

Sardis: The Danger of a Good Reputation

Revelation 3:1-6

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To the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of the One who holds the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation for being alive, yet you are dead. Wake up and strengthen what remains, which was about to die; for I have found your deeds incomplete in the sight of My God. Remember, then, what you have received and heard. Keep it and repent. If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know the hour when I will come upon you.

Revelation 3:1-6, cont

But you do have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments, and because they are worthy, they will walk with Me in white. Like them, he who overcomes will be dressed in white. And I will never blot out his name from the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father and His angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

The Danger of a Good Reputation

- The Church and the Christian must be refreshed and empowered daily by the Spirit of God. Sardis forgot this!
- Jesus said, “To whom much is given, much shall be required” (Luke 12:48). But they said, “Aren’t we lucky. We have been given much, so we do not need to do very much.”
- Moses asked God: (1) Give me your presence, (2) Teach me your ways, (3) Show me your glory. (Exodus 33:12-23)
- God said to Joshua, “As I was with Moses, so shall I be with you” (Joshua 1:5). Jesus said, “Without me you can do nothing” (John 15:5)

1. How Christ Described Himself

- “These are the words of the One who holds the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars.”
- “The Seven Spirits” refers to the full power of the Spirit, who would be with them.
- “Seven Stars” refers to the pastors who shared the word of God in a relevant way.
- The best heritage from the past that anyone can receive is the knowledge that God will be with them.

2. How Christ Evaluated the Church

- Asleep: “Wake up!”**
- We must always act and react in the power of the Spirit.**
 - Reasonable actions and reactions are not enough**
 - Socially acceptable actions and reactions are not enough**
 - We must transcend this world by the Spirit of God**
- They had neglected what they had been given and had not fulfilled their God-given mission.**
- They were about to die and didn’t know it.**

3. How to Overcome

- Repent and return to God
- “Walk with Christ” – rediscover prayer and fellowship with God
- “Dressed in white” maintain their spiritual health, confess their sins daily and live in the grace of Christ.
- “God our Father has made all things depend on faith so that whoever has faith will have everything, and whoever does not have faith will have nothing” (Martin Luther).

Sardis: The Church of the Reformation, 1517 -1800

- **The times were changing: Eyeglasses, books, clocks**
- **1534 Lutherbibel, 1539 Great Bible in English**
- **Age of personal empowerment. A man could become his own theologian.**
- **But, the Reformation stopped short**
 - **Churches were supported by taxes**
 - **Confirmation classes were mandated**
 - **Today state churches are largely empty and dead**



Philipp Spener

1635 - 1705

- **“Pious Desires” 1675**
- **People: personal faith, read the Bible, involved in churches, apply their faith**
- **Pastors: Humility and love, training in devotional life, seek to build up the faith of their people.**
- **The Great Awakening, 1700-1750**