

# To The Seven Churches

## Sardis



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### **Revelation 3:1-6**

*What does it mean to be spiritually dead?*

For a brief moment, you feel as if the church in Sardis maybe had everything together. On the outside, they appear to be alive and doing well. Yet, nothing could be further from the truth. The appearance of life and the actuality of life are incredibly different and the church in Sardis only had one of those things. Though it appeared as if it was moving, it was lacking in life and had died. Note that the scripture does not speak of the church as being in the process of dying but of being already dead. When a church dies, spiritually, it often continues in the natural, enduring a slow and drawn out death, dragging others alongside it as well. God, though, is in the business of bringing the dead to life.

As this letter to the church in Sardis starts, we are reminded of the nature of God. He is all knowing and sovereign overall. He holds the sevenfold Spirit and reigns from the throne of God. We see similar things in the church Ephesus whom had lost their love and passion. Yet, the condition of Sardis is much more grim. The church remained dead though the world saw them as alive. There is more to their faith than merely going through the motions but an in-depth relationship with Jesus Christ and the expression of the presence of God in every aspect of their lives.

## **Going Through The Motions**

The church in Sardis was merely going through the motions. They may have had the gatherings, the semi-religious talk, and the lip service to Jesus. Yet, their condition remained much worse than they originally thought. They were dead and simply going through the motions. When people die spiritually, it often takes the individual time to understand their death. They can, for all appearances, give off the impression of spiritual vitality, even fooling themselves, but in reality their heart has decayed unto the point of death. "Faith" then is merely a matter of going through the motions.

For the church in the end time, many will merely be going through the motions. They will appear to support the heart of God but have long since forgotten all of the depth and power of the Gospel. Faith is only about living out a type of social justice in the world or demanding obedience and works from a people who have not yet turned to Christ. The values will appear to be Christian but spiritually the church will be dead. It is only through honest reflection and inviting the Holy Spirit to shine a light on our death and have His way in us that we are able to return from the dead.

## **Faithfulness at the End**

Furthermore, bringing the dead to life remains a core tenant of the Gospel. In Spiritual death, the church looks like the world who is similarly dead. In Christ, the church comes alive to the grace of God and spreading the name that is above every name. The spiritually dead may appear to be alive, but God looks at the heart of the church and reveals what is deep within the soul. If the heart is the wellspring of life, we allow the Holy Spirit to reside in our heart and flow freely out of us to every corner we have the honor of representing Jesus Christ.

Through our faithfulness to God through the end, no matter what circumstance arise or befall us, the reward is clothed in white. Our old dirty clothes are taken off and we are reformed and renewed into the life and person that God set before us in the beginning of time. We receive the righteousness of God as our own. We stand, boldly, in the throne room of God. We are new creations. This is the reward that God offers to the church in Sardis. Sadly, some in the church will not receive that gift, but those who do will find that everything they sacrificed for the sake of the Kingdom of God will be returned to them in fullness and perfection. God is a God of grace and power, bringing the poor to riches, and the dead to life all through grace by faith in Jesus Christ.

## Discussion Questions

1. How does Jesus Christ take us from death to life?
2. What are the five commands that God gives to the church in Sardis in Revelation 3:2-3?
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3. **Wake Up** If you are honest, where is God calling you to wake up from your spiritual death?
4. **Strengthen What Remains** What areas are you doing well in that you can continue and strengthen?
5. **Remember What You Have Received and Heard** What gifts and graces has God given you? What is the most memorable experience you have had with God where He was undeniably present?
6. **Hold It Fast** How does understanding our past story encourage us through the future?
7. **Repent** What does it mean to repent? How can you do this in your life, today.
8. What does verse 5 symbolize being clothed in white? What promises does God offer to His church for following him?