know it. ~~As we study this letter to Sardis~~ ^{Now there are 4 things}

~~I would have you see five things.~~ ^{I would like you to see about this church.}
 First of all ^{to} THE CONDITIONS (VS. 1) ^(Read)

~~In the text~~ Jesus said that this church had a ~~name~~ ^{name of being alive} that it lived, but ~~it~~ was dead. The church had a reputation in the community as a live, wide-awake, going concern. It had that reputation in Sardis, it had that ~~name~~ ^{name} among the brethren and the neighboring churches, but it had no such name with God. Jesus said to this church, "You are dead." [You will remember that after Samson's hair had been cut and after he had lost his power, "he knew not that the power of the Lord had left him." He said that he would go out and do big things just as he had done before, but he could not do them - his power was gone. It was this way with the church of Sardis. They thought they could exercise themselves and do great things. They didn't realize that God's power was gone ~~and spiritual~~ ^{and spiritual} They were a dead people.

Name The of Sardis

~~This~~ church was running on steam from accomplishment and glories of the past. Once they had done great things for God. Once they had had a great ministry - now they had nothing left but memories. [That is true of many Christians today. Once they were happy and active in the service of Christ, ~~But Now~~ today they live in cold neglect of their Christian duties. They have memories of days when Christ was near and their heart sang with joy, but today these memories are nothing but cold ashes. Their christianity is no longer warm and vital. How many of us need to get back to our first love.

Have you ever gone into a store and noticed a conter full of beautiful flowers? But as you drew closer you saw that the flowers were not real, but artificial. Artifical flowers have the appearance of life but they are dead. I have gone into a museum and seen animals and birds in great numbers. All of them stood upright, their poise was perfect. Their eyes glistened with apparent intelligence. But there was not a spark of life in any of them. They were just stuffed skins of dead animals and birds. Ans some ^{christians} churches are just as deceptive. They have the name of being alive, ~~but their witness means nothing~~ ^{but their witness means nothing} ~~services go on as usual.~~ ^{an there is} ~~But their was~~ no compassion for souls, no growth into the likeness of Chrst, no missionary spirit, no ^{wisdom} ~~witnessing~~ for the Lord. They ^{call themselves christians} ~~had a church~~ but the net result of ~~its~~ ^{their} work ^{bring} ~~brought~~ forth no fruit for God. ^{John 5:2-3 James says that if a man does not bear fruit, he takes away and cast forth into the fire and burned.}

This was the cindition of the Chrch of Sardis. It was a church that went through the motions, but a church that was dead spiritually. May God keep us from such a condition in our church today. *But if you are in that condition, then take note of*
II. THE COUNSEL *that Jesus gives*

Now Having described their condtion before God, Jesus now gives them some counsel (~~Read Vers 2-3~~) *in Verse 2-3*

1. First, Jesus told them to be watchful. They were to wake up, they were to be on their guard. They were not to allow any more sin or neglect to enter into the church. *sheer life* { A Christian must always be on guard. ~~Some years~~ *lest Satan come in a defeat us.*

Some years ago the crown jewels of England were brought to this country and were seen by thousands of people. But always, night and day, men ~~were~~ were on guard, lest someone might steal the diamonds. Likewise the Christian is to be on guard always, lest sin and the world creep in and rob him of his spiritual power.

2. ^{Secretly} ~~REPEAT~~, JESUS TELLS THEM TO STRENGTHEN THE THINGS WHICH REMAIN. ^{Now} What

things ~~are~~ remained? All the works that they were doing remained, but now they must put ^{Life} ~~it~~ into them, they must do them out of love for Christ and a sincere heart. They must make these works mean something. [If we could have looked in on the Sardis church, we would have seen how wonderful things were going. Their finances were in good shape, their organizations were functioning, they had a good program. But their members were not growing in grace. The salt had lost its taste.

^{Now} God would ^{not want} ~~not~~ these people or ourselves to quit coming to church, but he wants us to come and really worship Him. I wonder at times - do we worship or do we just come and listen to the songs and ^{be entertained} ~~the sermon?~~ Jesus wouldn't tell us to quit singing or praying or giving, but he would tell us to put life and love into these things. Christianity is life.

When we begin to live for Jesus and serve Him as we should the world will soon know that we have something real. They will never know it if our Christianity is not a living, throbbing, radiant ~~thing~~ ^{Effecting things}

3. JESUS TELLS THEM TO REMEMBER ALL THE THINGS THAT THEY HAD RECEIVED AND HOLD THEM TIGHTLY. Jesus was telling ~~this~~ people the same thing he

told the Church of Ephesus. Remember your first love. Remember the thrilling experience ~~it~~ was when you first began to walk with Christ? My friends, if you have drifted far away from Christ, let your first love flood your soul and bring you back to ~~his side~~ ^{the foot of the cross}

4. JESUS TELLS THE CHURCH OF SARDIS TO REPENT. This word repent is the keynote to these seven churches. Jesus sees sin in each of these churches

and calls upon them to repent. { If you have grown cold toward the things of God, you are also called upon to repent. To have a cold heart is to be guilty of a ~~terrible~~ sin. You have asked God to forgive you of many other sins. Have you ever ask Him to forgive you of the sin of cold-heartedness?

