

The message to the Church of Sardis...Wake Up

Sardis was once one of the greatest cities of the world. It had been the capital of the ancient kingdom of Lydia, and in the 6th century B. C. was ruled by a fabulously wealthy king, Under Croesus, whose name became a legend for wealth, prosperity, it had it won Golden and silver minted coinage, and the Pactolus River, which flowed nearby, famous for its easily panned gold. However Sardis passed from hand to hand under a number of successive regimes. **It fell first to the Persians, Greeks, Syrians and finally to the Romans in 133bc...**Sardis became an administrative center of Rome. Asia, and when in a.d. 26 the cities of the province contended for the honor of building a second temple for the Caesar-cult, the envoys spoke long and eloquently about the past glory of the place. Sardis was located about 50 miles east of Smyrna and 35 miles southeast of Thyatira. Sardis was built on a mountain spur about 1500 feet above the valley floor. It was regarded as virtually impregnable to military assault.

Robert show picture

History shows that on two separate occasions, when enemy armies had surrounded Sardis, her careless guards fell asleep. In the dead of the night an opposing army slipped in and captured the embarrassed city.

Bottom line "It was a city whose history was far greater than it's present...it lived on its past accomplishments and reputation...it seemed awake but it was dead..."

It was a city whose name was almost synonymous with self-importance but unjustified by its present accomplishments, promises unfulfilled, appearance without reality, confidence which heralded ruin."

Jesus seems to be using this history as an example to teach this church a great truth. Don't talk about your past accomplishments Return to doing those things...

This letter stands out as there was nothing of commendation given to it, only a strong rebuke...in the other churches evil was the exception, but in Sardis it was the general practice...much of it had to do with idolatry... In John's time Sardis was a wealthy and important commercial trading center. As a pagan city, Sardis was home to the well-known temple of Artemis, and Cybele worship The church at Sardis was surrounded by paganism and idolatry but failed to stand out amidst the darkness.

NLT Rev 3:1 "Write this letter to the angel of the church in Sardis. This is the message from the one who has the sevenfold Spirit of God and the seven stars: "I know all the things you do, and that you have a reputation for being alive—but you are dead

- The way the Lord presents Himself to each of these churches is a clue as to what the church needs. The "seven spirits" are a symbol of the Holy Spirit in His fullness and this fullness rest on Jesus....
- What this church at Sardis desperately needed was the Spirit -- life by the Spirit. After Jesus baptism...

The works of Jesus. *NLT Luke 4:18* "The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, ¹⁹ and that the time of the LORD's favor has come"

Our Works...what Jesus said on the last night of his life...

John 14:12 12 “I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. ¹³ You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father.

- **No life change....was happening for Holy Spirit transforming power was left out...**

It is the message to the churches...

NLT REV 1:20 As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

- **The seven stars are the angels or messengers helping the churches...and they are in his hands...He is directing them...**
- **And the seven lampstands are the churches... Jesus is in the midst of the lampstands...they surround him...so he knows everything and directs his messengers...he is in absolute control...**
- **And the Church of Sardis has absolutely no influence on the culture it is surrounded by..though it did some good works...**
- **In Sardis these were works that were done not to please the Lord, nor in the Spirit’s power, but to impress people.**
- **They had a good reputation, but it was actually a spiritually dead church.**

What does Dead mean?

- **A person who is dead... can neither do anything nor need anything**

- They have no needs, has no want, can neither do anything nor need anything, nor has any struggles within or without...
- This church in Sardis was so devoid of life that it actually had no impact nor influence on anyone....
- If it closed tomorrow no one would even miss it!
- Now If you are alive, you get hungry and thirsty and need rest, you have issues...You have relationships, you have struggles inward and outward... you have stress and joy, pain and sorrow, highs and lows....you love....you have rejection
- There is a parallel to this in the Christian life. If your spiritual life is alive, you will be challenged to grow, and you will feel a need to be fed. A cadaver doesn't need food and drink and clothing. Neither does a spiritually dead person know he needs to be nurtured, walk in faith, live with hope, influence their generation...

They are nice, and kind and helpful to the community... But there was no spiritual influence.. they did nothing to bring their culture to God...

Unfortunately there are thousands of churches like that around the world today. It is what gives non-Christians such a negative impression of Christian faith. They see the profession, they hear the wonderful words, but there is no life in them. Nothing attracts people to Jesus through them...they look just like the culture....

- **But there was a time, apparently, when this church was alive, when it was filled with people who knew the Lord, lived the Lord influenced the community to the Lord.... They lived on their past glory...the good old days...**

This is a warning. 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...than with the spiritual quality of life producing transformation of people,

*****What does a dead church need? Our Lord doesn't waste any time telling them.**

NLT Rev 3:2 Wake up! Strengthen what little remains, for even what is left is almost dead. I find that your actions do not meet the requirements of my God.

Jesus Tells them what there is of value in the church. "I know your works," he says. They were good works, in a way, but they were incomplete.

