

Morning Sermon June 20, 2021
"The Dead Church!" – Revelation 3:1-6

I. Jesus' introduction of Himself –

3 "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, Revelation 3:1 A (NKJV)

1. *The seven Spirits of God are the One Holy Spirit, our Lord has Him, we do not –*

11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. Matthew 3:11 (NKJV)

A. *He is called "seven" here because of the full array of ministries, gifts, and graces He provides to the Church and to churches, ultimately the Spirit saves, the Spirit brings about the New Birth and LIFE –*

63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. John 6:63 (NKJV)

B. *Even the best ministry, of the best (mere human) ministers is fleshly, is water (vs Spirit) we need the Holy Spirit working with us or our ministry is DEAD, this is why we pray for the Spirit –*

9 "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. **10** For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. **11** If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? **12** Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? **13** If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" Luke 11:9–14 (NKJV)

2. *The seven stars, the angels of the seven churches, our Lord Jesus holds these as well -*

20 The mystery of the seven stars which 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 which you saw are the seven churches. Revelation 1:20 (NKJV)

3. *He is in the KNOW about them -*
"I know your works, Revelation 3:1 A (NKJV)

II. Jesus' evaluation of the church at Sardis –

3 ... "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Revelation 3:1 (NKJV)

1. *They had a name, indicating they were alive, they had a good reputation –*

A. *Good works*

B. *No doctrinal disputes*

C. *No scandalous sins –*

2. *But they were dead – "but you are dead."*

A. *Many in the church at Sardis were spiritually dead, unsaved, we all once were dead, spiritual zombies –*

2 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, **2** in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, **3** among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. Ephesians 2:1–3 (NKJV)

B. *Now an unsaved sinner is a spiritual zombie and often has the monstrous traits of such a beast, yet at Sardis there were "good looking" Zombies, they deceived men about their natures –*

5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! 2 Timothy 3:5 (NKJV)

C. *The "dead" at Sardis were a lot like the Pharisees –*

27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Matthew 23:27 (NKJV)

Their appearance, their reputation was different from, and a deception, in relation to their REALITY –

"It is not hard to deceive ministers, relatives and friends but it is impossible to deceive Christ." J. C. Ryle

D. *It is impossible to deceive Christ, but we are capable of deceiving ourselves, even about salvation –*

⁹ “The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? Jeremiah 17:9 (NKJV)

3. *That non-believing, unsaved people might make up the majority of a church’s membership is not a strange thing -*

²⁴ Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵ but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. Matthew 13:24-25

Tares look like wheat, but they are poisonous!

III. *Jesus’ counsel –*

1. *There were a few in Sardis that are alive –*

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. Revelation 3:4 (NKJV)

2. *I believe Jesus’ counsel here is mostly aimed at them, they are watching, they must 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. 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. Revelation 3:2-3

A. *Being watchful and ready is one of the distinguishing characteristics, dividing true saints from false / wise virgins from foolish –*

²⁵ “Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ² Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. ³ Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, ⁴ but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. ⁵ But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. ⁶ “And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’ ⁷ Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ ⁹ But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest there should not be enough for us and you;

but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ ¹⁰ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. ¹¹ “Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ ¹² But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ ¹³ “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming. Matthew 25:1–13 (NKJV)

B. *Notice the foolish virgins, were virgins, they had lamps, they seem to be waiting and watching for the Bridegroom (Christ) but their lamps did not have OIL (symbolic of the Holy Spirit) to light them.*

C. *Even the true need encouragement, lest the influence of the ungodly is such that it discourages their asking, seeking, knocking - Luke 11:9–14 (NKJV)*

IV. *Jesus’ reward for overcomers, the white garment and not blotting out –*

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. Revelation 3:5

1. *Sardis was known for its clothing and dyes, they were famous for colorful clothing – in Sardis it was said “only slaves wore white” –*

Here the white garment is the righteousness of Christ, imputed to them –

¹⁸ “Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the LORD, “Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool. Isaiah 1:18 (NKJV)

2. *Of course, no truly saved person could have his name blotted out, but these who had a name to live but were dead were not truly saved, but the overcomers had truly good names and life –*

V. *Again, hearing the Voice of the Spirit is key –*

⁶ “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” Revelation 3:6

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