

THE JESUS FILES – PART V
“Sardis – The Dead Church”
Revelation 3:1-6

We’ve all heard the expression “that church is dead!” Often this terminology is applied to churches that have no new converts joining them, the church is aging, the people are living in the past reflecting on their fond memories of their once thriving church. Jesus says the church at Sardis is like a hospitalized patient on life support. This morning’s teaching will explain what treatment can bring a very sick church back to life.

1. JESUS’ SELF-DESCRIPTION – THE SEVEN SPIRITS, v. 1

- A. Jesus holds the 7 spirits of God, Isa 11:1-2
- B. Jesus holds the 7 stars, Rev 1:20
- C. Jesus embodies the fullness of the Spirit

2. JESUS KNOWS THEIR DEEDS – THEY ARE IN THE SPIRITUAL

- _____, v. 1
- A. You have a reputation (*Lit. name*) of being alive
 - B. You are dead

3. JESUS’ PRESCRIPTION FOR RECOVERY - FIVE COMMANDS FOR _____, vv. 2-3

- A. **Wake up** (*Lit. be watching*)
- B. **Strengthen** what remains & is about to die
- C. **Remember** what you received & heard – the gospel
- D. **Hold it fast** - keep it
- E. **Repent** – open yourselves to the Holy Spirit
- F. The warning – If you don’t I will come like a thief unexpectedly

4. JESUS COMPLIMENTS THE FAITHFUL FEW, v. 4

- A. There are a few who are unsoiled
- B. They will walk with me
- C. They will be dressed in white
- D. They are worthy – not dead

5. JESUS’ PROMISE TO THE OVERCOMER, vv. 5-6

- A. Will be dressed in white
- B. Will never have his name blotted out of the book of life, Rev 13:8, 17:8, Phil 4:3, Psalm 69:28, Exodus
- C. 32:32
- D. Will be acknowledged before my Father & his angels
- E. What is the Spirit saying to you?

APPLICATION POINTS

Characteristics of an almost dead church

- A. The church is alive in the _____, but dead in the _____
- B. The church is a _____
- C. The church presents an _____ brand of Christianity to the community, Gal 5:11, 1 Cor 1:23
- D. The church has no _____
- E. The church has lost sight of its _____

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What insights do you have about Jesus' self-description?
2. How would you describe a dead churches relationship with the Holy Spirit?
3. How does a church get to the point where Jesus says it has one foot in the grave?
4. Discuss the things one should do to experience revival in their own personal life and in their church.
5. If they don't repent Jesus will come unexpectedly like a thief. What does this mean?
6. Discuss the faithful few
7. What does it mean to be dressed in white?
8. What is the book of life?
9. What is your takeaway from this teaching?

Welcome

to

Hillcrest Church

Love, Acceptance & Forgiveness

I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge that name before my Father and his angels.

Revelation 3:5

September 17, 2023
Pastor Bruce Guckelberg, PhD

ANNOUNCEMENTS

TODAY

Pastor Bruce is continuing his series titled "The Jesus Files." Today's message focuses our attention on the church at Sardis.

NEXT NEIGHBORHOOD WALK – SEPTEMBER 23 at 11:00am

Meet at church for prayer at 11am.

ONLINE GATHERINGS

The Prayer Meeting: Tuesday at 7pm with Pastor Tim Brooks

The Bible study: Wednesday at 6:30 – 7:45pm with Pastor Bruce. Go to the online meeting room on our website (hillcrestRoseville.com) to access either gathering. If you have a need for prayer don't hesitate to call Pastor Tim Brooks at (916) 872-5207 or email: timnealbr@gmail.com

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS FOR THE NURSERY

See Kathy Brooks for details (916.847.8123). We have a TV in the nursery, so you can watch the whole service while caring for the babies.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Our offering box is in the back of the sanctuary. You can place your tithes and offerings there, or you can visit our website and give online (hillcrestroseville.com). Consider giving to the building fund so we can continue to upgrade our facility

The City of Sardis

In the 6th century BC Sardis was one of the most powerful cities in the ancient world. By the Roman period, it had declined to the point of being known as a relic of the period of barbaric warfare and lived on its past reputation rather than its present status.

One of the unique features of Sardis was that she was built on a mountain 1,500 feet above sea level. Her rock walls rose nearly perpendicular, which made her virtually inaccessible to invading armies, for she was a natural citadel. However, twice in her history when under attack, the watchmen weren't vigilant and their enemies scaled the steep mountain, opened the gates and Sardis was captured. This happened in 546 B.C. when the Persian Cyrus laid siege to her, and again by Antiochus III in 214 B.C. After these two defeats the city continued to prosper economically, but never regained her power and had lived on the reputation of what she once was.

Sardis was finally incorporated into the Roman Empire in 133 BC. Excavations revealed a large Roman theater and stadium. In AD 17 the city suffered a catastrophic earthquake and was rebuilt with the help of the emperor Tiberius. The city was decorated with a variety of temples one of which was dedicated to Cybele (Artemis to the Greeks) who was thought to have the special power of restoring the dead to life. Situated at the western end of a well-traveled highway from Susa through Asia Minor, Sardis was a city of wealth and fame. Jewelry was found in the local cemeteries, indicating great prosperity. Archaeologists first discovered gold and silver coins at Sardis, and it was thought that the art of dying wool originated there.

There is no evidence that the church was under attack by false teachers or that there was any persecution from the Jews or Roman authorities. It appears that Jews and Christians merged into Roman culture, thus making the Christians there a form of Christo-pagans. One would think that under these peaceful conditions the church could thrive; however, the church declined just as the city declined. What caused this spiritual disaster that brought them to the point of almost dying as a church?