With Jesus it is either "repent or else." (vs3). If the people of Sardis did not repent, Jesus would come upon them like a thief. ~~Does a person welcome the coming of a thief? Never. Because a thief will take and steal from you.~~ *The thief comes when people least expect Him to come. I have never heard of a thief announcing his coming.* One day Jesus is going to come upon you like a thief. *Now we are to* ~~The Christian~~ looks forward to Christ coming. But many people are not because they are not ready.

at III. THE CHRISTIANS

In vers 4 -- Jesus said, "~~There~~ *But you have* ~~is~~ *people* a few ~~names~~ even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy." That's just like Jesus. He always searches out the good in any church. And God always has his "faithful few." *Now,* who were these few in Sardis? They were the one who where serving Christ. These were *They were the ones living by faith* the onces who worship Christ insincereity and truth. They were the Lord's remnant. God is still in the remnant business. He still has his followers in every church. People who are sincere, faithful. They love Christ and his church. They really pray. They work and witness for the Lord. Do you belong to this remnant or do you just have your name on the church rolls?

Please ~~not~~

Gives to Those who repent

IV. THE COMPENSATIONS. (~~Read~~ vs. 5-6) that Jesus

repented

Jesus tells those who have overcome that they will walk with him in white. Here we have a picture of Jesus, the Bridegroom, talking the hand of his bride, the redeemed, and walking down the pathway of life with her. What a blessed privilege. Some walk hand in hand with the world, some walk hand in hand with sin, but you and I can walk hand in hand with God's Only-begotten Son.

Jesus gives us assurance that we will never be lost. He says that he will not blot their names out of the Book of Life. If indeed we have repented of our sin and put our trust in Christ, ^{if we are living by faith} our names are written in the book of life and will never be erased. In Revelation 20:15 we are told that all whose names are not in the Book of Life will be cast into the Lake of fire. But Jesus says that our names will never be blotted out.

only Nothing can separate us from God after we become His through faith in Christ. ^{Paul says} "Who shall separate us from the Love of Chrst? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neighter death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor dept, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8;35-39)

in vs 5

Then Jesus said that He would confess those who are faithful before God and His angels. What an honor. I see God upon his throne, with men gathered before. Then I see Jesus put an arm around the Apostle Paul and present him to the Father. I hear Jesus saying, "Father, he confessed me before the world, now I confess him before you." And then I can hear all of heaven ring with shouts and applause. ~~I can imagine~~

Paul

I can imagine Christ confessing the great apostle before the Father, but it is hard to imagine His confessing us lesser saints. Yet, that's exactly what he is going to do. What joy that will be.

We remember that there was a time when the Armenians were cruelly tortured by the Turks. Then the Americans came and set up first-aid camps for the refugees. One who came to camp was a young girl. Her dark eyes were full of pain and her body hardly seemed able to stand the strain of waiting for the doctor. Someone said to her, "Have you been hurt?" And she answered, "I am bearing the cross. I bear in my body the cross of Jesus Christ. I know how ~~he~~ suffered." They didn't understand her, but in a few minutes a nurse came up to her. The girl slipped her loose, ~~dirty~~ dress from her shoulders and revealed a ~~cross~~ that had been branded with hot iron into her shoulder. The wound ~~was~~ was buring with fever, swollen and infected. The girl then explained, "Every day they would say to me, 'Mohammed or Christ?' When I said 'Christ', they brought the iron and branded a cross on my shoulder. I thought I would die before help came. Now as long as I live I will bear the cross ~~and/someday/when/I/see~~ ~~Jesus/I~~ of Jesus, my Lord."

Today you and I have the privilege of bearing the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have the joy of sharing the Gospel with men and women who are lost in sin. And one day, clothed in white, we will stand before the Lord Jesus Christ and hear him as he confesses us before the Father in heaven. ~~"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Sprit saith unto the churches."~~

~~My friend, please your faith and trust in Jesus. Except Him as your Lord and Saviour. Christ has repented and returns to your just love.~~

STOP

→ (over)

(7)

Jesus said that 'every one who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my father who is in heaven. (Matt 10:32)

My friend, place your faith and trust in Christ. Accept him as Saviour and Lord. Let this be your hour of decision.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

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