- **The first thing a dead church needs is to wake up.** But He doesn't say, "I have nothing to do with you." He gives them a way of recovery, and He still reveals Himself as Lord of the church.
- **These words Wake up ...in Greek are staccato commands, sharp words, like a slap in the face, designed to stimulate, to wake up. This was what the church needed in Sardis. Wake up!**
It was dead but not all the way dead....like in young Frankenstein ...almost dead!
- Wake up! face your failure! Feel the dullness of your spiritual life! Smell like like the dead and not the aroma of Jesus!**
- **A church in this state needs to ask itself some very serious, sobering, honest questions.**
- **Their life as a sermon to the world was Friendly, people liked them but of no spiritual value...**
- **They didn't offer light to a world in darkness**

- **They offered no salvation and restoration to a world decayed and dying...sinking in sin....**

They needed to wake up and become who they are ...

*NLT Matt 5:13 "You are the **salt** of the earth. But what good is **salt** if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it **salty** again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless.*

Jesus said you guys are the real deal...you are salt to this world...so let what you are be displayed....if you lose who you are...what value to the world are you?

******1)Salt is an essential life promoting and sustaining mineral. that is what we are...**

- **The concentration of salt sodium ions in the blood is directly related to the regulation of safe body fluids**
- **Salt is life giving and life sustaining... we are life giving love and hope to this world..in other words Hope dealers to this world...because we love people... But it is something else...**
- ******2) Salt is a Preservative... it is called aseptic...it halts decay... It is one of the most effective and widely used of all food preservatives... **Jesus says you are salt to this world ...wherever you are decay should be halted... Which means you must be placed in the midst of that which is decaying...****
- ******3) Salt is a flavor enhancer... Salt is an asset to whatever it touches... it adds flavor to anything it is poured on..... Christianity is to life what salt is to food...**
- **Yet many in the world have equated Christianity with sucking the flavor out of life...**
- **We are not called to be pessimists...we are the bearers of good news...there is Hope for the hurting... a home for the Lost...forgiveness for the sinner... belonging to the rejected ...Love for the lonely... deliverance to the oppressed...freedom for those in bondage....Peace for those in fear**

- So when Jesus speaks of us as being the salt of the earth... he speaks of us as a gift to the world of extreme value and importance ..and as an essential promoting and sustaining life... and if we are not that then what is our value to the world?

If it loses these qualities...it is poured out on the road during the rainy and snow season to lower the freezing point of water.. season to make the roads less slippery by increasing friction...it serves the exact opposite effect of spiritually drawing people ...makes it easier for people walk on as they make their way to hell

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

- So The Lord says is to, "go back" to the beginning when you were rich in the things of the Spirit...the Kingdom and do complete requirements of God....influeenc the culture around you...quit playing church ...That is where the Holy Spirit will show up!!
- When these people had first heard the gospel they had heard it by the Spirit....they walked with the Spirit...they were Spirit led....

2. And they needed was to recover the hope of the Lord's return. "If you do not wake up," Jesus says, "I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you." They are living like this is it!! Complacent! Asleep

- They forgot ...Jesus says that He will come suddenly, without warning, like a thief comes to steal away the treasure of a

home. Exactly what has happened to Sardis in History...they are in danger of it happening to them

- **A thief does not announce his coming.** He comes silently and takes what he wants and then disappears again. They like their city will be caught unaware of the Lord's coming....

But there are some ...who will not be taken by surprise at the Lord's coming...

NLT Rev 3:4 "Yet there are some in the church in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes with evil. They will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. 5 All who are victorious will be clothed in white. I will never erase their names from the Book of Life, but I will announce before my Father and his angels that they are mine.

- Now, here is a three-fold promise to the overcomer.

First, believers are promised white clothes, symbolizing their righteousness in Christ. Just like Jesus wore...in Chapter 1

Second, He promises: "I will never erase their names from the book of life." Notice the way the Lord puts it. He does not say anything about anyone's name being blotted out.

- His words are simply assuring that those who trust Him will never be blotted out. "I will never blot out your name from the book of life." **That word never, is the strongest negative in the Greek language. He will never, ever, under any circumstances, erase out your name from the book of life.**

3."On the contrary," says Jesus (and this is the third thing), "I will acknowledge you before my Father and the angels in heaven."

- We know truths about ourselves that we do not want known. But Jesus says, "When you stand there with your entire record exposed for everybody to see, I will look at you and say, 'You are mine.'
- I will acknowledge your name before the Father and all His angels.
- **This to the world unknown character –the one who was nothing and despised in Sardis... I want the universe to know -- He is mine!"**

6 *“Anyone with ears to hear **must listen to the Spirit** and understand what he is saying to the churches.*

- ***Though the culture may reject you ... I never will..i know who you are!! Keep being Salt!***
- ***you do not know the time of his Return or our time of going to him...***

Stay Salty !! impacting our community!! And ready for his return

And shine your light

NLT Matthew 5:14-16 “You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one **lights** a lamp and **then** puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives **light** to everyone in **the** house. In **the** same way, let **your** good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise **your** heavenly Father.

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